THE IVY GREEN. BY CHARLES DICKENS.

Oh, a dainty plant is the Ivy Green, That creepeth o'er ruins old Of right choice food are his meals, I ween, In his cell so lone and cold. the wall must be crumbled, the stone decayed, To pleasure his dainty whim; and the moulding dust that years have made,

Is a merry meal for him.

Creeping where no life is seen,
A rare old plant is the Ivy Green. Fast he stealeth, though he wears no wings, And a staunch old heart has he: How closely he twined, how closely he olings To his friend the huge Oak Tree. And slyly he traileth along the ground,

And his leaves he gently waves, As he joyously hugs and crawleth around The mould of dead men's graves, Whole ages have fled, and their works decayed, And nations have scattered been; But the stout old Ivy shall never rade From its hale and hearty green. The brave old plant in its lonely days

Shall fatten upon the past; For the stateliest building man can raise, Is the Ivy's food at last. Creeping where no life is seen, A rare old plant is the Ivy Green.

A FAMILY IN LOVE.

ROMANCE OF REAL LIFE. BY MISS DINAH MARIA MULOCH.

Author of "John Halifax, Gent.," and other stories. This is the age of complainings. Nobody suffers in silence; nobody breaks his or her heart in secrecy and solitude; they all take "the pub-

lic" into their confidence—the convenient pub-Hath no tongue, but speaks With most miraculous organ. Of course it is neither the confider's fault nor yet the confidant's, if the winds sometimes

whisper that King Midas has asses' ears. Mine is no such confession. I have no gossip to retail of my neighbors; I am a very quiet gentleman, who prefer confiding my interests and observations to my own household, my own immediate family. Ay, there lies my inevitable grief, there lurks my secret wrong; I am the unhappy elder brother of a family in love.

The fact dimly dawned upon me, widening by degrees ever since I came home from India last year, and I took upon myself the charge of my five sisters, aged from about —. But Martha might object to my particularizing. Good little Patty! what a merry creature she was when she went nutting and fishing with me? And what ugly caps she has taken to wearing, poor dear ! why can't she speak so gently, when scolding the servants, as I remember our sweet-voiced, pretty mother used always to do? And why, in spite of their mutual position, will she persist in calling Mr. Green, with a kind of frigid solemnity, "Mr. Green?" But he does not seem to mind it; probably he never was called any-

He is a very worthy person, nevertheless, and I have a great respect for him. When my si-ter Martha—Miss Heathcote, as she has been called from her cradle—by letter announced to me at Madras that she intended to relinquish that title for the far less euphonious one of Mrs. Green, I was, to say the least of it, surprised. I had thought, for various reasons (of no moment now) that my eldest sister was not likely to marryrather hoped she would not. We might have been so comfortable, poor Patty and I. How-ever, I had no business to interiere with either happiness or her destiny; so when, the first Sunday after my arrival home, a cozy carriage drove up the avenue, and a bald, rather stout little man got out, to be solemnly introduced as "Mr. Green," I submitted to the force of circum-

stances, and to the duties of a brother-in-law.

He has dined with us every Sunday since. He and I are capital triends; regularly, when the ladies retire, he informs me what the funds have been at, day by day during the past week, and which is the safest railway to buy shares in for the week following. A most worthy person, I repeat; will make a kind husband, and I suppose Martha likes him, but—. However, poor girl, she is old enough to judge for herself, and it is no business of mine. Some time, before long, I shall give her away at the old parish church—quietly, without any bow: I shall see her walk down the church aisle with old Mr. Green—he in his best white waistcoat, and she in her sober grey poplin, which she insists on being married in-not the clear soft muslin and long lace veil I quite well remember seeing Patty working at and blushing over, we won't say how many years ago. Well, women are better married, they say; but I think I would rather have had Martha un old maid.

My second sister, Angeline, was fifteen when I left England; and the very loveliest creature I ever beheld. Everybody knew it, everybody acknowledged it. She could not walk down the street without people turning to look after her; she could not enter a room without creating a general whisper:—"Who is she?" The same ing continued as she grew up to womanhood. All the world was at her feet; every one said she would make a splendid marriage—become a countess, at least; and I do believe Angeline herself had the fullest confidence in that probability. She refused lovers by the dozen; every letter got told me of some new slaughter of Miss Angeline's. I would have pitied the poor tellows, only she was such a dazzling beauty, and no man falls out of love so safely as a man who falls in love with a beauty. I never heard that anybody died either by consumption, cord, or pistol through the cruelty of my sister Angeline.

, like most cruel damsels, she paid the penalty of her hard-heartedness; when I came nome I found Angeline Heathcote, Angeline Heathcote still. Beautiful yet, beautiful exceed ingly; a walking picture, a visible poem, it was a real pleasure to me to have such a handsome creature about the house. Though people did say, with a mysterious shake of the head, that, handsome as she was, if I had only seen my Angeline two or three years ago! And Angeline herself became tenacious on the subject of new gowns, and did not like it to be generally known whether she or Charlotte was the elder. Good, lain, merry Charlotte, who neverthought about alther her looks or her age!

Yet Charlotte was the first who brought me into trouble—the trouble which I am now called upon to bemoan. I had not been at home three months, when there came a young gentleman-a very lively and pleasant young gentleman, too -who sang duets with the younger girls and made himself quite at home in my family circle. myself did not much meddle with him, thought a good-natured lad, and no more-until one fine morning he astonished me by requesting five minutes conversation with me in my study. (Alas! such misfortunes come not singly—my study has never been sate from similar applica-

tions and conversations since.)
I was very kind to the young man; when he blushed, I looked another way; when he trem-bled, I invited him to take a chair. I listened to his stammering explanations with the utmost patience and sympathy; I even tried to help him out with them-till he came to the last

Now, I do say that a man who asks you for

Now, I do say that a man who asks you for your purse, your horse, your friendship, after only four weeks' acquaintance, has considerable courage; but a man, who, after that brief period since his introduction, comes and asks you for your sister—why, one's first impulse is to kick him down stairs.

Happily, I controlled myself. I called to mind that Mr. Cuthbert was an honest young fellow, and that if he did choose to risk his whole future upon the result of a month's laughing, and singing, and dancing at balls—certainly it was his affair, not mine. My business solely related to Charlotte. I was just despatching it in the quickest and frienditest manpatching It in the quickest and friendliest manner, by advising the young fellow to go back to college and not make fool of himself in vain when te informed me that my consent only was required, since he and Charlotte had been

I have always held certain crotchers on the paramount rights of lovers, and the wrong of interfering with any apparently sincere yows; so I sent for Lotty—talked with her; found she was just as foolish as he. That because he was the best waitzer, the sweetest tenor singer, and had omest moustsche she knew-our lively Charlotte was quite contented to dance through life with Mr. Cuthbert, and decidedly proud of having his diamond ring on her third finger, and being considered "engaged"—as, indeed, they were likely to remain, if their minds changed

not, for the next ten years.

So, what would I do? Nothing but deal with the young simpletons, if such they were, according to their folly. If true, their love would have time to prove itself such; if false, they would best find out that fact by its not being

thwarted. I kissed away Lotty's tears, silly child! and next Sunday I had the honor of carving for brother-in-law elect No. 2.

It never rains but it pours. Whether Angeline was roused at once to indignation and condescension by Charlotte's engagement—which she was the loudest in inveighing against, or whether are considered. she was the foldest in inveigning against, or whether, as was afterwards reported to me, she was influenced by a certain statistical newspaper paragraph, maliciously read aloud by Mr. Cuth-bert for general edification, that women's chances of matrimony were proved by the late census to diminish greatly between the ages of thirty and thirty-five; but most assuredly Ange-line's demeanor changed. She stooped to be agreeable as well as beautiful. To more than one suitor whom she had of old swept haughtily by, did she now graciously incline; and the result was—partly owing to the gayetles of this autumnal election—that Miss Angeline Heath-cote, the beauty of the county, held a general election on her own private account,

Alss for me! In one week I had no less than four hopeful candidates requesting "the honor

of an interview" in my study.

Angeline's decision was rather dilatory, they were all such excellent matches; and, poor girl! with all her beauty for her chief gift, and with all the tinsel adoration it brought her, she had never been used to think of marriage as any-thing more than the mere wordly arrangement. She was ready to choose a husband as she would a wesding-gown—dispassionally, carefully, as the best out of a large selection of articles, each rich and good in its way, and warranted to wear. She had plenty of common sense, and an acute judgment; as for her heart-

"You see, Nigel," she said to me, when weighing the respective claims and merits of Mr. Archer and Sir Rowland Griffith Jones, "you see, I never was sentimentally inclined. I want to be married. I think I should be better married than single. Of course, my husband must be a good man; also, he should be a wealthy man; because—well!—because I rather like show and solendor; they suit me.'

And she glanced into the mirror at something which, certainly, if any woman has any excuse for the vanities of life, might have pleaded An-

"But," I argued-half sorrowfully, as when you see an ignorant could throwing gold away, and choosing sham jewels for their pitiful glistering-"you surely would think it necessary to love your husband?"

"O yes; and I like Sir Rowland extremelyperhaps even better than Mr. Archer—though he has been fond of me so long, poor fellow! But he will get over it—all men do."
So, though the balance hung for a whole week

doubtful-Heaven for give the giri! but true love was not in her nature, and now can people see further than their lights go? I was soon pretty certain that fate would decide the marriage ques-tion in favor of the baronet. As Lotty said, Angeline would look as magnificent in the family diamonds as Lady Griffith Jones.

The Welsh cause triumphed; Mr. Archer quitted the field. He had been an old acquaintance; but—what was that to Sir Rowland and

After Angeline's affair was settled, there came a lull in the family epidemic—possibly because the head of the family grew savage as a bear; and for a full month his spirit hugged itself into fierce misanthropy, or rather misogony, contemning the whole iemale sex, especially such as contemplated entering into the unfiely state of matrimony.

No wonder I could not find peace in my own house; I had not my own sister's society; not a single family fireside evening could I get from week's end to week's end; not a room could I enter without breaking in on some tete-a-tete; not a corner could I creep into without stum-bling upon a pair of lovers. For a little while these fond couples kept on their good behavior towards, preserved a degree of reserve towards, each other out of respect to the head of the house, the elder brother; but gradually it deteriorated-ceased. Nay, I, who belong to the old generation—which was foolish enough to the old generation—which was foolish enough to deem caresses hallowed things, that the mere pressure of a beloved woman's hand, not to speak of her sacred mouth, was a thing not to be made a public show of—never to be thought of without a tender reverence, a delictous fear—I, Rigel Heathcote, have actually seen two young men, strangers a little year ago, kiss my two sisters openly before their whole family—before their brother's very face!

My situation became intolerable. I fied the fireside; I took refuge in my study. Wo betide the next lover who should assail me there!

Surely that fatality would not again arrive for When the elder ones were once

married and away, surely I, and Constantia, and little Lizzie, might live a few years in fraternal peace, unmolested by the haunting shadow of impending matrimony.

It occurred to me that in the interval of the weddings I would send for an old friend, a bachelor like myself—an honest, manly fellow,

who worked hard from circuit to circuit, and got barely one brief a year. Yes, Will Launceston would keep me company; and we would spend our days in the woods, and our evenings in my study, safe out of the way of lovers, wedings, and womankind.
I had just written to him, when my sister

Martha came in with a very serious face, and told me "she wished for a little conversation with me. Ominous beginning! But she was not a young man, and could not well attack me concerning

any more of my sisters. At least so I congratulated myself—alas, too soon!

My sister settled herself by the fire with a seas countenance.

"My dear Nigel.

"I wish to consult you on a matter which has recently come to my knowledge, and has given me much pain, and some anxiety,"
"Indeed!" and I am afraid my tone was less

sympathizing than eager, since from her troubled nervous manner, I thought—I hoped, the matter in question indicated the secession of Mr. Green. "Go on. Is it about"—I stopped and corrected myself hypocritically—" about the

She assented. "Whew!"-a disappointed whistle, faint and low. "Still, go on. I'll listen to anything except another proposal."

Martha shoos her head. "Alas, I fear it will never come to that! Brother, have you noticed? —but men never do—still, I myself have observed a great change in Constantia lately.'

Now, Constantia always was different from the other girls—liked solitude and books, talked little, and had a trick of reverie. In short, was little, and had a trick of reverie. In short, was what young people called "interesting," and old people "romantic"—the sort of creature who, d'd she grow up a remarkable woman, would have her youthful peculiarities carefully and respectfully noted, with "I always said there was a great deal in that gir!," but who, did she turn out nothing particular, would be laughed at, and probably would laugh at herself, for having been "very sentimental when she was young." Nevertheless, having at one time of my life shared that imputation, I was tender over the little follies of Constantia.

over the little follies or Constantia. "I think the girl reads too much, and sits with her eyes too wide open, Martha; is rather unsocial, likewise. She wanted to get out of the way of the weddings, and positively refused to be

Angeline's bridesmaid."

"Ah!" sighed Martha, "that's it. Poor, foolish child, to think of falling in love"—

I almost jumped off my chair. "I'll not hear a word of it—I declare I will not! I'll keep the wife whom I wife at ali."

a plighted couple for the space of three whole young fellow off my premises with man-traps days! me of another 'engagement.'
"No chance of that;" and Martha shook her

head more drearily than ever. "Poor child, I fear it is an unfortunate attachment!" I brightened up—so much so, that my sister looked, pay, gently hinted, her conviction that I was a "brute." She expected I would have been

was a "brute." She expected I would have been as sorry as she was!

"No, Martha; I am rather glad. Glad, after my experience of these "fortunate" love-affairs, to find that one of my sisters has the womanly courage, unselfishness, and simplicity to conceive an 'unfortunate' attachment."

Ferhaps this speech hurt Martha, and yet it need not. She and I both knew and respected one another's youth; and if we differed in optimical concentration of the statement.

nion concerning our middle age, why-I was as like to be wrong as she.

She did not at first reply; and then, without comment, she explained to me her uneasiness about Constantia. The girl bad long played confidence to Mr. Archer in the matter of Angelian confidence to Mr. Archer in the Mr. Archer in t line, and, as often happens, the confidente had unwittingly taken too great interest in one of her principals, until she found herself envying the lot of the other, When Mr. Archer's dismissal finally broke off all his intercourse with our family, there was one of my sisters who missed him wearily, cruelly; and that was—not

I was touched. Now, no doubt Constantia had been very foolish; no doubt she had nour-ished and endouraged this fancy, as romantic ished and endouraged this fancy, as romantic girls do, in moonlight walks and solitary dreams, hugging her pain, and deluding herself that it was bliss. Little doubt, likewise, that the feeling would wear itself out, or fade slowly away in life's stern truths; but at present it was a most sincere passion, sad and sore. Foolish and romantic as it might be, in itself and in its girlish demonstrations, I could not smile at it. It was a real thing, and as such to mile at it. It was a real thing, and as such to be respected.

Martha and I held counsel together, and acted on the result. We took Constantia under our on the result. We took constantia under our especial charge; we gave her books to read, visits to pay, work to do, keeping her as much as possible with one or other of us, and out of the way of the childish flirtation of Cuthbert and Charlotte, or of the formal philandering of Sir Rowland and the future Lady Griffith Jones. If sometimes, as Lizzie told me—my little Lizzie, who laughed at love and lovers with the light ness of sixteen—Constantia grew impatient with Lotty's careless triffing, and curled her lip zoornfully when Angeline paraded the splendors of her trousseau, we tried to lead the girl's mind out of herself, and out of dreamland altogether,

as much as possible.

"But suppose," Lizzie sagely argued—"suppose, when Angeline is married Mr. Archer should come back? He always liked Constantia extremely. Who knows but'—
I shook my head, and desired the little castlebuilder to hold her tongue.

She was our sole sharer of the secret; and I must say, though she laughed at her now and then, Lizzie was extremely loving and patient with Constantia. After a time, we left the two girls wholly to one another, more especially as my time was now taken up with my friend Launceston.

Oh, the comfort, the relief of the society of a man!—a real honest man—who had some ster-ling aim and object in life—some steady work to some earnest interest in the advance of the do—some earnest interest in world, the duties and pursuits of his brother men; who was neither handsome, witty, nor recomplished; who rarely shone in ladies' accomplished; who rarely shone in ladies' society; in fact, rather eschewed it than other-For, he said, nature had unfitted him to act the part of a mere admirer, and adverse fortune forbade him to appear in the character of a lover; so he kept aloof, keeping his own com-pany and that of one or two old friends like

I was fond of Launceston; I wished my family to like him too; but they were all too busy about their own affairs. Evening after evening I could not get any of my sisters to make tea for us, or give us a little music afterwards, except the pale, dull-looking Constantia, or my bonny rose of June, little Lizzie. At last, we four actted into a small deals command. four settled into a small daily company, and went out together, read together, talked together continually. I kept these two younger ones as much as possible in our unromantic practical society, that not only my mind, but Launceston's in its thorough cheerfulness and healthiness of tone, might unconsciously have a good influence upon Constantia.

The girl's spirit slowly began to heal. She set aside her dreaming, and took with all the energy of her nature to active work-women's work-charity school-teaching, village-visiting, She put a little too much "roand the like. mance" into all she did still; but there was life m it, truth, sincerity.
"Miss Constantia will make an admirable lady

of all-work," said Launceston in his quaint way, watching her with his kindly and observant The world wants such. She will find enough to do.

And so she did: enough to steal her, too, from my side, almost as much as the three fiancees, The circle in my study dwindled gradually down to Lizzie, Launceston, and me.

We were excellent company still, we three. I had rarely had so much of my pet sister's society; I had never found it so pleasant. True, she was shyer than usual, probably from being with us two, older and wiser people—men likewise—but she listened to our wisdom so sweetly—she bore she listened to our wisdom so sweetly—she bore with our dry, long-worded learning so patiently—that my study never seemed itself unless I had the little girl seated at my feet, or sewing quietly in the window corner. And then she was com-pletely a "little girl:" had no forward ways—no love notions, or, ten times worse, marriage notions, crossing her innocent brain. I felt sure I could take her into my closest heart, form her mind and her principles at my will, and one day make a noble woman of her, after the pattern of-But I never mentioned that

sacred name. I loved Lizzie-loved her to the core of my heart. Sometimes with fatherly more than even brotherly pride, I used to talk to Launceston of the child's sweetnesses, but he always gave me short answers. It was his way. His laconism in most things was really astonishing for a man

under thirty.
One day, when Angeline's grand wedding was safely over, and the house had sunk into a pathetic quietness that reminded one of the vening after a funeral—at least so I thought
—Launceton and I fell into a discussion, which stirred him into more demonstrativeness than usual. The subject was men, women, and marriages.

"I am convinced," he said, "that I shall never marry. It was not my first hearing of this laudable determination; so I let it pass, merely asking his

reasons. "Because my concience, principles, and teelines go totally against the system of matrimony, as practised in the world, especially the world of womankind. All the courting and proposing, the presents and the love-letters, the dinners to relafives and congratulations of friends, the mar-riage guests and marriage-settlements, the white lace, white satin, and white favors, carriage, postilions, and all. Heigh-ho, Heathcote, what

fools men are !" I was just about to suggest the possibility of naming one, say two, wise individuals among our sex, when in stole a white fairy—my pretty Lizzie, in her bridesmald's dress. Her presence changed the current of conversation; until, from ome remarks she made about a message Angeline had left as to the proper way of inserting her marriage in the *Times* newspaper to-morrow, our talk imperceptibly fell back into the old

channel. "I, like you, Launceston, hate the whole system of love and marrying. It is one great sham. Beginning when miss, at school, learns that it is the apex of feminine honor to be a b-ide-the lowest depths of feminine humiliation to die au old maid. Continuing when she, a young lady at home, counts her numerous 'offers;' taking pride in what ought to be to her a source either of regret or humiliation. Ending when, time slipping by, she drops into the usual belief that nobody ever marries her first love; so takes the best match she can find, and makes marriage, which is merely the visible crown and comple tion of love, the pitirui, dishonored substitute for it. I declare solemnly, I have seen many a wife whom I held to be scarcely better than-no

I had forgotten my little sister's presence; but I had forgotten my little sister's presence; but she did not seem to hear me—nor Launceston either, for that matter. His earnestness had sollened down; he sat, very thoughtful, over against the window where Lizzle had taken her sewing. What a pretty picture she made!

"Come here, my little girl," I said; "I should not like thee to go the way of the world; and yet I should be satisfied to give thee away some day, onietly, in a white muslin grown and straw

day, quietly, in a white muslin gown and straw bennet, to some honest man who loved theeand was loved so well, that Luzzie would never dream of marrying any other, but would have been quite content, if need be, to live an old maid for his sake to the end of her days. That's what I call love—eh, my girl?"
Lizzie drooped her head, blushing deeply. Of

course; girls always do.

Launceston said, in a tone so low that I quite started. "Then you do believe in true love, after

"It would be ill for me, or for any human being, if I did not. And I believe in it the more earnestly because of its numberless counterteits. Nay"—and now, when, after this gay marriagemorning, the evening was sinking grey and dull my mind inclined pensively, even tenderly, to the sister who had gone, the other two sisters who were shortly going away, from my hearth for ever—"nay, as since in the falsest creeds there lurks, I hope, a modicum of absolute truth, I would fain trust that in the poorest travesty or masquerade of love, one might find a fragment of the sterling commodity. Still, my Lizzie, dear, when all our brides are gone, let us congratulate ourselves that for a long time we shall have no more engagements.'

"You object to engagements?" said Lizzie, speaking timidly and downfaced—as I rather bke to see a young girl speak on this subject, "Why, how should you like it yourself, my lit-tle maid? To be loved, wood, and wedded, in public, for the benefit of an amused circle of friends, neighbors, and connections. To have one's actions noticed, one's affairs canyassed one's feelings weighed and measured; to be congratulated, condoled, and jested with. Horrible! literally horrible. My wonder is that any true lovers can ever stand it."

"Perhaps you are right," said Launceston, ve-hemently. "No man ought to place the girl he loves in such a position. Whatever it costs him. he ought to leave her free—altogether free—and offer her nothing until he can offer her his hand at once and with no delay."

"Bless my soul, Launceston, what are you in such excitement about? Has anybody been offering himself to your sister? Because, you mittook me. Ask her, or Lizzie, or any good woman, if they would feel flattered by a gentleman's acting in the way you suggest? As if his hand—with the ring in it—were anything to them, and himself and his true love nothing at all 19

Launceston laughed uneasily. "Well, but what did you mean? A—a friend of mine would like to know your opinion on this matter." "My opinion is simply an opinion. Every man is the best judge of his own affairs, especially love affairs. As the Eastern proverb says:—'Let not the lions decide for the tigers.' But I think did I love a woman—and it pleases me to know I was but speaking out her mind, who years ago lived and died, in her fond sim plicity wiser than any of there—did I love a woman, I would like to tell her so, just to her-self, no more. I would like to give her my love to rest on; to receive the help and consolation of hers. I would like her to feel that through all chances and changes she and I were one, neither for foolish child's play nor headlong passion, but for mutual strength and support holding ourselves responsible both to Heaven and each other for our life and our love. One, indissolubly, whether we were ever married or not, one in this world, and, we pray, one in the

world everlasting." Was I dreaming? Did I actually see my friend Launceston take, unforbidden, my youngest sister's hand, and hold it—firmly, ten derly, fast! Did 1 hear, with my own natural ears, Lizzie's soft little sob, not of grief certainly, as she slipped out of the room, as swift and silent as a moonbeam?

Eh! what? Good heavens! Was there ever any creature so blind as a middle-aged elder brother.

Well, as I told Launceston, it was half my
own fault, and I must bear it stoically. Perhaps,
own fault, and I must bear it stoically. Perhaps,

on the whole, things might have been worse, for he is a noble fellow, and no wonder the child loves him. They cannot be married just yet—meanwhile, Lizzie and I kept the matter between ourselves. They are very happy—God bless them! and so am I.

P. S.-Mr. Archer reappeared vesterday, looking quite well and comtortable. I see clear! that, one day not distant, I shall be left lament ing-the solitary residuum of a Family in Love.



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