

## MEMORIES.

A little window, and a broad expanse  
Of sky and sea,  
A little window where the stars look in,  
And waves beat ceaselessly;  
Where, through the night, across the  
silvery foam,  
The moonlight falls like blessed thoughts  
of home.

A little space within a crowded ship,  
A restless heart;  
A little time to pause awhile and think  
O'er lives apart;  
To pause and think, while others pray and  
sleep;  
A little while to bow the head and weep.

A little window, but a heaven of rest  
Bent over all,  
Where, through the silence of the star-lit  
dusk,  
The angels call;  
Where the dead faces of the vanished  
years  
Look in and smile across a sea of tears.

A quiet room—a quiet heart of peace  
Wi h earth and sea;  
A little corner—but a glimpse of heaven,  
An angel's company;  
O, steadfast soul, O, flower pure and  
white,  
Still on my lips I feel thy last "Good  
night."

—Chambers' Journal.

## Captain Jacobus.

BY L. COPE CORNFORD.

Although the time was long past midnight, lights were still gleaming from behind the shutters of the little blind alehouse hard by the Reading road, not far from Winchester; and Captain Jacobus, riding gently up, judged it prudent to enter by the back door in consequence. The inn was a house of a creature of his own, but at a time when detachments of Cromwell's soldiers were rough riding the country, it behaved a gentleman of the road to use caution. Indeed, in the estimation of Captain Jacobus, it was no insignificant item in the long score held by him against the Commonwealth that a king's gentleman should sometimes be compelled to sneak into his inn by a menial entrance. After stabling his horse the captain entered the kitchen, where the landlord, a little, dark remnant of a man, with a short pipe between his teeth, was going to and fro, busying himself amid a litter of empty bottles and greasy plates. Stopping short in his employment, the landlord nodded to his patron without a word, at the same time jerking his thumb over his shoulder towards the half-door, above which a square of the paneled wall of the inn parlor was visible. Captain Jacobus, without further hesitation, walked promptly into the parlor.

The long, low, red curtained room was brilliantly lit with a wasteful profusion of candles, a huge fire of wood roared in the fireplace, and, standing side by side, with their backs to the blaze, were two very tall, loosely hung men, dressed in the decent black garb and falling white collar affected by the Presbyterian ministers of the day. Save that the elder man had white hair and wore a beard, while the younger was clean shaven and almost bald, so that his great head glistened like a moist egg in the firelight, the two resembled each other in every particular.

Captain Jacobus took off his hat, with a sweeping gesture, and began, with some show of deliberation, to unbutton and lay upon the table his sword and pistols. The two parsons returned the salute with a grave inclination, the younger bowing just a fraction of time behind the elder, after a momentary glance at him; as if (thought the captain) the junior had so lively a habit of subservience to the senior that he manifested it unconsciously, even in the most trivial actions. Captain Jacobus disposed himself comfortably upon the settle against the wall, and called for wine. Opposite to him, the travelers' saddles were piled, together with their riding cloaks and great slouched hats.

"You travel late for gentlemen of the cassock," remarked the captain. "Have you no fear of highwaymen?"

"We put our trust in the sword of the Lord," replied the elder clergyman, piously.

"And of Gideon," echoed the younger, in a thin, high voice, extremely out of keeping with his bulk.

"Spoken very godly, and a mighty pretty sentiment!" observed the captain, rolling his liquor on his tongue. "And yet it seems to me you run something of a risk, notwithstanding."

"My son and I," returned the old man, with much tranquility, "shoulder to shoulder, have bested the devil these many years past."

"Yes, even when he travelst abroad in the guise of a robber," the other chimed in, cheerfully.

"Ah!" said the captain. "But perhaps you never met Captain Jacobus, the cavalier, who rules the very road from Reading to Winchester. They say he hath a very deadly spite against Puritans. The Parliament disposed him of all estate, I've heard, and he vowed the pragmatical rebels should pay for it among them."

Paying to sip his wine, the speaker eyed the two parsons over the edge of his glass. They returned his gaze in silence, with a watchful attention. "He has a mighty pleasant way with him, so I'm told, hath Captain Jacobus," pursued the captain. "None of your common, stand and deliver methods for him, but all manner of pretty knacks and strange devices. Why, now, just to give you an example; supposing he were sitting where I sit now,"—the speaker paused a moment, but the two big clerymen did not move so much as an eyelid.—"It's likely he would propose a game at the cards to you two gentlemen. Down you would have to sit with him, willy-nilly, you see; and inside of an hour, 'I'll wager he would have won the very coats off your backs. All by pure skill, you understand. No violence at all. And talking of cards," said the captain, briskly, with a sudden change of tone, "what do you say to a turn? Come! Landlord, a clean pack!"

The highwayman rose, moved an elbow chair to the table, and, looking at the two parsons, with a very eloquent expression of countenance, sat absently fingering his pistols.

"I am exceedingly sorry, sir, it is impossible that I should pleasure you in so

carful a diversion," said the old man, mildly. "And, setting aside the claims of my holy office, I know not one painted toy from t'other. I will ask you to pardon me—we have ridden far to-day," and, with a courteous gesture, he sat down upon the settle in the chimney corner, and leaning back upon the bundle of cloaks and saddles, closed his eyes and folded his hands.

"And you, sir? Come, doff the priest-hood for an hour! Unchain the old Adam, and give him a run! Trust me, you will be a world the better for so self-denying an exercise. What! 'tis not so long since you were to college that your fingers have forgot the feel of the cards, so glossy and ticklish, I'll warrant. Sit down, young man, sit down, and cut for the deal, like a saint of sense!"

The momentary silence that followed was broken by a tiny click, as the captain cocked a pistol.

The bald young man started slightly at the sound, the recumbent figure on the settle opened its eyes, and the two exchanged a glance, so rapid as to be scarcely perceptible.

"Sir," answered the younger man, earnestly, "you touch me nearer than you know. I am naturally eager for social diversions; and I own it seems hard that a single traveler like yourself must sit and twiddle his thumbs because his fellow guests chance to be clerymen. Yet, see how it is. Before I was a man grown, I gave my word to my father never again to touch the cards."

"Johnny," broke in the old gentleman, "I give you back your word. Do as your conscience bids you. And call to remembrance the House of Rimmon, sonny."

"Nay," said the captain, pleasantly, "say no more. I would not be an occasion of stumbling to any. It would be a thousand pities to risk a sojourn in purgatory for the sake of a trumpety game of cards;—and, cocking the other pistol, he laid one on either side of him.

The bald young man, a good deal flushed, drew up a chair and sat down, wiping the beads of perspiration from his forehead with his coat cuff.

"It becomes my turn to entreat the pleasure, although I fear you will find me but a dull opponent," he said, with a ghastly attempt at urbanity. "Come, sir, let us to't. I am heartily glad of the opportunity."

"No, no," said the captain, shuffling the cards. "Y' are forcing yourself out of sheer good nature. I see it. I will have no man blacken his record in heaven for me!"

"Not a jot, not a tittle," returned the other, with an obsequious alacrity. "And I take it greatly as a favor you should play with so rusty an amateur."

"Well, have it as you will, then," said the captain. "And what shall we call the stakes?"

"Shall we say—Jacobuses?" said the bald young man, smoothly.

A doubt crossed the mind of Captain Jacobus, and he looked up sharply at the speaker. But the bald young man was laboriously dealing the cards, his white face creased in a fatuous smile; and the captain could make nothing of his expression.

"Why, yes, with all my heart," returned the captain, "Jacobuses, certainly!" and the two men settled to the game, the clergyman conning his play with the most arduous attention, often clutching his jaw and pausing to consider; and the captain, with scarcely a glance at his hand, nonchalantly tossing his cards on the table.

They played without exchanging a word, at intervals a smouldering log broke and fell upon the hearth, disengaging a shower of sparks; the old clergyman snored in the chimney corner, and the night wind rustled in the trees outside. At first the game went evenly; but, as the night wore on, a little heap of gold began to accumulate at the elbow of the bald young man, in a manner to the captain quite unaccountable. The doubt in his mind grew and prickled him. He began to watch the other narrowly, and presently detected a piece of very deft manipulation. The highwayman said nothing, but, twisting his moustache, looked the other full in the eyes. The chest blinked, went very white, and glanced swiftly round at the sleeper, who continued to snore placidly; but the captain, at the moment of choosing a card, and without turning his head, shot an answering look of meaning at his son. The incident passed so quickly that to an onlooker the pause in the game would have been barely noticeable. Captain Jacobus, under cover of the table, unsheathed a short dirk, and laid it, naked, on his knee.

Soon the pile of gold pieces began to dwindle and change sides upon the table, when suddenly, as the bald young man laid down a card, the captain, with an oath, drove his dagger through the back of his opponent's hand, deep into the oak.

"Not again, my cully!" he cried.

The man screamed and fell back in a swoon, and at the sound the other parson leaped to his feet with a cry, whipping a great horse-pistol from his pocket. But the captain was too quick for him; before he could bring the ponderous engine to bear, the highwayman had caught his wrist with one hand, and trust the muzzle of a pistol into his face with the other. The clergyman's weapon exploded harmlessly, the bullet striking the ceiling.

"Now," said Captain Jacobus, releasing him, "it's my turn! Obey orders!" he thundered. "Hand up those saddles!"

The old man with shaking fingers and a very white face, heaped up the baggage and dumped it on the table, where the litter of cards was afloat in widening pools of blood.

"Empty out the saddle-bags!" Give me but the shadow of disobedience, and I'll put a bullet in you. What's here? Now what is a couple of rascal parsons doing with a fortune of gold? Won at the cards, I suppose! And what kind of gear is this for a clergyman?"

For among a miscellany of personal effects were two bulky leathern bags, full to the throat with broad pieces, a great jeweled watch, and a handful of ladies' rings and trinkets. The sham clergyman, biting his fingers, and looking haggardly at the spoil, stood in sullen silence. At the other end of the table the bald young man was moaning and writhing in his chair, his hand pinned fast. The captain, vigilant as a bird, but thoroughly at his ease and enjoying himself hugely, leaned against the panelling, eyeing the pair by turns.

"Come," he said, "speak up, parson! Make a clean confession. You may see

up your little boy, if your care to, while you talk."

The old man cast a venomous glance of contempt upon his abject offspring, "Serve him right!" he broke out savagely. "The clumsy fool!"

"I begin to perceive you are something of a precisian," remarked the captain. "Let me make your son's excuses. To get the better of Captain Jacobus is a highly temerarious enterprise for a young man, though I say it. But I must ask you to take my dagger out of him, and to clean it. I thank you. Now add your purse to the blunt, and pack it all carefully up again. It's time for me to go, as the song says."

"Come," returned the other, roughly, "let's talk sense, Captain. The crop was fairly nimmed on the road, as you might have done yourself. You can't mean to whiddle your fellows?"

"On the road? You surprise me! And yet I had some kind of an inkling; that it wasn't entirely parson beneath those beautiful black clothes, too," said the captain, genially.

"Why, of course! of course! gentlemen of the road, like yourself, said the old man, brightening somewhat at the friendliness of the other's tone. "But parsons we've been for the last six months, just to implant a little confidence."

"And how did it all come about?" inquired Captain Jacobus.

"Parsons we were for six months," repeated the impostor, "in Kingsclere yonder." He jerked his thumb over his shoulder. "Did you never try the lay, Captain? You have to live mighty strict while it lasts, but it's a good lay! a good lay!" The speaker smiled, slyly, at the recollection. "Highly respected by rich and poor, there was nothing good enough for such a brace of saints as Johnny and me. Fat collections every Sabbath, and the poultry and butter and cheeses,—why, we lived like a couple of kings, except for the liquor. Your parson must be cruel sparing of the bene-bowse. That was where the shoe pinched. But at last our chance came along, for a girl of the place was going to be married to one blasted cit in Winchester. Her men-folk were out of the way, and who fit to escort her and her mother—and her dowry—as the two tall parsons? So, one on each side, all for fear of you, Captain, we joggled along till nightfall. . . . And here we are, and I offering you a third of the swag; and what could be fairer?"

"You dogs of Egypt!" began Captain Jacobus, in a voice that made the glasses ring, "would you make terms with me? By the heavens you blaspheme you shall strip yourself of every doot! 'Tis you and your like bring disgrace upon the names of the King's gentlemen. Are we to keep the road, with curs like you snapping at our heels? What! You would decoy two poor ladies upon the King's highway, and drag the very rings from their fingers? You would pouch on the manner of Captain Jacobus, take possession of his inn, sharp him at the cards, and shoot him through the head afterwards, if he hadn't been a match for the hulking pair of you rum clapper-dogsons! All that you would do, and when he gets upides with you, you have the bravado to inform him of it to his face, and to offer him a share! A share! To me!" and the orator interpolated some highly-stimulating oaths. "A share! You shall see, now! Empty your pockets on the table. Take off that ring—off with it—that or the finger. Search the other rascal. Now strip, the pair of you! Quick about it! Am I to dance attendance upon you, while you make a toilet? Put the clothes on the fire!"

The two men, constrained by the brace of grinning pistols, stripped to their shirts and obeyed in silence. The face of the elder was flushed to a dusky red; his eyes shone in his head; a trickle of blood from his bitten lip streaked his white beard; and the younger tottered to and fro, with a death-white face, hugging his wounded hand.

"Now," said Captain Jacobus, "you shall lade my horse for me, by thunder!"

Keeping his eye on the two, he moved to the door, opened it, and whistled. Instantly there was a clatter of hoofs, and his black mare came trotting around the corner and tramped into the room. The Captain stood by his horse's head, rating the shivering wretches like dogs while they strapped on the baggage; and when they had done he led the animal into the road.

"Hold my stirrup, Gideon!" said the Captain to the hapless Johnny; and including them both in a final exhortation, "The landlord takes your mags for the reckoning. But if ever I meet you out on the pad, I'll shoot you down like vermin, so sure as my name is Captain Jacobus. Stand clear!"

And with a bound he was gone, leaving the two half-clad rascals a prey to the humiliation of impotent fury, and the most deadly discomfiture of body, amid a scene of the dismal disorder, the last sparks of their clothes flying up the chimney in the icy draught, and the gray light of the winter's dawn paling the candles.

It is upon record that Captain Jacobus took it upon himself to restore all the trinkets, and, according to his rule in such cases, one-half the money, to the rightful owners thereof; and that the other half went into the bottomless pocket of King Charles the Second, then living very privately in the city of Cologne.

## An Improved Saw.

People who cut up very valuable timber into merchantable shape have always felt a certain amount of regret at the great waste as seen in the enormous piles of sawdust that accumulates. For this reason it has been economy to use band saws, which are extremely thin and durable. Circular saws have not heretofore been available for this work on account of their much greater thickness, but, being cheaper and much more easily managed, they have been used, even though the waste of material incident thereto has been great. By a new means a 12-gauge 54-inch circular saw has been operated, and the inventor says that it behaves in the most approved fashion in all respects, doing the work as well as thick saws and standing the strain in the most satisfactory manner. This is of a great deal of importance, as a thin circular saw can be operated where a band saw is difficult to handle, and is therefore an economy and also much more convenient.

## CUBAN WEAPON.

### THE MACHETE A TERROR IN THE HANDS OF THE INSURGENTS.

#### The Skilful User Cuts and Tears the Spanish Enemy and Sometimes Severs His Head.

Cuba has a terrible national weapon. In the present conflict in progress in Cuba the insurgents have done such deadly execution with it that the Spaniards have decided to arm their own infantry with it in order to be able to meet the insurgents on more nearly equal terms. This weapon is the machete.

The machete is the Central and South American agricultural tool. It is pronounced as if spelled mah-tchay-tay, with an accent on the ay of the second syllable. It is the husbandman's implement in all sugar growing countries. There are some three or four hundred styles used in Brazil, the Central American States, Mexico and San Domingo. Each country uses a different blade, and of each there are about a hundred varieties.

But wherever it appears and whatever its style, it is a murderous weapon in the hands of those accustomed to its use. It has played no small part in the history of all uprisings in the Spanish speaking provinces. But in Cuba it has done such execution that if the island should win her freedom the machete ought to be included in the coat-of-arms of Cuba libera.

In Cuba every man possesses a machete, no matter what else he doesn't own. It is the tool of the Cuban workingman. With it he earns his living cutting the sugar cane. With it he cuts the firewood for his own use. Indeed, it is hatchet and knife combined for him.

Every Cuban except those who live in the big cities, like Havana, is familiar with the use of the machete. The rank and file of the Cuban insurgents, who come from the plantations, are not skilled in the use of firearms. But they make up for it by the ferocity with which they engage in close-quarter encounters with Spanish soldiery with the faithful machete. When this is the case the Spaniard fares badly and the machete man leaves a lot of bloody corpses or wounded bodies behind him.

A young Cuban explained the most common manner of using the machete. It is entirely different from sword practice; the thrust is not employed at all. The aim of the machete user is to cut, rip and tear his opponent and disable or kill at once. Among the insurgents the privates, who are armed with machetes, carry the weapon in the scabbard at the left side of the belt or dangling from a chain about the right wrist. In any case the weapon is not held for use until the lines are within a few yards of each other.

When the word it passed the machete is pulled from the scabbard with an upward stroke diagonally to the right, with the longest and sharp edge toward the enemy. This constitutes one stroke, and is aimed at the abdomen of the attacked person with the design of cutting or tearing the body. With the weapon raised to the length of the right arm the wrist is simply turned over, and the machete makes a stroke back to the left so as to slash the attacked person's neck and, if possible, partially behead him. With still one more turn of the wrist the edge of the machete strikes downward, cleaving the body again.

This is all done with wonderful dexterity. These strokes are the easiest form of attack to learn among edged weapons. In the hands of the insurgents who are habituated to the use of the machete and are very strong the blows are described as wicked. Many times heads are all but severed from the body, and a machete wound is usually fatal.

The machete used by the insurgents at present is a very cheap and ordinary looking affair and costs less than a dollar. It is made in England and in Germany. The blades are from twenty to thirty inches long. Some of them have a blade slightly curved backward towards the thick, dull edge with a rounded point curved back to the thick edge. The favorite and the one that has done most damage to the Spanish forces has the thirty inch blade, about three inches wide, long, straight and clean looking, and with the end cut off diagonally to a point, as a milliner cuts the ends of a ribbon bow. The handle is of rough looking bone, the handle of the blade being run through the centre and fastened together with what looks like four ordinary nails with the heads cut off. There is no guard at all and the machete man often gets his fingers badly wounded. That is the simplest machete.

Others have the bone hand curved to fit into the palm of the hand. When the Cuban husbandman gets his machete it isn't at all sharp. He, however, whets it up until it cuts very easily. A Cuban who has been with the insurgent army described the scene after an encounter, when the insurgents sat around, each busily sharpening his machete for the next assault.

Not only the privates, but the officers as well use the machete. The officers have a shorter weapon and of better stuff. The long blades of the machete of the private will almost bend double without breaking. The shorter, broader, thicker weapons have not the same elasticity.

Astonishing stories are told of the force of the blow that the insurgent can give with the native knife. In the National Museum at Madrid is an American rifle, which, it is claimed, was completely split in half lengthwise, with a blow from a machete.

Women have been known to use the machete, and during the Ten Years' War there were numerous instances where women whose husbands were away fighting defended themselves and children with the machete.

## AMERICAN TORQUOISES.

### One Gem Which We are Mining Extensively.

Although the United States cannot claim to be considered one of the great gem-producing countries of the world, almost every known variety of precious stone has been found within its limits. Few gems, however, are common enough to be of decided commercial importance, and systematic mining is rarely carried on. The only exception to this is afforded by the turquoise. The last edition of the "Mineral Resources of the United States" gives the value of the rough gems of all kinds produced here during 1893 as amounting to \$264,041—of which \$143,136 goes to the credit of the turquoise mines.

Almost all of the American turquoise comes from Santa Fe County, New Mexico, or Mohave County, Arizona.

As in Persia, the turquoise, both in New Mexico and in Arizona, occurs in veins permeating volcanic rocks, a yellowish brown trachyte being the commonest matrix. The Pueblo Indians find them an easy way of making money, as they can be obtained with little trouble, and after being subjected to rough grinding, can be readily sold to travelers. Formerly, when the Indian was more unsophisticated, choice stones could be obtained from them at the outlay of a few cents, but of late years the sellers have begun to realize the value of their goods, and now few real bargains can be secured.

The ancient inhabitants of Mexico mined the turquoise extensively, and the invading Spaniards found it largely used to incrust human skulls, and also to inlay mosaics and to decorate obsidian ornaments. Traces of the old mines can be found to this day, and rubbish heaps are common in the turquoise district. In the Arizona mines they tell how, on a tunnel being run through a turquoise deposit, the miners came across the remains of a more ancient tunnel, its top and sides rent and caved in as if by an earthquake, while in a small space, three or four feet each way, was the skeleton of the unfortunate Aztec, who had been imprisoned there by the falling in of the roof. In one hand the skeleton still clutched the handle of his old mine hammer, and at his side was a leather bag containing, as the discoverers found, several choice stones. It only shows that in the old days men would take as big risks in search of treasure as they will now.

Another tale of turquoise drifts up from Yucatan. It tells of an idol in an ancient temple, around whose neck, arms and ankles are hung strings of magnificent turquoises, while each of its eyes is a single large stone. The narrator, a Mexican miner, claimed that these eye stones were about three inches in their largest diameter. There is something in this story irresistibly suggestive of Rider Haggard's idols.

## The Great Sails of Racing Yachts.

The sails of the racers are probably the most wonderful part of their whole make up. Defender, when she has her mainsail, her jib, her jib topsail, her staysail, and her working topsail up, carries 12,000 square feet of canvas. And when she substitutes for these working-sails her balloon jib, her club topsail, and puts out her spinnaker she almost doubles that area. These sails cost thousands of dollars, because there must be several of each in case of accident to one or another, and for use in the different kinds of wind that may prevail in the race. There is a heavy mainsail for strong winds, of sea-island cotton or Egyptian cotton or ramie cloth, while the jibs are made of lighter grades of the same material, until they come down to the constituency of a coarse pocket-handkerchief. One of Defender's spinnakers is of Scotch linen. In 1893 it was reported that one of Valkyrie II's big spinnakers was of silk, but it was not; it was of exceedingly fine Irish linen.

Taking all these matters into account, and considering that each boat must have from forty to fifty sailors to man her, it becomes evident that the building and maintaining of such a yacht is a matter of no small expense. Mr. George Gould spent no less than \$40,000 to put Vigilant in condition to race with Defender in the preliminary trials this year. The crew has to be engaged and trained for weeks before the racer is put into commission, and kept at work for a couple of months before the great contests for the cup are held. These sailors, of course, cannot live on the yacht, since there is no room for bunks or lockers or a galley on the modern racing machine. Therefore both Defender and Valkyrie had steam-tenders.

## An Electrified Mail Box.

There is a United States letter box on Grand street, Paterson, with letters in it which will not be delivered to the addresses in the morning mail. Letter Carrier James Low attempted to take them out last evening. When he rested one hand on the box and with the other inserted his key in the lock he was sent reeling twenty feet away and picked up dazed.

Others tried to open the box with the same result. The box is charged with electricity, and unless the current is cut off the box cannot be opened.

## THE WHITE BIRCH.

### A Splendid Tree That is Put to Many Uses.

"Why not call trees people?—since, if you come to live among them year after year, you will learn to know many of them personally, and an attachment will grow up between you and them individually." So writes that "Doctor Amabilis" of woodcraft, W. C. Prime, in his book "Among the Northern Hills," and straightway launches forth into eulogy of the white birch. And truly it is an admirable, lovable and comfortable tree, beautiful to look upon and full of various uses. Its wood is strong to make paddles and axe handles, and glorious to burn, blazing up at first with a flashing flame, and then holding the fire in its glowing heart all through the night. Its bark is the most serviceable of all the products of the wilderness. In Russia, they say it is used in tanning, and gives its subtle, sacerdotal fragrance to Russia leather. But here in the woods it serves more primitive ends. It can be peeled off in a huge roll from some giant tree and fashioned into a swift canoe to carry man over the waters. It can be cut into square sheets to roof his shanty in the forest. It is the paper on which he writes his woodland despatches, and the flexible material which he bends into drinking cups of silver lined with gold. A thin strip of it wrapped around the end of a candle and fastened in a cleft stick makes a practical chandelier. A basket for berries, a horn to call the lovelorn moose through the autumn woods, a canvas on which to draw the outline of great and memorable fish—all these and many other indispensable luxuries are stored up for the skilful woodsman in birch bark.

Only do not rob or mar the tree unless you really need what it has to give you. Let it stand and grow in virgin majesty, ungriddled and unscarred, while the trunk becomes a firm pillar of the forest temple, and the branches spread abroad a refuge of bright green leaves for the birds of the air. Nature never made a more excellent piece of handiwork. "And if," said my lady Greygown, "I should ever become a dryad, I would choose to be transformed into a white birch. And then, when the days of my life were numbered, and the sap had ceased to flow, and the last leaf had fallen, and the dry bark hung around me in ragged curls and streamers, some wandering hunter would come in the wintry night and touch a lighted coal to my body, and my spirit would flash up in a fiery chariot into the sky."

## The Nautch Dancer.

The tent was already densely packed with Hindoo spectators, a line of statuesque torch bearers stood around a long carpet, and at the end of the carpet lay a pile of cushions under a canopy, all of gold worked crimson velvet. This was the Rajah's place, but as he had sent word that he could not be present, the music struck up when our party had seated themselves in a row of chairs on a raised platform at the right. Then the dancing began—dances by several bayaderes, and single dances accompanied with song or recitative, ending with a performance by the court actors. After a preliminary ballet, in which two or three took part, a dainty little personage came forward—graceful, gazelle-eyed—enveloped in a filmy cloud of black and gold gauze, which floated airily about her; she was the living incarnation of the Nautch, as interpreted by the sculptors of Chitor; from the air of laughing assurance with which she surveyed her assembled subjects, it was evident that she was accustomed to homage and sure of conquest. She held her audience absorbed and expectant by the monotonous and plaintive cadence of her song, by long glances full of intense meaning from half closed eyes, and by swift changes of expression and mood, as well as by the spell of "woven paces and of waving arms." One may see many a Nautch without retaining such a vivid impression; much of its force was owing, no doubt, to the fitness of the place and the charm of strange accessories, the uncertain glare of the smoking torches, the mingling of musky odors with the overpowering scent of attar of roses, and of wilting jasmine flowers; these perfumes were intensified in the close air of the tent by the heat of the night—the prelude to the fiercer heat which comes with the morning and the rising of the hot wind.

## Expensive Bird Skins.

Skins of the great auk are still more valuable than eggs, but the number of transactions has been very much fewer, in fact, it is believed the last one previous to the sale this year took place in 1869. This had belonged to Dr. Troughton, and brought £94 10s. The Edinburgh Museum had an opportunity of acquiring one in 1870 for £100, but the offer was declined. However, in 1895, a fine specimen was secured for 350 guineas. The great auk preserved in the Natural History Museum of Central Park, New York, cost £130 in 1868. Previous to this the value rapidly declines, so to speak, as in 1860 Mr. Champey bought a skin and an egg for 45s. It is safe to say they would fetch ten times as much now. The skin possessed by Mr. Malcolm of Poltalloch, Lochgilphead, New-Brunswick, is thought to have cost originally, about the year 1840, only £3 or 4s.

Mr. Bullock's great auk, sent to him from Papa Westra, Orkney, was, after his death, sold in the year 1819 for £15 5s. 6d., and this although it was a genuine British specimen, and therefore almost if not quite unique in this respect. Yet—and this must close the summary of prices—the value of a skin in 1834 was only about 2s. Truly, tempora mutatur.