

English tongue, which is not too general even in this time; and they express themselves naturally and nobly enough, considering that they are not written but in the familiar way; and some of them, I confess, I think to be as good as ever I

saw." In one of them, written in 1848, Lowell says, "I love above all other reading the early letters of men of genius"; but if he had had his own letters to read, he would have found the late almost as good reading as the early.

ETELKA TALMEYR: A TALE OF THREE CITIES.

BY BRANDER MATTHEWS.

I.—LONDON.

THERE had been a full week of fair weather at the beginning of June, and Piccadilly was swept its whole length by the afternoon tide of cabs and carts and carriages, which swirled about the stolid statue of the Iron Duke and eddied away to Belgravia, to Kensington, and to Mayfair. The sandwich men who wearily followed each other in single file along the gutter, bearing on their breasts and backs boards announcing "*The Messiah*" at the Albert Hall, were often splashed by the brisk hansoms emblazoned with the arms of their noble owners. It was nearly four o'clock, and the flood was still rising.

Among those who were borne along by its current were two New-Yorkers.

"I used to think," said one of them, Mr. Robert White, "that the chief difference between New York and London could be summed up in a sentence: in America we have clear skies and dirty streets, while in England they have dirty skies and clean streets. But such a week as we have had now spoils my epigram, and gives the British both clean streets and clear skies."

"In dry weather all signs fail," gravely quoted his companion, Dr. Cheever.

"Then I had always been told that the English climate had none of the staggering uncertainty Old Probabilities gives to American climate, and that the British Clerk of the Weather could be counted on absolutely, so that you might be sure as to what was going to happen—if it rained, you might declare it was going to clear up in an hour or so; and when it was fair, you knew that it would pour sooner or later. But after the past ten days I begin to believe that the British abuse their own climate just as they do our spelling."

"If you will examine the attire of some of the young ladies who are passing us," said Dr. Cheever, "I think you will see

that the natives have not maligned their weather. They have been taught by experience to go prepared for any fate."

White laughed gently. "I have noticed," he rejoined, "that the regular June costume of a London girl is a white muslin dress with a pink sash and a fur cape, and then, when she puts on her galoches and takes her umbrella, rain or shine makes no difference to her."

The doctor smiled, but did not respond further.

"I suppose we shall see lots of girls at this concert," White went on. "Is it going to be a very swagger function, as they say over here?"

"Probably," Dr. Cheever answered. "Lady Stanyhurst is very popular with young people, I'm told. But this is really a children's concert we are going to now. Her son is a violinist; he's only fifteen, but he takes lessons of Sarasate. And I heard the Dowager Duchess of Dover say that 'really, you know, his playing isn't half bad,' and that is their highest formula of praise."

By this time the two friends had arrived before a spacious house facing the pleasant freshness of the Green Park. From the door of this mansion a carpet had been rolled across the sidewalk; and every minute or two carriages drew up, and their occupants—mostly ladies, and many of them elderly and elaborately upholstered—passed along the carpet into the house.

"Here we are," said Dr. Cheever.

"She has a sizable house, this Lady Stanyhurst of yours," White responded, as they made ready to enter.

They were late, since the concert had been announced for three o'clock; and as they passed up the crowded stairs they heard the metallic notes of two pianos, vigorously pounded by a pair of tall, thin girls, twin daughters of Sir Kensington Gower, K.C.B.

The duet ceased as the two Americans

managed to reach the hostess, standing just within the doorway of the drawing-room.

"So glad you were able to come," said Lady Stanyhurst to Dr. Cheever. She was a pleasant-faced, plump little body. "And this is your friend? So sorry you did not hear that charming duet! Those girls of Sir Kensington's are astonishing—really astonishing."

White was about to murmur inarticulate regrets for his tardiness when the hostess turned from him to greet a later arrival. He heard Lady Stanyhurst say, "So glad you were able to come," to a portly clergyman; and then the pressure of the crowd carried him and Dr. Cheever toward the end of the room, and they found freedom only when they were in the embrasure of an open window, whence they could look across the park and see the clock tower of Westminster through the summer haze. From this coign of vantage they could survey—if they turned their backs on the view outdoors—the large rectangular drawing-room, with the other rooms opening beyond.

They had scarcely taken up their position when a violin stand was placed in the centre of a little open space near the two pianos in the adjoining room, and a smug-faced boy of fifteen came forward with a violin in his hand. He wore an Eton jacket, and he seemed very uncomfortable and awkward. There was a lull in the chatter which filled the house, for this was the son of the hostess; and the lad began the "Sarabande" of Corelli. He did not play badly for a boy, but the musicians present must have wondered at the maternal pride which could force the lad to such a discovery of his inexperience.

When the perfunctory applause had died away, after the encore which the poor boy had prepared for, White said to Dr. Cheever, "And who is here?"

"All sorts of people," responded his friend. "There's the Prime Minister in that corner talking to the Dowager Duchess of Dover. There's the editor of the *Epoch*, with his wife and five daughters, just coming in. There is Dr. Pennington, the rector of St. Boniface's, of Philadelphia—"

"Are there Americans here besides us?" asked White.

"Lots of them," the doctor replied; "and

all sorts too. The rector of St. Boniface's there is alongside Dexter, the Chicago wheat-operator."

"How did he get here?" White wanted to know.

"Oh, there are worse here than Cable J. Dexter," Cheever returned. "When an American adventurer comes to London with lots of money, it's always a question whether he will be taken up by the police or by Society."

While the two Americans were thus generalizing hastily about London society, the violin stand had been removed by a footman in white livery, who now returned and raised the top of one of the grand pianos. Among the little group of intimates of the house who were gathered close to the instrument there was to be noticed a movement as of expectancy. In a minute a young girl came forward and took her seat at the piano.

For a moment she sat silent and motionless, and then, without any suggestion of hesitancy or timidity, she raised her hands and began to play.

As the first bars of Chopin's B Minor Scherzo fell upon his ears, Dr. Cheever checked his friend's gossip with a gesture, and said, "Why, they've got a musician!"

He and White turned to see the player. They saw a slip of a girl of perhaps fifteen or sixteen, her thin face crowned by a thick mass of black hair, and lighted by a pair of flaming eyes. As she played on, a spot of color began to glow on her tawny cheeks.

"That bag of bones has the sacred fire, hasn't she?" cried White. "See how her long face is almost transfigured by the music!"

"I wonder who she is?" Dr. Cheever said.

"She's not English, for one thing," returned White. "Neither that swarthy skin of hers nor that musical temperament is native to the British Isles."

"Not English, of a certainty," the doctor declared; "gypsy, possibly, or Jewish—they are both musical peoples. But she may be a Slav or a Czech; you can't tell. The face is expressive, but it keeps its secrets, for all that."

"It's the face of a born musician—that's obvious enough," said White, as the power of the performance seized them both. "I wish she hadn't that trick of twitching her eyebrows."

"She has very obvious gifts," the doc-



"FOR A MOMENT SHE SAT SILENT."

tor added; "and she has trained herself rigorously. There is will in that jaw of hers—the determination to succeed."

"What will she be in the future?" White queried. "A great artist? A great lady? A great beauty even? Or will she degenerate, and not develop at all?"

"She may be a beauty if she chooses," his friend answered. "She has the raw material of beauty in those strange features of hers. And she is clever enough to be a beauty if she thinks it worth while. It's the exceeding cleverness in the face that impresses one most. Yes, she is devilishly clever, that girl; quite clever enough to be a great artist, a great lady, and a great beauty—all three—if the chance come. And in the mean while she is interesting to listen to and interesting to look at."

"I wonder," said White, gazing at the girl intently, "where she came from almost as much as I wonder where she will go. What is the heredity that breeds faces and figures like hers? And what environment will best develop an ardent soul like that? Will the future take her up or carry her down?"

"Who can tell now?" the doctor responded. "Look at her mouth—that is sensual; and there is cunning in those thin lips. With that mouth I should say a girl might go to the devil—or might hold a candle to him, if she thought the game worth it."

"That is to say," White returned, "with a face such as hers anything is possible in the future. In the mean time, I'd like to know to whom the face belongs now. It will have to be an outlandish name to fit that exotic personality."

When the music ceased and the girl rose from the piano, Dr. Cheever saw standing near to him a spare and angular old lady with a queer little cap askew on her head under a queer little bonnet.

"Here is the Dowager Duchess of Dover," he whispered to White. "I'll ask her. She knows everything and everybody, and everything about everybody."

Stepping forward, he said, "Good-afternoon, Duchess."

The elderly lady looked up and recognized the American, and acknowledged his presence by protruding two bony fingers of her right hand, saying, "It's Dr. Cheever, isn't it?"

"At your service," he replied, "and

he wants to ask a favor of you—or at least some information. Who is that girl who has been playing?"

"Plays very well, doesn't she?" returned the Duchess. "You could tell at once that she wasn't a lady by her touch—quite professional. And they tell me she has a voice, too—something quite wonderful."

"Who is she?" the doctor repeated.

"She's a foreigner, of course—a Pole, or a Hungarian, or something of that kind, you know," the Duchess answered. "Her name's Etelka Talmeyr—odd name, isn't it? But then foreigners are so peculiar. She's the daughter of a music-teacher at Madame Mohr's, a doubtful sort of character, who ran away and abandoned the child. I believe that she's dead now, and Madame Mohr has kept the girl out of charity. So kind of her, wasn't it? But then she is charity itself. Of course Talmeyr teaches the little girls and makes herself useful about the school. She couldn't do less, could she?"

Having thus satisfied Dr. Cheever's curiosity, the Dowager Duchess of Dover dropped him an acidulated smile and passed on.

"Kindly old aristocrat, that Duchess of yours," said White, as Dr. Cheever returned to his side. "Every woman her own freezer. Duchess of Wenham Lake, I'd call her."

"I wouldn't call her if I were you," the doctor rejoined, "for she wouldn't come. And you need not abuse her either, for she told us what we want to know about the thin girl with the fiery eyes."

"Etelka Talmeyr is just the name for her—isn't it?" asked White. "Etelka is Hungarian, isn't it?"

"And Talmeyr is German, I suppose," said Dr. Cheever.

"Well," White added, after a moment's pause, "we know who she is and what her name is. But we don't know what she will be in five years."

"What she will be in five years," the doctor responded, "nobody knows, least of all the girl herself. And yet a face like that has force behind it, and I should not wonder if the woman of five years from now made some of the dreams of the girl of to-day come true."

By this time a duet had begun between a plump girl of thirteen playing the 'cello and her brother, a lad of fourteen,



"EATING A LONELY DINNER."

seated at the piano. The rooms were getting more and more crowded as betarded guests continued to arrive.

Dr. Cheever found an acquaintance who had in his hand one of the satin programmes which set forth the order of exercises, and borrowing this for a second, he saw that Miss Etelka Talmeyr was not to perform again. He told his friend.

"Shall we go, then?" asked White. "I believe that a little turn in Bond Street before dinner might drive my wife's headache away."

So the two New-Yorkers shook hands with the hostess, and passed down the thronged stairs and out into the sunshine of Piccadilly.

II.—NEW YORK.

One evening in February, more than six years later, Mr. Robert White sat in a corner of the huge dining-room of the College Club in New York, eating a lonely dinner. His wife had gone down to Florida with her father to avoid the thawing and the freezing which are commonly characteristic of a New York February; she had been away two weeks, and White was beginning to feel abandoned. It was Washington's birthday, and a holiday often operates to make a solitary man desperately lonely. The desolation of the occasion was further intensified by the weather. For two days there had been a steady drizzle of fine rain, enough to moisten and embrown the heaps of snow in the streets, but not vigorous enough to wash these away. Now a damp mist was rising from the sidewalks, and a flicker of rain trickled through it at intervals. The dampness made it unwise to open the windows of the dining-room, and the atmosphere was close and discomforting.

Holiday as it was, White had gone duly to the office of the *Gotham Gazette*, and he had written his usual editorial article, putting into it perhaps an undue causticity, due only to his dissatisfied loneliness; it was an essay on the gratitude of our republic, as proved by its keeping the birthday of its founder, now nearly a hundred years after his death. An essay on this theme does not lend itself necessarily to sarcasm and irony.

His day's work done, on a day when other men were doing nothing, White

had come to the College Club, in the hope of a stimulating game of piquet and a dinner with some congenial friend. But the club had been almost deserted, and among the few men there he had seen none of his intimates. He was too kindly to abuse the waiter for the fault he found with the dinner, but he called for the complaint-book, and wrote a sharp protest against the acridity of his coffee. Having thus relieved his feelings somewhat, he walked down to the billiard-room.

As he entered the room he was met by a cry of welcome.

"Hello, White! I say, boys, let's make White go with us too! 'When the wife is away, the husband can play,'—there's a motto for you!"

The speaker was a clean-shaven, clean-looking young fellow, Kissam Ketteltas by name; and he was just back from three years of hard labor at a German university. As he spoke he was coming toward the door with half a dozen other young fellows.

"Mr. White has the best of it," said one of them; "this is the kind of day when I wish I was married. If I had a wife, now, I could pass the time quarrelling with her."

"To be bored is the proper punishment of idleness," returned Ketteltas; "and you haven't done any work since you graduated. Besides, matrimony is a poor remedy for monotony. 'Anything for a quiet wife,'—that's another motto for you!"

"White is a grass-widower now, anyway," said one of the group, an undersized little man with a thin wisp of sandy mustache, "and he had best make hay while the sun shines. So he hasn't any excuse for not coming with us."

This last speaker was little Mat Hitchcock, whom White disliked. He lighted his cigar before responding.

"If you will kindly intermit this coruscation of epigram," he said, "and tell me where it is you want me to go with you, I shall be in a condition to give you an earlier answer."

"We are going to the Alcazar," Ketteltas replied.

"The Alcazar?" White repeated, doubtfully.

"If you had read your own paper last Tuesday," returned the other, "you would have seen that the Alcazar is a

new music hall—something like the London Alhambra, you know; and the Great Albertus is to make his first appearance to-night—in honor of Washington's birthday, I suppose, and to commemorate the ancient alliance of France and America."

"Are you all going?" asked White, looking over the group, and remarking in it none of his own intimates, and even one man he disliked.

"We've got a big box, and we are all going," Ketteltas responded; "and we want you to come with us to matronize us. We will blow you off. So 'don't look a gift cigar in the mouth,'—there's another motto for you!"

"I don't know about going—" White began, hesitatingly.

"I do," the other interrupted. "And I know you are going. We need you to expound the ulterior significance of some of the more abstruse of the Frenchman's songs. Besides, little Mat Hitchcock here is so near-sighted that he can't see a joke unless he has his eye-glasses on, and he has broken them, and we shall rely on you to explain all the doubtful allusions to him."

So saying, Kissam Ketteltas seized Robert White's arm and led him away, only half resisting.

"I suppose this thing we are to see is what is called a variety show?" White asked, as the party plunged into the muggy murkiness of the night.

"It is *called* a variety show, I admit," Ketteltas answered, "just as a lawyer's document is called a brief—and with about as much reason. But then, if it is always the same, it is always amusing, for it makes absolutely no demand on the intelligence."

A sudden flurry of rain forced them all to button their collars tightly and made conversation difficult. A dank steam rose from the roadway, and the electric lights gleamed dully through the mist and the drizzle.

"This is a soggy night, if you like one," said Ketteltas, as they came to the vulgarly decorated entrance of the Alcazar.

"But I don't like one," White responded, following his guide down a long dark corridor. "And I don't like to think myself a fool, either—although I feel like one for coming to this hole."

"Here's our box," the other said, as the attendant opened a door. "You won't

regret coming; this place has a color of its own quite worth while seeing. I've been to variety shows in all parts of the world, and they are all alike—and all unlike too. They are great places for studying human nature. There's a lot of character about a music hall—although some of the frequenters have lost theirs."

The box they emerged into was one of a series into which the narrow galleries running along the walls were divided by low board partitions. It was the one nearest to the stage, and it was perhaps the largest, for it contained eight chairs, in two rows, with a long table between them. The hall was also long and narrow. The floor was covered with more little tables, surrounded by chairs. There was a small stage at the end, with a violently painted set of scenery, supposed to represent an Oriental garden. The decoration of the hall was equally mean and vulgar. The strongest impression the place produced was one of tawdry squalor. Men with their hats on sat at the little tables, drinking and smoking, countrymen and boys mostly. Women with obviously artificial complexions were drinking with the men, or moving restlessly up and down the side aisles. The atmosphere was heavy with stale smoke. Robert White wondered why he had come.

When White, Ketteltas, Hitchcock, and the others entered, half a dozen musicians were blaring forth the refrain of a comic song, and the scant stage was filled by the exuberant presence of Miss Queenie Dougherty, the Irish Empress—such the programme declared her to be. It was nearly nine o'clock, and the performance had begun an hour before. Miss Queenie Dougherty was even then singing for the fourth time, in response to three successive recalls. The song she was then engaged on White recognized from having heard it whistled in the streets. It described the prowess of a Hibernian gentleman of pugnacious proclivities, who was besought in the chorus to demolish his antagonist:

"Hit him one or two!
Hould him till you do!
Bate him black an' blue!
For the honor of ould Ireland!"

When the Irish Empress had sung this song to the bitter end, and had at last been allowed to withdraw, a screen painted crudely to imitate a glaring Japanese fan closed in and hid the stage.

"What's next?" asked little Mat Hitchcock.

"I've a programme," Ketteltas answered. "Next we are to behold The Staggs, the Royal Star Acrobats. That will give me time for my celebrated imitation of a man taking a drink. What will you have, boys?"

Before the attendant had taken their orders the screen on the stage was withdrawn, and The Staggs came forward in single file. There were five of them, the foremost a thick-set, middle-aged man, and the last a slight lad. They were all in evening dress, with black knee-breeches and black silk stockings and white ties and crush-hats. They bowed to the audience, removed their hats, and built themselves suddenly into a human pyramid, with the oldest man as the base. Then they removed their dress-coats, and in their shirt sleeves they proceeded to perform the customary feats of ground and lofty tumbling, with a certainty and a neatness which delighted White's heart. At length they withdrew, and the screen again shut off the stage.

"What's next?" asked little Mat Hitchcock again, with the impatience which was one of his most irritating characteristics.

Ketteltas referred to his programme. "'La Bella Etelka and Signor Navarino in their great musical and terpsichorean fantasy,'" he read. "I remember La Bella Etelka," he said. "I saw her in Buda-Pesth two years ago; but she hadn't any Signor Navarino with her then. She was a good looker, rather, but when she danced she tousled herself all up till she was as fearful as a Comanche banshee."

When the screen parted again, it was seen that a piano had been placed on the stage. Then an ignoble little man, in a caricature of a dress suit, led on a tall, dark woman of striking appearance. He escorted her to the piano, at which she took her seat; he prepared her music for her with exaggerated courtesy, and when she began to play, he danced a few eccentric steps behind her back.

As La Bella Etelka took her seat at the piano she faced Robert White, and was scarcely fifteen feet from him. He looked at her without interest, and then suddenly he began to ask himself where he had seen that face before. By the time she had played a dozen bars of Chopin's Waltz in A Minor he had recog-

nized her by the peculiar twitch of the eyebrows. The movement of the wrist was the same also, the carriage of the head, the eyes, even the face—everything but the expression. He did not hesitate more than a minute, and after that he had no longer a doubt that he had seen La Bella Etelka once before—six years before, in London, at Lady Stanyhurst's children's concert, one afternoon in June. La Bella Etelka was Etelka Talmeyr; of that there could be no question, although she had altered strangely for the worse. The foreign look, Slav or Czech, Jewish or gypsy, was unmistakable still; and there was no difficulty in recognizing the high cheek-bones, the fiery eyes, the thick black hair. But what a pitiful metamorphosis it was that the bright, youthful girl of six years ago should be changed already into this full-blown, vulgar-looking woman! The expression had been energetic and self-reliant; it was now crafty, common; and the hint of sensuality in the girl's face was obvious animality in the woman's. All the features had hardened; all the promise had gone out of them, all the gentleness, and all the hope.

While Robert White was thus moralizing, La Bella Etelka and Signor Navarino were earning their salary. She had played the dreamy and poetic measures of Chopin with a mastery of the instrument and an appreciation of the music almost out of place in that tobacco-smoked hall. Then, without warning, she changed the time to that of the ordinary waltz, instantly vulgarizing the music and accentuating the rhythm as her associate danced more and more grotesquely. After a while he skipped over to her, and still keeping time with his feet, he began playing also. Almost as soon as he took his position at the piano she left the instrument, dancing away with easy grace, and managing her long black train with consummate skill. She waltzed about the small stage decorously enough at first, and then, without warning, still keeping perfect time, she flashed out her foot and kicked her partner's hat off his head. Playing with one hand only, he turned sideways and protested in vigorous pantomime. She danced away from him, sweeping her long skirts; and then she danced back, kicking high over his head as he sat at the piano. The band then took up the tune softly, and Signor

Navarino left the piano and skipped toward La Bella Etelka, who tripped lightly up the stage and took his hand, whereupon they came down to the foot-lights together, each in turn swinging a foot over the other's head, to the roaring applause of the spectators.

It was with growing repugnance that Robert White watched this vulgar exhibition, but he could not take his eyes from the woman's face. As he looked at the low couple pirouetting about the tawdry stage, he recalled every word of his conversation with Dr. Cheever at Lady Stanyhurst's that afternoon in June, six years before. He remembered their speculation as to the future of Etelka Talmeyr—whether she would degenerate or develop. She had degenerated—there was no doubt of that. Despite the diabolical cleverness Dr. Cheever saw in her face, and the abundant strength of will he declared her to have, the girl had not become a great artist, a great beauty, a great lady. She had become what White saw before him—a sorry spectacle. If six years had wrought all this change, what adventures, what experiences, what harsh disappointments, and what bitter griefs must have been crowded into them to have made possible this obvious moral disintegration! The woman looked twice six years older than the girl he had seen six years before—but then the face was rouged and plastered and blackened out of likeness to itself. Besides, as the French say, years of campaign count double; and he almost shuddered to think what hideous campaigns hers must have been to account for so saddening a transformation.

Another roar of applause awakened White to the fact that La Bella Etelka and Signor Navarino had made their final bow, and were retiring hand in hand.

"They'll get their encore," said Kissam Ketteltas; "she needn't beg for it with those electric-light eyes of hers. She's got more spice in her now than she had in Buda-Pesth two years ago."

As La Bella Etelka and Signor Navarino reappeared, Robert White was so saddened by the painful comparison he could not help making between the Etelka Talmeyr of London and La Bella Etelka of New York that he felt a sense of shame in being any longer a witness of the woman's degradation.

He rose, and after a few hasty words of

apology to Ketteltas he left the music hall and went home.

"White's not going to be here to explain the Gallic jests of the Great Albertus to you, Mat," said Ketteltas; "but I'll do my best to replace him."

"Bob White's getting very high-toned lately," little Mat Hitchcock responded; "he thinks a good deal too much of himself."

"There are lots of us who do that," Ketteltas returned; "'it's a poor mule that won't work both ways,'—if you want another motto."

III.—PARIS.

About that time Robert White's father-in-law, Sam Sargent, the chief owner of the Transcontinental Telegraph Company and a striking figure in Wall Street, was planning a sale of certain of his stocks to an English syndicate; and when, some three months later, Sir William Waring, the head of the great London banking-house of Waring, Waring, and Company, arrived in New York on a brief tour of inspection and inquiry, Mr. Sargent seized the opportunity and gave the visiting financier a dinner at Claremont. It was a most elaborate entertainment, and the British guest was equally impressed by the beauty of the Riverside Drive, then in the first freshness of its spring greenery high above the noble Hudson, which swelled along grandly below, and by the accumulated wealth of the assembled company. One of the newspapers, in its paragraph on the banquet, the Sunday after, declared that the twenty guests represented more than One Hundred Millions of Dollars.

If this surmise was accurate, then the wealth was not distributed equally among the guests, for there were at least two poor men at the table. Robert White was generally invited to his father-in-law's formal dinners, and on the present occasion he found himself by the side of his old friend Dr. Cheever.

"Is there any germ theory of wealth?" he asked the doctor as they took their seats. "Can you isolate the bacteria and breed riches at will?"

Dr. Cheever laughed lightly, and returned, "If wealth were contagious, would you expose yourself to the danger of catching it, or would you come to me to be inoculated against the infection?"

"I wonder," the journalist answered—

"I wonder whether I should really like to be enormously rich. I doubt if I should care to give up my mind, such as it is, wholly to the guarding of wealth. That must be the most monstrous and enervating of pursuits. Of course it has its compensations. If I were as rich as the rest of our fellow-diners, I'd have my private physician—at least I'd offer the appointment to my friend Dr. Cheever."

"I'm afraid one master would be more exacting than many," the doctor responded. "There is safety in numbers. I took a rich patient over to the south of France last February, and the experience was not so pleasant that I care to repeat it. By-the-way, while I was in Paris I wished you were with me once—"

"Only once?" White interrupted. "Then I'm sure I shall not confer on you my appointment of physician in attendance."

"Once in particular I wished for you," Dr. Cheever replied. "It was because I could have shown you the answer to a question that we had puzzled over together. Do you remember my taking you to a children's concert at the Stanyhursts' one afternoon in June, six or seven years ago?"

"Of course I recall that concert," White answered, "and I've got something to tell you about that queer little girl we saw that afternoon—Etelka Talmeyr."

The doctor finished his soup, and said: "It was about that same queer little girl that I was going to tell you something. I have seen her again."

"So have I," interposed White.

"Have you?" Dr. Cheever asked, in surprise. "I didn't know you had been to Europe since that summer."

"I haven't," White returned. "I saw the Etelka here."

"Here?" echoed the doctor. "I didn't know she had ever been to this country."

"She is here now," White said.

"Impossible!" cried Dr. Cheever. "If the Prince were in America, I should have heard of his arrival."

"The Prince?" repeated White, amazed.

"Yes," the doctor explained. "She is now a Princess, the little Etelka Talmeyr we saw in London years ago."

"A Princess, is she?" White returned. "Then the Prince must be a queer specimen."

"Prince Castellamare is one of the most

charming men in Italy," the doctor explained, "and one of the most dignified."

"Then I should think his dignity would be shocked at the way his wife exhibits herself here," White replied.

"But she can't be in this country," Dr. Cheever declared. "She was in Paris when I left there, the last week in February."

"But I saw her here in New York the last week in February," asserted the journalist.

"You saw the Princess Castellamare here last February?" the physician asked.

"I don't know any Princess Castellamare," White responded. "I know only that I saw Etelka Talmeyr here in New York in February last. Oh, I can recall the very date; it was on Washington's birthday."

Dr. Cheever laid down his fork, and looked at his friend in astonishment. "Why, it was on Washington's birthday that I saw her in Paris," he said. "I can fix the date easily, because it was at a reception at the American minister's that I saw her—a reception given in honor of the national holiday. How could the Princess Castellamare be in two places at once?"

"Barring she was a bird," quoted the journalist, "and she is almost light enough on her feet to be one. But, joking apart, you begin to puzzle me. I don't know anything about any Princess Castellamare, but I do know that I saw La Bella Etelka here in New York on the evening of February 22d, and I am sure that La Bella Etelka and the Etelka Talmeyr we saw in London that June afternoon are one and the same person."

"This is really very extraordinary," said the physician. "For my part, I know nothing of any Bella Etelka, whoever she may be, but I know for a fact that on the evening of February 22d I went to a reception at the American minister's in Paris, and there I saw the Princess Castellamare, and I heard her sing; and, beyond all question, she is the Etelka Talmeyr we heard play that afternoon in London."

"See here, doctor," White remarked, earnestly, "the Etelka Talmeyr we saw in London can't have been twins, can she? She can't have doubled up and developed into a Princess in Paris and into a variety-show performer here in New

York. It is too early along in the dinner for us to see double in that fashion; so we had best tell each his own story in his own fashion, and then we can compare them, and so discover which of us has been befooled. You can begin."

"My story is simplicity itself," the doctor said. "On the evening of Washington's birthday I went to a reception at the American minister's in Paris. There was music, of course; we had a contralto from the Opéra, a tenor from the Opéra Comique, and two or three of the best amateurs of the American colony. Just before the supper was served I was at the door of the music-room, when I heard the first notes of Schumann's 'Warum' sung by a mezzo-soprano, a voice of wonderful richness and softness and flexibility, trained to perfection. Besides her method, the vocalist had a full understanding of the dramatic character of the music. I pressed forward, and I saw before me, standing beside the piano, a very handsome young woman, tall, stately, with raven hair, with a splendid throat, with flaming black eyes, and with the same curious trick of twitching her eyebrows we had remarked when we heard that little bag of bones play in London. The likeness was obvious—indeed, it was unmistakable. The face had softened; the lines had filled out; the contour was flowing now, and not sharp; the complexion was more delicate, but there was the same spot of color in the cheeks, and there was the same resolute glance from the eyes. Where there had been determination to succeed, I could now see the determination which had succeeded. I asked who she was, and I was told that she was the Princess Castellamare. The Prince's first wife was an American; she died four or five years ago, and he was inconsolable till he met his present wife. They were married last summer. She had been a Mademoiselle Talmeyr, and she had made her first appearance at La Scala in Milan the year before. I remembered that the Duchess of Dover had told us that Etelka Talmeyr had a voice. What more natural than that she should tire of teaching and go on the stage? As I looked at her across the room I recalled our talk about her, and I saw that she had developed into a great beauty, a great artist, and a great lady. I gazed across the room, and although her face was rounded now, I could still detect the firmness of the jaw

which had made such a development possible."

"Is that all?" asked White, as his friend paused.

"That is all," the doctor answered. "I have told you how I came to identify the Princess Castellamare with the little Etelka Talmeyr of years ago. I confess I am curious to hear your story, and to discover how you can possibly think that you have seen her in this country when I left her in Europe."

"My story is quite as short as yours, and quite as plain, and quite as convincing," White declared; and then he told the doctor how he had been alone on the evening of Washington's birthday, how he had dined at the College Club, how Kissam Ketteltas had taken him to the Alcazar, how he had seen La Bella Etelka and Signor Navarino in their great musical and terpsichorean fantasy, how he had recognized La Bella Etelka as the Etelka Talmeyr he and the doctor had seen in London years before, how he also had noticed the characteristic twitch of the eyebrows, how he had been saddened that the girl had not developed, but had degraded and vulgarized. "But," he concluded, "that La Bella Etelka whom I saw at the Alcazar on the evening of February 22d is Etelka Talmeyr I am absolutely certain."

"And I am equally certain," the doctor declared, "that the Princess Castellamare whom I saw at the American minister's in Paris on the evening of February 22d is Etelka Talmeyr."

"Well," said Robert White, as he began on his Roman punch, "we cannot both of us be right."

"Either you are wrong," the doctor asserted, "or—"

"Or you are," White interrupted. "On the 22d of February Etelka Talmeyr was either in New York or in Paris; she could not have been in both places. I say she was in New York, and you say she was in Paris. There is no possibility of reconciling our respective statements, is there?"

"None whatever," Dr. Cheever answered. "But I will allow you to withdraw yours if you like."

"I'll do better," returned the journalist. "I will prove it; at least I will prove that I am right in thinking that Etelka Talmeyr and La Bella Etelka are one and the same person."



"THE WRETCHED LITTLE PARODY OF A MAN LED ON HIS TALL, DARK PARTNER."

"I'd like to see you do that!" said the physician, sarcastically.

"You mean that you wouldn't like to see me do it," White retorted. "But see it you shall, and with your own eyes. According to your own story, your Princess Castellamare is now in Europe somewhere."

"She was in Paris when I left there," said the doctor, "but she has very likely gone back to Rome now with her husband."

"Exactly so," White went on. "Your Princess Castellamare is at least three thousand miles off, and you can't show her to me. But La Bella Etelka is still here in New York at the Alcazar, and I can show her to you. And I propose to do it, too. You shall be convinced by your own eyes. Dine with me to-morrow, and we will go to the Alcazar together, and you shall see for yourself."

"I will dine with you with pleasure," the doctor replied. "And I will see for myself."

"For the present," White declared, "let us have peace. Let us possess our souls in patience. Let us do justice to my father-in-law's hospitality. It is now the middle of May, and the game-laws are in force, so I draw your attention to the Alaskan ptarmigan which is now about to be served."

"I didn't know there were any ptarmigan in Alaska," said the doctor, innocently.

"There isn't," White responded, as he helped himself to the prairie-chicken.

IV.—NEW YORK.

The next evening Dr. Cheever and Mr. White sat side by side in the Alcazar, the tawdry gilding of which was already beginning to be tarnished by tobacco smoke. They arrived in time to see Miss Queenie Dougherty, the Irish Empress, respond to her third encore, and to hear her sing about "The Belle of the old Eighth Ward," the chorus of which declared that

"When Thady O'Grady
Came courtin' Nell Brady
There wasn't a lady

As pretty, as witty, in the whole of the city."

They had the pleasure of seeing the Human Sea-serpent give his marvellous exhibition of contortionism in a Crystal Casket of real water. Then Prince Sio-

nara, the Royal and Unrivalled Japanese Juggler, made butterflies out of bits of paper, and forced them to flutter hither and thither about the stage, after which he spun a top in the air and caught it on the edge of a sword, and did other strange feats, as is the custom of Japanese princes in variety shows, concluding with his Celebrated Cyclone Slide on the Silver Wire from the upper gallery backward to the stage.

"Now," said White, as the Japanese bowed himself off the stage—"now we are to have Etelka Talmeyr," and he handed his programme to Dr. Cheever, pointing to the lines announcing La Bella Etelka and Signor Navarino in their great musical and terpsichorean fantasy.

The screen which served as a drop-curtain parted in the middle, and disclosed the piano on one side of the stage; and then the wretched little parody of a man led on his tall, dark, striking partner, and escorted her to the instrument.

"Don't you see the likeness?" cried White. "It is unmistakable."

"Of course I see it," the doctor answered. "But it is a likeness only, a likeness such as one may see any day."

As La Bella Etelka seated herself at the piano and struck the opening notes of Chopin's Waltz in A Minor she looked out across the foot-lights at the audience, and her eyebrows twitched automatically, as they had done when White had watched her before.

"Did you see that twitch of the eyebrows?" he asked, triumphantly. "Did you ever see any one who had that trick and who looked like that except the Etelka Talmeyr we saw in London years ago?"

"Yes," the doctor answered; "I have seen the Princess Castellamare; she looks like this poor creature here, and she has that same twitch. And, as I told you last night, I am sure that she is the Etelka Talmeyr we saw in London."

"You are unconvinced still?" White asked.

"Quite unconvinced," Dr. Cheever responded. "The Princess Castellamare was a Mademoiselle Talmeyr, and she is now about the age the Etelka Talmeyr we saw ought to be by this time. This Bella Etelka of yours is five or ten years too old."

"She looks older than Etelka Talmeyr

might look, I'll admit," the journalist returned; "but she has had a hard life, obviously, and she shows it. A woman doesn't keep her youth in an atmosphere like this."

"That is true enough," the doctor acknowledged.

"Let's put two and two together," White went on. "It is seven years since we were in London, and Etelka Talmeyr was then fifteen or sixteen, so she may be twenty-three now. La Bella Etelka here looks twenty-six, or thereabouts; but will you declare that she is really more than twenty-three?"

The doctor gazed intently at La Bella Etelka as she and the little Italian gyrated about the stage.

"No," he said at last. "This woman may be any age you please, and she is astoundingly like the girl we saw in London. I see the resemblance more and more the longer I look at her. She has the sensual mouth I noticed then, and the cunning lips too. In fact, I see in this woman here the development of all the less pleasing characteristics of the Etelka Talmeyr we speculated about seven years ago, just as I saw in the Princess Castellamare the development of all her pleasanter qualities. In the little girl in London there were the possibilities of a beauty, an artist, a lady, and the Princess Castellamare is all three. But there was in her also the possibility of a degradation such as we see on the stage now."

"In other words," commented White, "you think that the little Etelka Talmeyr is a female Jekyll and Hyde, with the added faculty of sending the bad Hyde on this side of the Atlantic, while the good Jekyll on the other marries a fairy prince? That's a picturesque explanation of our dilemma, of course, but isn't it a little lacking in scientific probability?"

Dr. Cheever did not answer for a minute. His eyes were following the tall figure in the long silk dress as it floated languidly across the stage in time to the music of the waltz. He extracted a coin from his pocket, dropped it in a slot on the back of the chair next to him, and released an opera-glass; with this he took another long look at the dancer.

Then handing the glass to White, he said: "This woman is much older than she looks. There are signs which are unmistakable. Look at the wrinkles

around her eyes and below her chin. She is at least ten years older than the Etelka Talmeyr we saw in London."

White took the glass and gazed in his turn. "You are right," he admitted, frankly, "she does look older; but, for all that, I think—" Here he broke off suddenly and called to a man who was about to take a seat near them. "Brackett!"

"Hello, White," responded the gentleman thus hailed, turning suddenly and dropping into the nearest chair. "I didn't know you took in this sort of thing often."

"I don't," White answered. "I come as little as possible; and to-night we are here for a purpose, Dr. Cheever and I. Dr. Cheever, Mr. Harry Brackett."

The two men bowed. Harry Brackett offered the doctor his box of cigarettes.

"I am here regularly. They'll let you smoke here, and then you see all sorts of things."

"I called Brackett over," said White to the doctor, but so that the new-comer could hear him, "because I believe he can help us out. He has been a reporter, and he has managed a panorama, and last winter he wrote an alleged farce-comedy for Daisy Fostelle, and he probably knows more people and more different kinds of people than any other man in New York."

"That's true," assented Harry Brackett. "You never can tell when knowing a man will come in handy."

"Do you happen to know the manager of this place, or the stage-manager?" asked White.

"I know them both," was the response. "I know the manager best, but Zeke Kilburn has a swelled head since he got this show. He owns the earth, and has a first mortgage on the rest of the solar system. But I guess I can work him. What do you want?"

"We want to find out about La Bella Etelka here, and whether she used to be called Etelka Talmeyr, and whether she is any relation to the Princess Castellamare."

"I guess she's no relation to any princess, or we should have seen it in the paragraphs before this," said the ex-manager of the panorama. "I don't know anything about her, but I believe that she is married to that little chap who does a dancing act with her. She is very jealous of him, too; flared up like a volcano the

other night because he complimented Queenie Dougherty on her new song. There came near being a hair-pulling scrap; but Zeke Kilburn happened along just then, and he separated them. Tell me just what it is that you want to know, and I'll see what I can do for you."

Thereupon White set forth with perfect fairness the point at issue between the doctor and himself, and explained why it was they were interested in knowing whether the Etelka Talmeyr of London was the Mademoiselle Talmeyr of Milan, now the Princess Castellamare of Rome, or whether she was La Bella Etelka of New York.

"I think I see what you want," Harry Brackett declared as he rose to his feet. "And I guess I can get it for you. Keep my seat for me, and I'll come back as soon as I can."

Lighting another cigarette, and throwing the empty box under the chair, Mr. Harry Brackett left them, and walked away to the manager's office.

On the stage La Bella Etelka and Signor Navarino were concluding their musical and terpsichorean fantasy; side by side they advanced from the scenery at the back to the trembling foot-lights, each in turn lifting a foot over the other's head as they danced down, to the wild applause of the spectators.

White and Cheever waited patiently as the successive numbers of the variety entertainment followed one another. The Senyah Sisters, two pretty girls, with lithe and graceful figures, climbed to a double trapeze in the arch of the proscenium, and went through the usual intricate performance commingled of skill and danger. Then Mr. Mike McCarthy gave his World-Renowned Impersonation of the Old-Time Darky, in the course of which he sang an interminable topical song, accompanying himself on the banjo. Finally came the last number on the programme, a so-called burlesque extravaganza, compounded of noisy songs and halting verses. Bored as they were and weary, White and Cheever felt sorry for the poor actors, straining themselves vainly to give a double meaning to words devoid of any.

At last, when the tether of their patience was stretched almost to the breaking-point, Harry Brackett reappeared, and dropped into the seat they had kept for him.

"Did you discover anything?" asked Dr. Cheever.

"Is La Bella Etelka the Etelka Talmeyr we saw together in London," White inquired, "or isn't she?"

"One at a time, please," Brackett responded. "And give me a cigarette, if you've got one. Then I'll tell you what I've found out."

Robert White proffered his cigarette-case.

Harry Brackett helped himself. "Thanks," he said. "Egyptian, ain't they? Too rich for my blood nowadays; I stick to the native article."

Dr. Cheever handed him a lighted match.

"Thank you," he went on, puffing at his cigarette. "Well, I found out several things. I've got the key to your mystery. And the answer isn't at all what either of you thinks."

"How so?" began White; "isn't—"

"Best let him tell his story in his own way," the doctor interrupted.

"That's what I think," assented Harry Brackett. "And I'll be as brief as I can, too. I happened on Zeke Kilburn at the door here, and I got him to take me behind. First thing we stumbled on the little Dago—Signor Navarino. Zeke knocked him down to me, and I froze to him at once, and took him into the cork-room and blew him off to a bottle, and got him to talk about himself. In less than five minutes I turned him inside out as easy as an old kid glove. There isn't anything he wouldn't tell me if I asked him. So I dropped a question or two about La Bella Etelka. And she wasn't in London seven years ago."

Dr. Cheever looked at White with an air of triumph.

"For the good and sufficient reason," Harry Brackett continued, "that she was then in South America, singing in comic opera—*La Perichole*, you know, and the *Timbale d'Argent*. She had been in London once upon a time, about ten years ago, when she was a music-teacher, or something of that sort—"

"So she was once a music-teacher in London?" White interrupted. "Then I don't see why—" Then he checked himself.

Harry Brackett continued: "She was a widow, and she got stuck on a Dutchman, who came over with a French comic

opera company, and she just dropped everything and went off with him. Four or five years ago he died—that's the Dutchman—and she drifted into the variety business. She met the little Dago in Buda-Pesth a year or two ago; he's a mean little cuss, but she has married him all the same. She's worth a dozen of him easy. From things he let on, I sized her up, and I made a guess as to her relation to the Princess Castellamare."

"I see," said White. "The Princess is her younger sister."

"Then you can't see straight," Harry Brackett retorted, "because the Princess isn't her sister. I made a guess, as I say, and I wanted to find out if I'd struck it. So I shook the little Dago, and I went back on the stage and found Kilburn again, and I got him to introduce me to La Bella Etelka, who was just ready to go on in the burlesque. She is a good-looking woman, for all she's forty."

"Forty?" cried White. "Come, now, that's impossible."

"It's true," Brackett returned. "She confessed to it—indirectly, but it's straight enough. I complimented her, and I made myself as solid as I could. You see I had my idea, and I wanted to find out about it. So at last I made a brace. I said, suddenly, 'There's a friend of mine in front, just back from Paris, and he tells me he saw the Princess Castellamare just before he left.' She flushed up, and asked: 'How was she? Is she well? I wish I could see her.' Then I told her what the doctor here had said—how the Princess was looking beautiful, and how she sang like an angel. Then she turned on me all of a sudden, and said, 'How did you know about my daughter?'"

"Her daughter?" White interrupted.

"Yes," Brackett answered; "that was my guess. And it rang the bell the very first shot, too. She grabbed me by the arm and said: 'She doesn't know about me, does she? The Prince doesn't suspect?' And then I knew I'd sized the thing up about right."

"I confess I do not quite see—" began the doctor.

"It's simple enough," explained Harry Brackett. "She'd run away from London and abandoned her daughter, leaving her in good hands, though. She had kept track of her always, and she was delight-

ed when she heard of the success of Mademoiselle Talmeyr at Milan. Then she was just going to write to her daughter, a little doubtful of the reception she would get, or how the daughter would take the news that the mother was alive she had so long thought dead, when all at once she heard that Mademoiselle Talmeyr was going to marry Prince Castellamare. Then she knew she had better not say a word. She had heard enough about Italian princes to suppose that they wouldn't like a mother-in-law on the variety stage doing a song-and-dance act. So long as the daughter thought the mother was dead, the old woman reckoned that she had better stay dead. And I left her just paralyzed with wonder that I had dropped on a secret she didn't suppose anybody else in the world knew. And it is funny, isn't it?"

"The maternal instinct seems to have awakened very tardily," the doctor remarked.

"It was pretty slow, for a fact," Brackett admitted. "But I guess it was there all the same—slow but sure."

"Well," said White, "if she keeps away from her daughter she will enjoy the very highest feminine felicity—the luxury of self-sacrifice."

"Yes," Brackett smilingly agreed. "I think that she was about as glad that I knew about it as she was sorry."

At that moment the music of the brazen orchestra swelled out, and part of the scenery at the back of the stage fell apart, disclosing the Fairy Queen glittering in the glare of the calcium-light, and with her opulent figure daringly revealed by her splendid costume.

"I wonder," remarked Robert White, foreseeing the end of the play, and rising with his two friends—"I wonder what your Princess Castellamare is doing in Rome now, while La Bella Etelka is on exhibition here in New York?"

"That's easy enough," Harry Brackett answered, as they turned their backs to the stage and walked toward the door. "There is five or six hours' difference in time, isn't there? Well, it's nearly twelve o'clock here, so I guess your Princess over there is getting her beauty-sleep—that is, unless she sits up five hours later than her mother, which isn't likely."

A DISCONTENTED PROVINCE.

BY HENRY LOOMIS NELSON.

IN the hills back of the little settlement of Oka, on the Ottawa River, is an institution which, it is hoped by those who founded it, will not only maintain but will extend the influence and power of the French people in the Dominion of Canada. It is a Trappist monastery.

Here, on a farm of a thousand acres presented by the rich Sulpicians of Montreal, the austere brotherhood is preparing to teach the French Canadians the modern art of agriculture. These pious, silent, indefatigable monks are great farmers. They are breeding splendid draught-horses and fine cattle. They are clearing and preparing virgin lands for cultivation. They are raising old and introducing new crops. They have already stimulated the neighboring population of Oka to the adoption of improved methods. Fences are better kept, trees are healthier, animals are of a superior kind, cultivation is more intensive, for the presence and influence of the Trappists.

They are here because they are needed by those who wish to keep the province of Quebec French and Catholic. They are trying to satisfy a public demand. The government has determined to set apart for their use several tracts of land in different parts of the province, where, both by example and precept, the *habitants* may be taught how to restore and cultivate their worn-out lands.

Quebec is not flourishing. Progress is making headway elsewhere in the Dominion, but Quebec proceeds so slowly that its relative place in the North American advance is almost as if it were standing still. An old race, working with old methods on old and worn lands, is an anachronism in the nineteenth-century movement. Nevertheless, this is French Canada of to-day—very much the same French Canada that stood in the way of the English two centuries ago.

It is not true, of course, that nineteenth-century influences have not affected the simple and interesting people who dwell along the shores of the St. Lawrence, but it is absolutely true that the great majority of them are very like their ancestors of the seventeenth century. The disintegrating enlightenment of modern life is be-

ginning to exert its power. A few of the French Canadians are rebelling against the burdens of their Church. Fewer still are turning towards Protestantism. Among the quick and clever lawyers, doctors, and politicians of the race there is growing up a set of radicals and free-thinkers. This group has existed for a long time. Some of the names now prominent in French intellectual circles in Montreal are to be found attached to the annexation circular of 1848. The group is increasing in numbers, and although it is still very far from being an important political power, it has its daily and weekly press, and furnishes leading statesmen and orators to the Liberals both of the Dominion and the province. Far more important than all other influences is that which is exerted by the emigrants who have made their way into the United States. It is this emigration which is the important fact in the contemporaneous history of Quebec, for it is not only depriving the country of some of its best and most vigorous blood, and reducing the tithes of the Church, but it is instilling new ideas into those who go away; it is giving them a new intellectual atmosphere. These new ideas and this increased mental stimulus are strongly reflected in the old parishes of Canada, where busy minds are set at work on new problems. There are plenty of signs that the end of the domination of authority in Quebec, priestly and political, is coming. It may not be felt in the near future, but the seeds of a change have been planted by Protestantism and by the peculiar institutions of the United States.

The men and women who go away from the French settlements to work in a New England cotton-mill, or to fish under the command of a Gloucester skipper, mingle with the nimble-minded New England populace, come under the influence of the town meeting—learn, in short, what is the meaning of local self-government. It may be that in some towns they have greatly modified the character of the basic New England institution, and that in time the essential virtues of our Teutonic inheritance will disappear under the blighting influence of foreign customs, indifference, or actual corruption.