

game is up, you see, at last, Mr. Capel; you will go with me;" and he stepped toward the unhappy culprit. Capel, thoroughly desperate, turned, sprang with surprising agility over a dining-table, threw up a window-sash, and leapt into the street. The height was not so much, but his feet caught in some iron railing, and he fell head foremost on the pavement, fracturing his skull frightfully. Before an hour had passed, he was dead.

Brocard contrived to escape, but the evidence of Marie Deschamps and the finding of the stolen notes, in accordance with her statement, fully established the innocence of Travers, and he was restored to freedom and his former position in the world. He and Constance Hervey, to whom he owed so much, were married three months after his liberation, and I officiated, by particular desire, as bride's father.

I had lost sight of Marie Deschamps for some twelve or thirteen years, when I accidentally met her in Liverpool. She was a widow, having married and buried a M. L'Estrange, a well-to-do person there, who left her in decent circumstances. We spoke together of the events I have briefly but faithfully narrated, and she expressed much contrition for the share she had taken in the conspiracy against Travers. I fancied, too—it was perhaps an unjust fancy—that, knowing I had lately been promoted to four hundred a year, she wished to dazzle me with those still bright eyes of hers—a bootless effort, by whomsoever attempted. The talismanic image daguerreotyped upon my heart in the bright sunlight of young manhood, could have no rival there, and is even now as fresh and radiant as when first impressed, albeit the strong years have done their work, yet very gently, upon the original. It could scarcely be otherwise, living visibly, as she still does, in youthful grace and beauty in the person of the gay gipsy I am, please God, soon to "give away," at St. Pancras Church, as I did her grandmother, more than forty years ago, at Kensington. Constance, *this* Constance is, as she well knows, to be my heiress. Travers, her grandfather, is now a silver-haired, yet hale, jocund, old man; and so tenderly, I repeat, has Time dealt with his wife—the Constance Hervey of this narrative—that I can sometimes hardly believe her to be more than about three or four and forty years of age. This is, however, perhaps only an illusion of the long and, whatever fools or skeptics may think, or say, elevating dream that has pursued me through youth and middle age, even unto confirmed old bachelorhood. Madame L'Estrange, as before stated, died a short time since at Liverpool; her death, by influenza, the paper noticed, was sudden and unexpected.

WONDERFUL TOYS.

VERY wonderful things are told by various writers of the power of inventive genius in expending itself upon trifles. Philip Camuz describes an extraordinary automaton group that was got up, regardless, of course, of expense, for the entertainment of Louis the Fourteenth.

It consisted of a coach and horses—what a modern coachman would designate "a first-rate turn-out." Its road was a table; and, at starting, the coachman smacked his whip, the horses began to prance; then, subsiding into a long trot, they continued until the whole equipage arrived opposite to where the King sat. They then stopped, a footman dismounted from the foot-board, opened the door, and handed out a lady; who, courtesying gracefully, offered a petition to his Majesty, and re-entered the carriage. The footman jumped up behind—all right—the whip smacked once more; the horses pranced, and the long trot was resumed.

Some of the stories extant, respecting musical automata, are no less extraordinary. D'Alembert gives an account, in the "*Encyclopédie Méthodique*," of a gigantic mechanical Flute-player. It stood on a pedestal, in which some of the "works" were contained; and, not only blew into the flute, but, with its lips, increased or diminished the tones it forced out of the instrument, performing the legato and staccato passages to perfection. The fingering was also quite accurate. This marvelous Flautist was exhibited in Paris in 1738, and was made by Jacques de Vaucanson, the prince of automaton contrivers.

Vaucanson labored under many disadvantages in constructing this marvelous figure; among others, that of a skeptic uncle; who, for some years, laughed him out of his project. At length, fortune favored the mechanist with a severe illness; and he took advantage of it to contrive the automaton he had so long dreamt of. This was at Grenoble; and, as Vaucanson designed each portion of the figure, he sent it to be made by a separate workman; that no one should find out the principle of his invention. As the pieces came home, he put them together; and, when the whole was completed, he crawled out of bed, by the help of a servant who had been his go-between with the various operative mechanics, and locked his chamber door. Trembling with anxiety, he wound up the works. At the first sound emitted from the flute, the servant fell on his knees, and began to worship his master as somebody more than mortal. They both embraced each other, and wept with joy to the tune which the figure was merrily playing.

None of Vaucanson's imitators have been able to accomplish the organization by which his figure modified the tones, by the action of the lips; although several flute-playing puppets have since been made. About forty years ago there was an exhibition in London, of two mechanical figures, of the size of life, which performed duets. Incredulous visitors were in the habit of placing their fingers on the holes of the flutes, in order to convince themselves that the puppets really supplied the wind, which caused the flutes to discourse such excellent music.

A full orchestra of clock-work musicians is quite possible. Maelzel, the inventor of the Metronome, opened an exhibition in Vienna, in 1809, in which an automaton Trumpeter as large

as life, performed with surprising accuracy and power. The audience first saw, on entering the room, a tent. Presently the curtains opened, and Maelzel appeared leading forward the trumpeter, attired in full regimentals of an Austrian dragoon. He then pressed the left epaulet of the figure, and it began to sound, not only all the cavalry-calls then in use for directing the evolutions of the Austrian cavalry, but to play a march, and an allegro by Weigl, which was accompanied by a full band of living musicians. The figure then retired; and, in a few minutes, reappeared in the dress of a trumpeter of the French guard. The inventor wound it up on the left hip; another touch on the left shoulder, and forth came from the trumpet, in succession, all the French cavalry-calls, the French cavalry march, a march by Dussek, and one of Pleyel's allegros; again accompanied by the orchestra. In the *Journal des Modes*, whence this account is derived, it is declared that the tones produced by Maelzel's automaton were even fuller and richer than those got out of a trumpet by human lungs and lips; because a man's breath imparts to the inside of the instrument a moisture which deteriorates the quality of the tone.

Vaucanson has, however, never been outdone; after his Flautist, he produced a figure which accompanied a flageolet played with one hand, with a tambourine struck with the other. But his most wonderful achievements were in imitating animals. His duck became a wonder of the world. He simulated nature in the minutest point. Every bone, every fibre, every organ, were so accurately constructed and fitted, that the mechanism waddled about in search of grain; and, when it found some, picked it up with its bill and swallowed it. "This grain" (we quote from the *Biographie Universelle*) "produced in the stomach a species of trituration, which caused it to pass into the intestines, and to perform all the functions of digestion." The wonderful duck was not to be distinguished from any live duck. It muddled the water with its beak, drank, and quacked to the life. From men and ducks Vaucanson descended to insects. When Marmontel brought out his tragedy of "Cleopatra," Vaucanson obliged the author with a mechanical Aspic, in order that the heroine might be stung with the closest imitation of nature. At the proper moment the insect darted forth from the side-scenes, and settled upon the actress, hissing all the while. A wit, on being asked his opinion of the play, answered pithily, "I agree with the Aspic."

One never contemplates these wonders without regretting that so much mechanical genius should have been mis-expended upon objects by which mankind are no gainers beyond a little fleeting gratification. Vaucanson did not, however, wholly waste himself upon ingenious trifling. He was appointed by Cardinal Fleury, Inspector of Silk Manufactories, into which he introduced, during a visit to Lyons, some labor-saving improvements. In return for this, the workmen stoned him out of the town; but he

conveyed his opinion of their folly by constructing and setting to work a machine which produced a very respectable flower pattern in silk damask by the aid of an Ass. Had his genius confined itself wholly to the useful arts, it is not to be doubted that Vaucanson would have advanced the productive powers of machinery, and, consequently, the prosperity of mankind, at least half a century. In point of abstract ingenuity, his useless contrivances equal, if they do not exceed in inventive power and mechanical skill, the important achievements of Arkwright and Watt. Vaucanson's inventions died with him; those of the great English engineers will live to increase the happiness and comfort of mankind forever.

Single mechanical figures, including the automaton Chess-player (which was scarcely a fair deception, and is too well known to need more than a passing allusion), although surprising for their special performances, were hardly more attractive than the groups of automata which have been from time to time exhibited. One of the Memoirs of the French Academy of Sciences describes, in 1729, a set of mechanical puppets, which were at that time performing a pantomime in five acts. In 1746, Bienfait, the show-man, brought out "The Bombardment of the City of Antwerp," which was performed in the most soldier-like manner, by automata; all the artillery being served and discharged with that regularity which is always attributed to clock-work. A year or two later, the same artist produced "The Grand Assault of Bergem-op-Zoom," with unequivocal success. He called his company *Comédiens praticiens*.

The latest notable effort of mechanical puppet manufacture is exhibited at Boulogne at the present time. It is that of a jeweler, who has devoted eight years of his life to the perfection of a clock-work conjuror; which he has made a thorough master of the thimble-rig. Dressed in an Eastern costume, this necromancer stands behind a table, covered, as the tables of professors of legerdemain usually are, with little boxes and cabinets, from which he takes the objects he employs during the exhibition. He produces his goblets, and shows the balls under them; which vanish and reappear in the most approved style: now two or three are conjured into a spot, a moment before vacant; presently, these disappear again, and are perpetually divided and re-united.

At every exclamation of the spectators, the little conjuror turns his eyes from side to side, as if looking round the house; smiles, casts his eyes modestly down, bows, and resumes his sleight-of-hand. He not only takes up the goblets from a stand, and places them over the balls, but leaves them there for a minute, and holds his hands up, to show the audience that he conceals nothing in his palm or sleeve. He then seizes the goblets again and goes on. This trick over, he puts his cups away, and shuts his cabinet. He then knocks on his table, and up starts an egg, to which he points, to secure attention; he touches the egg (which opens lengthwise) and a little

bird starts into life ; sings a roundelay, claps its enameled wings—which are of real humming-birds' feathers, beyond any metallic art in lustre—and then falls back into its egg. The little conjuror nods, smiles, rolls his eyes right and left, bows as before, and the egg disappears into the table ; he bows again, and then sits down to intimate that the performance is over. The height of this little gentleman is about three inches ; his table and every thing else being in due proportion. He stands on a high square pedestal, apparently of marble. It is, however, of tin, painted white, and within it are all the wheels and works containing the heart of the mystery.

This jeweler sold to a dealer, who re-sold to a Persian Prince, not long since, a Marionnette flute-player ; but whose fingering in the most elaborate pieces, although as accurate as if Drouet or Nicholson had been the performers, had no influence over the tune ; which was played by a concealed musical box. It was therefore, much inferior to those mechanical flautists we have already described. The jeweler has never ceased to regret having sold this toy. He could have borne to have parted with it if it had remained in Europe, but that it should have been conveyed, as he says, "to the other world," has been too cruel a blow. "*Tout le monde*," he exclaims, "*sera enchanté de mon ouvrage ; mais, on ne parlera pas de moi, là-bas*"—all the world will be enchanted with my work, but no one will speak of me yonder—by which distant region, he probably means Ispahan.

He is now perfecting a beautiful bird, which flies from spray to spray, and sings when it alights, somewhat similarly to the little Swiss bird which warbled so sweetly at the Great Exhibition.

MY TRAVELING COMPANION.

MY picture was a failure. Partial friends had guaranteed its success ; but the Hanging Committee and the press are not composed of one's partial friends. The Hanging Committee thrust me into the darkest corner of the octagon-room, and the press ignored my existence—excepting in one instance, when my critic dismissed me in a quarter of a line as a "presumptuous dauber." I was stunned with the blow, for I had counted so securely on the £200 at which my grand historical painting was dog-cheap—not to speak of the deathless fame which it was to create for me—that I felt like a mere wreck when my hopes were flung to the ground, and the untasted cup dashed from my lips. I took to my bed, and was seriously ill. The doctor bled me till I fainted, and then said, that he had saved me from a brain-fever. That might be, but he very nearly threw me into a consumption, only that I had a deep chest and a good digestion. Pneumonic expansion and active chyle saved me from an early tomb, yet I was too unhappy to be grateful.

But why did my picture fail ? Surely it possessed all the elements of success ! It was grandly historical in subject, original in treat-

ment, pure in coloring ; what, then, was wanting ? This old warrior's head, of true Saxon type, had all the majesty of Michael Angelo ; that young figure, all the radiant grace of Correggio ; no Rembrandt showed more severe dignity than yon burnt umber monk in the corner ; and Titian never excelled the loveliness of this cobalt virgin in the foreground. Why did it not succeed ? The subject, too—the "Finding of the Body of Harold by Torch-light"—was sacred to all English hearts ; and being conceived in an entirely new and original manner, it was redeemed from the charge of triteness and wearisomeness. The composition was pyramidal, the apex being a torch borne aloft for the "high light," and the base showing some very novel effects of herbage and armor. But it failed. All my skill, all my hope, my ceaseless endeavor, my burning visions, all—all had failed ; and I was only a poor, half-starved painter, in Great Howland-street, whose landlady was daily abating in her respect, and the butcher daily abating in his punctuality ; whose garments were getting threadbare, and his dinners hypothetical, and whose day-dreams of fame and fortune had faded into the dull-gray of penury and disappointment. I was broken-hearted, ill, hungry ; so I accepted an invitation from a friend, a rich manufacturer in Birmingham, to go down to his house for the Christmas holidays. He had a pleasant place in the midst of some iron-works, the blazing chimneys of which, he assured me, would afford me some exquisite studies of "light" effects.

By mistake, I went by the Express train, and so was thrown into the society of a lady whose position would have rendered any acquaintance with her impossible, excepting under such chance-conditions as the present ; and whose history, as I learned it afterward, led me to reflect much on the difference between the reality and the seeming of life.

She moved my envy. Yes—base, mean, low, unartistic, degrading as is this passion, I felt it rise up like a snake in my breast when I saw that feeble woman. She was splendidly dressed—wrapped in furs of the most costly kind, trailing behind ; her velvets and lace worth a countess's dowry. She was attended by obsequious menials ; surrounded by luxuries ; her compartment of the carriage was a perfect palace in all the accessories which it was possible to collect in so small a space ; and it seemed as though "Cleopatra's cup" would have been no impracticable draught for her. She gave me more fully the impression of luxury, than any person I had ever met with before ; and I thought I had reason when I envied her.

She was lifted into the carriage carefully ; carefully swathed in her splendid furs and lustrous velvets ; and placed gently, like a wounded bird, in her warm nest of down. But she moved languidly, and fretfully thrust aside her servants' busy hands, indifferent to her comforts, and annoyed by her very blessings. I looked into her face : it was a strange face, which had once been beautiful ; but ill-health, and care, and grief, had