"FETTERS OF GOLD."

By KATHARINE RENELL.

He sat alone in the big luxuriously furnished library. The room was oppressively still, but from without, through the closed double doors, came the faint strains of a languorous waltz.

A grim smile curled slowly round the corners of his mouth. It really was rather comic to make one's exit from the world to the sounds, not of a "Marche Funebre," but of dance music!

He touched almost affectionately the revolver lying on the table in front of him. It was expensive, the best of its kind, like everything else in this expensive house, it would not blunder, it would do its work well.

Just one pull at the trigger, and then—ah!—respite from misery, freedom from care—eternal sleep. He leaned back in his chair and his eyes strayed, half mechanically, to the little Sevres clock on the mantelpiece. Half past eleven. In another thirty minutes—at midnight—he had made up his mind to die.

Leaning back with half closed eyes, he thought over his past life. It is said that the dying—and he, surely, was practically that—sometimes see their whole lives pass before them in full review, and now he was seeing his. He saw it all from the very beginning. The childhood in his grandmother's log cabin on the bleak Irish bog; the flight, as a lad of sixteen, to England, because, in his miserable home he had been treated worse than a dog; the poverty, the hardships, the marriage, when he was barely twenty, to a girl of seventeen, and then, just as if the young wife had acted as a mascot—as, laughingly, in those days he had often told her that she had—the gradual turning of his luck. He had "struck ile," as the vulgar saying expressed it, and the man who had been little better than a beggar at twenty had, at forty, become a millionaire.

A millionaire! He opened his eyes and glanced—the grim smile still on his face—round the splendid room. Who would have thought that the poor, beaten, half-starved little urchin of the log cabin was going to blossom out, some day, into a business genius? And who would have thought, too—and the smile grew grimmer—that the man who had proved himself to have such a splendid talent for organization, such a wonderful "grip" of his trade, would be a fool at gambling, and fritter his vast fortune away?

His fingers strayed again to the weapon which was to bring him his freedom. To-night nobody knew anything; to-morrow it would be in all the papers that John Dolan, the millionaire, was ruined.

His ruin had been creeping upon him stealthily for years. He had gambled—foolishly, heartlessly, recklessly. He had seen everything, all the money that he had striven for, in sweat and blood, slipping from his grasp—and he had not cared! And why had the wealth, which he had spent the best years of his manhood in striving for, proved such dust and ashes to him that, when he lost it, he did not mind?

A look of intense bitterness crept into his eyes. Ah! he had loved her, the pretty village maiden he had made his wife! They had been happy in the poor little poverty-stricken home—happier far than he, at any rate, had ever been in Grosvener square. And then? Then the money had begun to come in, and they had drifted apart. Mary had such a big house now to attend to—she had her visitors, her gayeties, her numerous rounds of what she called her "duty" calls. It takes three generations to make a gentleman, they say; it only takes about three years, he reflected half humorously, half bitterly, to make a lady. He had never been a gentleman—never would be one, he knew—and he remembered his sudden feeling of amazement, of shock, when he had seen his wife on the occasion of her presentation at court. Mary, at twenty, had been shy, awkward, a typical country miss, nothing more; at thirty, she had the ease and graciousness of a young queen. She had carried herself superbly; her little head—on which the diamond tiara had seemed to him to twinkle with mocking derisive eyes—was poised proudly on the slender throat. She wore her court train, her feathers, as if she had been accustomed to such gorgeous raiment all her life. Mary had very soon adapted herself to the role of grand dame.

And then the children! In the cottage home they had been a never-ending source of delight. Well he remembered how he came back in the evenings tired from his work, they would meet him in the doorway, these four beings whom he loved; the baby crowing on Mary's shoulder; Harry, the boy; Molly, the eldest girl, clinging to her skirts. Then, after tea, they would gather round the fire, and, with Mary sitting beside him, her soft arm round his neck, they two would talk eagerly of the business which he had just in an humble way begun to start, and make plans—half jokingly—of the wonderful things which they were going to do "when they got rich!" Harry, the boy, should be sent to a good school—he had always sorely felt the lack of education in his own life, and determined that, if wealth ever did come to him, his son should not suffer in the same way. Molly and Baby—the darlings, they were so pretty!—they should have the loveliest frocks that money could buy, they had actually been realized!

Harry had had a good education, and, in his first term at Harrow, he had realized bitterly that his son despised him. He was "common," and Harry was a gentleman—made so by his gold; and now that the Harrow days were over and a crack regiment had been entered by the idle, good-for-nothing young man, who would never have had the brains or the energy to make the fortune which his father had, he knew that he was despised still more.

Molly and Baby—Kathleen she was called now—had had the "loveliest frocks that money could buy." They had inherited their mother's beauty, while "poor papa's bourgeoise," as they called it, had been fortunately left out. Molly was married—to the eldest son of a peer; Kathleen, the younger girl, was expected to make an equally brilliant match. There had been a rich young American at her feet all the season; in the few hurried conversations which, in her whirl of social distractions, Mary found time to have with him, she had told him that it was "to bring the thing to a satisfactory climax" that this ball was being given to-night.

Well, they were well provided for—those whom he was leaving behind. If they were going to be left helpless he would not have done it—would not have recklessly gambled away his fortune, would not have thrown away his life—but they were left with settled prospects. Harry's money had been settled on him when he came of age; nobody could touch that; the girls would have wealthy husbands, and Mary—

A shadow fell across the stern, grave face. Mary was a beautiful woman, she was fairly young—under fifty still—she would marry again.

Doubtless after the first shock was over, she would be glad to be released from the "common" husband of whom, he had guessed long ago, she was ashamed.

The clock on the mantelpiece chimed out 12. Without a moment's hesitation, he stood up. With his right hand he raised the revolver to his temple.

The door opened, and his wife came into the room.

Quick as lightning he hid the deadly revolver behind his back. Anxiously, he searched her face. No, she had not seen the revolver, had not surmised what he was going to do.

"John, I have come to fetch you. Is it not rather rude for you to hide yourself in here, away from all your guests?" She came slowly toward him. Yes, Mary was certainly a most beautiful woman—a young looking woman, too. In her white brocade dress, diamonds shimmering on her neck and in her hair, she looked almost like one of her own daughters. And yet—he had loved her best in the sun bonnet and pink frock.

He looked at her angrily. Why had she interrupted him? And then he almost laughed. Good heavens! He must loathe this "too, too solid flesh" of his, indeed, to be in such a hurry to make an end of his life! He was only delayed only a few minutes—he could kill himself directly she had gone again.

"I hate my guests," he answered. He spoke roughly. "What do they come for? To feast in my house, drink my champagne, and laugh at me behind my back directly they have left!"

"John! I wish you would not talk like that. You won't come to the ballroom, then?"

"No."

"Why not?"

She looked up at him. He softened a little at the sweet wistfulness of her face. After all, they had loved each other once.

"I—I am busy. I have something else to do—just now."

He clutched feverishly at the weapon behind his back. What a mercy that she had not seen it!

She sighed. It seemed to him—or was it fancy?—that the wistfulness on her face deepened a little. A shadow fell across it.

"That is what it has been for years, John. You have always been 'busy.' Making money, I suppose."

He did not answer, and she moved to a sofa and sat down. He noticed how the softly shaded electric lamp drew out the rich tints in her hair.

"I—I have something to tell you," she said, gently, "about Kathleen. I thought, as the girl's father, that you would, perhaps, be interested"—

He laughed.

"Kathleen herself has never betrayed the slightest interest in, or affection for, me since she was ten years old. Why should I be interested in her?"

It was rather a cruel taunt, to the girl's own mother, but Mary ignored it. She sat very still, gazing straight before her, and he saw a tender maternal look steal over her face.

"Young Vanderveldt has proposed to her to-night. She has just told me. I hope—I hope the dear child will be happy."

"There is small doubt of that. He has tons of money, hasn't he?" Again he laughed. The laughter sounded bitter and hard.

His wife looked at him. There was a half puzzled, half reproachful expression in the large grey eyes.

"Why do you talk like that, John? Why do you look so white, so—so—odd?"

His laughter had died down, but it left a lingering smile—cruel, mocking—on his lips.

"You interrupted me," he said, harshly; "your entrance just now was—was ill timed."

"What were you going to do?" The clear, steady eyes were still fixed on his face. There was something about Mary to-night—her stillness, her gentleness—which, somehow, irritated him. It acted on his already overstrung nerves as a match applied to a torch. With a sort of bravado—defiance—he withdrew the revolver from behind his back and brandished it in front of her face.

"Blow my brains out!" he cried. It was cheap melodrama, but he had expected Mary to be impressed by it. He had expected her to scream—possibly, faint. Instead, however, she sat quite still. Only the sudden whitening of her face, the sudden little catch in her breath, betrayed that she had even heard at all. Then, suddenly, she got up from her seat.

"Why?" she asked.

He was amazed—and, perhaps, a trifle disappointed—at her coolness. Then a thought struck him. Mary thought that he was suddenly stricken with madness, and her attitude of calm collectedness was the one which she considered wisest to adopt toward a lunatic. Well, he would show her that his desperate words and action had not been the idle ravings of a maniac—that he was in deadly earnest.

He laid the revolver down on the table, and caught hold of her hands.

"Because I am ruined!" he said. The small hands within his trembled, but still Mary did not flinch—still the lovely, gentle eyes were fixed calmly on his face.

"Ruined!" he repeated, and his voice was low and hoarse. "They think I am a millionaire, the people dancing and feasting to-night in my house. To-morrow, the whole world will know that my money is lost! I am a beggar!"

"But how have you lost it?"

He let go her hands suddenly, and threw his out with a gesture of despair. He did not notice that, directly her hands were released, she snatched up the deadly weapon on the table and concealed it behind her back.

"Gambling! Oh, you didn't know that I was a gambler, did you? For the last ten years I have been fritting my hard earned money away. I gambled on the stock exchange, on the turf, at Monte Carlo—those annual visits which I paid there, when I always would go alone, were simply to indulge my awful passion—and I always—always—lost!"

"But why in the name of heaven, did you do it?"

She did not treat him to tears, abuses or reproach. She simply stood there calmly, and looked him straight in the face.

Almost unconsciously, he hung his head. Before, he had not been in the least ashamed of himself. He had thought his conduct—taking into consideration the fact that he was unhappy in his home—perfectly justified. Now—well, some people might think that to ruin your wife and children by gambling, and then bring further disgrace on them by committing suicide, the action of a brute and a cad.

"Because—oh, because I was miserable, reckless, mad—I did not care what I did! A man must go somewhere to find amusement, happiness, and I—I found no happiness in my own home!"

"Oh—John!"

At last she broke down. Her face worked, tears course! down her checks.

"Mary!" he lifted his bowed head. "You remember the old days, when we were poor, how we longed to get rich? We did get rich, and I learned to curse—yes, curse—the money which forged fetters of gold around my neck! What was money to me, do you think, when my children and my wife—ah! especially my wife!—were daily drifting away from me? You despised me! You, Mary, were able to take your place in society—women adapt themselves to their sourroundings far more easily than men do—and I—I was not. So, now, I am best out of the way."

The low, desperate voice broke off in a kind of sob. He moved to the table for the revolver—yes, he would do it now, in front of the woman who had ceased to love him—

The weapon was not there.

With a fierce exclamation he turned to his wife. Mary was breathing heavily, her face was deathlike, two little crimson drops—she had bitten her under lip till the red blood trickled down her chin.

"Have you ever thought, when you had done this dreadful thing—the children are provided for—what was to become of—of—me?"

"You are a beautiful woman, Mary. I know plenty of men who admire you—you will marry again."

She made no reply—it was as if she treated the remark with contempt. She asked him something else.

"When all your debts are paid—all your affairs wound up—shall I have any money?"

"Very little."

She drew close to him. He heard the soft rustle of her gown; a faint, subtle perfume of violets wafted across his face.

"We lived—on 'very little'—once."

He glanced at her, sharply. When had he seen that look before on Mary's face—that look of tender happiness—of love? Ah! he remembered! On that summer evening, years and years ago, when he had asked her to be his wife.

"And we were happy—too."

He stood as one struck dumb, gazing at Mary's radiant face, her shining eyes.

"Far happier than we have ever been since we were rich."

The silence in the room was intense. The ticking of the little clock on the mantelpiece—the only sound which broke the stillness—was like the beating of a heart.

Suddenly, he felt a soft arm round his neck.

"John!—you never knew it, you were always so busy, you never seemed to have time to talk to your poor little wife—but for years I—I have hated the money, too. It was all right for the children—they were young and had never known anything else; but we—we were old folks, old-fashioned"—she smiled—"and, whatever I might have appeared outwardly, I could never quite throw off the past. You thought the new prosperity made me drift apart from you; well, I thought it made you drift apart from me. You were always so occupied with your business, your affairs, which I was too stupid to understand. But now the money is lost, and I am glad—yes, glad!—for to me, too"—and there was a sob in the low, tender voice—"it has been fetters round my neck, John!—oh, my husband!—whom I have always loved better than any one else in the whole world!—let us go back to the little cottage—let us begin life over again."

She put the revolver back on the table—she knew there was no more need to hide it—and both the soft, clinging arms were round his neck now. And he was sobbing, with his gray head on her breast—sobbing like a child.

Yes, he would take up his life again—that life which he had so nearly thrown away—and, once more, he would be happy, with the happiness which only love can give.—The Bystander.

Young Man, Be a Farm-Owning Farmer.

Bishop Fitzgerald, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, says: "The land owners of a nation will rule it. There has been no exception to this in the world's history up to date. When the people of the South sell and leave their lands and huddle together in large masses as employers and operatives, their numbers may be increased but their quality deteriorated. The man who reads only the daily paper, and talks only the small talk of the passing hour, will never think like Thomas Jefferson or speak like Patrick Henry. The life of a farmer is especially favorable to a noble manhood. Men living thus on their own farms take time to think. They also preserve their individuality. The sharpening process takes away just so much of breadth. Too much grindstone proves especially fatal to thin material. The great Americans have been in the most instances country bred. Hold on to your lands. Put in some of your spare time in improving them. There is no fairer land on earth than this. Don't go farther to fare worse."

This is the truth plainly told. No better advice was ever given by any man. Many of our young men will live to regret the day they forsook the farm of their fathers for the city.

Misfires of Young Idea.

Air usually has no weight, but when placed in a barometer it is found to weigh about fifteen pounds to a square inch.

If a small hole were bored in the top of a barometer tube the mercury would shoot up in a column thirty feet high.

A right angle is ninety degrees Fahrenheit.

Hydrogen is colorless, odorless and insolvent.

A cuckoo is a thing that turns from a butterfly into a moth.

Horsepower is the distance a horse can carry one pound of water in an hour.

The earth revolves on its own axis 365 times in twenty-four hours. This rapid motion through space causes its sides to perspire, forming dew.—University Correspondent.

Fellow Churchmen.

The late Rev. Dr. John Hall was once walking home from preaching at a Sunday night meeting out in the country. In the moonlight he saw a man lying drunk in the gutter, and going up to him gave him a shake.

"Here!" he said; "it's a shame for a nice, respectable looking man like you to be lying in the gutter."

The man opened his tipsy eyes and saw the long, black coat.

"Are you a minister?" he asked.

"Yes," said Dr. Hall, "come, get up."

"Presbyterian?" queried the inebriate.

"Yes," was the answer, somewhat impatiently. "I am."

"Then," said the other, "help me up. I am a Presbyterian myself."—Philadelphia North American.

Gloves were first seen in England during the reign of Edward II.

Fatal Ridicule.

By Winifred Black.

A WELL-KNOWN and successful physician killed himself in Pennsylvania the other day because he couldn't stand the ridicule of his friends.

The physician had become interested in an invention made by an ignorant cobbler and he backed the cobbler to a goodly amount of money.

The invention turned out to be a failure, the cobbler who had dreamed of being a millionaire went back to his cobbling and the physician who had believed in him and his invention tried to go on with his work.

But his friends wouldn't let him.

They had too good a chance to have some fun with a sensitive fellow creature—so they had it.

The doctor stood the jokes and the twittings and the satirical congratulations of his friends—lovely name, that word friend, isn't it? It means so much in a case like this—as long as he could and then he killed himself to get out of the sound of their satirical laughter.

I wonder if the friends who laughed this man to death sent a wreath of roses or a broken column of immortelles to the funeral of the man they murdered.

What a lot of savages there are left in the world, after all!

There are some people who never laugh except at some one's else discomfiture, embarrassment or distress.

Nothing is so funny to them as a look of disappointment and chagrin on the face of one they know.

Strange idea of humor, isn't it?

Of course, it is folly to pay any attention to the satirical laughter of a mean-spirited acquaintance who loves to see you writhe under his sarcasm.

A really strong man would have laughed at the people who laughed at him.

A really strong man would have stood the jokes as long as he cared to, and then he would have given the jokers some kind of a little surprise party of their own which would have kept them too busy to give them time to laugh so hard at him.

A really great nature does not care much what the ordinary man or woman thinks of him.

A really big man does what he thinks is right and lets the world laugh or cry or frown or flatter him.

This man who died was, of course, weak and over-sensitive, but for that very reason I think I should hate to be one of the people who drove him to an unhappy death; wouldn't you?—New York American.

A Canadian Northwest Town As It Really Is

By Clifton Johnson.

THE village where I stopped was just up above the Canadian line. It had been recommended to me as "quite a busy little burg," but I could not see that it was very different from other small sawmill towns I had observed from the car window as I went North. There was the same cluster of wooden stores, saloons, churches, lodging houses and hotels, and a dribble of residences for a mile about. The dwelling that reached a full magnificence of two stories was a rarity. Most people were content with one story, and the house was small at that. Newness and rawness were very apparent, and there was a good deal of the makeshift about the dwellings. All the home premises were snugly fenced, and the cows and horses were turned loose to browse in the public ways and along the railroad tracks and out into the surrounding wilds to suit themselves.

A large sawmill had burned the year before and had not been replaced. Many workers had therefore moved away, and certain saloons and lodging-houses had closed their doors as a consequence. These buildings were now little short of ruinous, with shattered windows and other marks of neglect and misuse that gave the place a touch of melancholy and decay. On my first day, as I sat in the hotel office I made inquiry about conditions, and one man turned to another and said: "Well, Bill, the town's havin' a little bit of a boom just now, ain't it?"

"Yes," replied Bill, "it booms nights. I've heard it; but I don't see much difference daytimes."

"Why is it that your vacant buildings look so shaky?" I asked. "They can't be old."

"I suppose," responded Bill, "it's because it ain't the habit of the country to build substantial. Even a nice appearin' building is apt to be cheap and thin-walled. The paint is about all there is to it."—The Outing Magazine.

The Rapid Increase of Suicide

Sidney Reeve.

THE suicide rate of New York State had become, in 1900, 3.5 times what it was in 1860; by 1904 this multiplier had risen to four. Indiana's rate, although generally lower than any of the others, is increasing more rapidly than any of them. From 1860 to 1900 it had multiplied itself by three and two-thirds. In four years more this ratio had risen to seven and one-third! In other words, during each of the first four years of the new century, Indiana's suicide-rate had increased by an amount almost equal to the entire suicide-rate for 1860! It is to be remembered, too, that this refers, not to the number of suicides, which would naturally increase with increasing population, but to the number per thousand of population.

It is impossible to say just how far Indiana is better or worse than her neighbors in this respect, for the statistics are not equally complete for all. But to prove that this state is not exceptional in its showing, the statistics for ten eastern States and several hundred cities scattered all over the land, averaged together, show that the increase of suicide-rate during the first four years of the century was 6.5, 4.4, 10.0 and 8.2 per cent. per annum respectively, a remarkably steady increase, averaging 7.3 per cent. per annum. For the four years taken together, Indiana's increase was almost exactly equal to the average for this large territory above mentioned. But the following year, for which there are no available data from the larger territory, Indiana's rate jumped 43.6 per cent. further, and during the first half of 1907 was 55 per cent. greater than it was in 1904!

During these first four years of the century, Boston, alone among the cities, showed a decrease in suicide-rate. Yet from even this oasis in the desert of despair comfort is denied us, for the result was even then fifty per cent. higher than it had been in 1880.—From the World To-Dday.

Who Governs Korea?

By Prince Ito Hirobumi.

IN the solution of the Korean problem, a man always asks this question: What power is it that exercises the dominant control over that people? What force is it that is controlling the politics of the Koreans? Moreover, what is that invisible power (which one sees in every country controlling the life of a race) that shapes the destiny of the Korean? Is it religion, or is it customs and habits?

In my judgment the majority of the Koreans are governed by the Chinese learning and the Chinese code of ethics. Beyond that, I do not see any influence that has a particular power over them. In the interpretation of virtues,—politeness, righteousness, truthfulness, faithfulness, affection, and so on,—they find their criterion in the teachings of Confucius and Mencius. Even among the highly educated class of Koreans, education stops with the Chinese scholarship. Beyond that there is nothing. Even those who style themselves scholars are by no means scholars in the professional and specialized sense. When you ask what are the thoughts and ideas which govern this class, you will find that they are much like those young men in the closing days of the Shogunate in Nippon, who were governed by a few pamphlets and patriotic poems written by the thinkers of the time. They look upon Nippon as a barbarous country, they regard themselves as the civilized and enlightened race. As for the common people and the farmers, they have no education or culture whatever.—Harper's Weekly.

Woman's Independence

WITH the household as it is now made up, it is not psychologically a good thing for one person to be dependent upon the will of another and solely attached to his interests. No matter how perfectly a woman is educated in the schools, she will not keep pace with men unless she has some concerns for which she is primarily responsible. This does not amount to saying that she must be financially independent, or a bread-winner, though there is no objection to that. But her life demands some first-hand reaction to the world for the sake of her character and intelligence. Under the pressure of natural selection man made a tardy alliance with woman and the home in primitive times. He has used woman as a plaything, as a lay figure on which to hang his wealth; has bought her cheap and bought her dear; but he has really never associated with her.