

feeling the bad effects of my confinement, though it was stupid work playing alone. In the course of time people from the town and neighbourhood began to pester the jailor to be allowed to see me, and on receiving handsome fees he let them do so. The people were good to me; almost too good, for they were inclined to make a lion of me, which I hated - at least the women were; only they had to beware of Yram, who was a young lady of a jealous temperament, and kept a sharp eye both on me and on my lady visitors. However, I felt so kindly towards her, and was so entirely dependent upon her for almost all that made my life a blessing and a comfort to me, that I took good care not to vex her, and we remained excellent friends. The men were far less inquisitive, and would not, I believe, have come near me of their accord; but the women made them come as escorts. I was delighted with their handsome mien, and pleasant genial manners.

My food was plain, but always varied and wholesome, and the good red wine was admirable. I had found a sort of wort in the garden, which I sweated in heaps and then dried, obtaining thus a substitute for tobacco; so that what with Yram, the language, visitors, fires in the garden, smoking, and bed, my time slipped by more rapidly and pleasantly than might have been expected. I also made myself a small flute; and being a tolerable player, amused myself at times with playing snatches from operas, and airs such as 'Oh where and oh where,' and 'Home, sweet home.' This was of great advantage to me, for the people of the country were ignorant of the diatonic scale and could hardly believe their ears on hearing some of our most common melodies. Often, too, they would make me sing; and I could at any time make Yram's eyes swim with tears by singing 'Wilkins and his Dinah,' 'Billy Taylor,' 'The Ratcatcher's Daughter,' or as much of them as I could remember.

I had one or two discussions with them because I never would sing on Sunday (of which I kept count in my pocket-book), except chants and hymn tunes; of these I regret to say that I had forgotten the words, so that I could only sing the tune. They appeared to have little or no religious feeling, and to have never so much as heard of the divine institution of the

Sabbath, so they ascribed my observance of it to a fit of sulkiness, which they remarked as coming over me upon every seventh day. But they were very tolerant, and one of them said to me quite kindly that she knew how impossible it was to help being sulky at times, only she thought I ought to see some one if it became more serious - a piece of advice which I then failed to understand, though I pretended to take it quite as a matter of course.

Once only did Yram treat me in a way that was unkind and unreasonable, - at least so I thought it at the time. It happened thus. I had been playing fives in the garden and got much heated. Although the day was cold, for autumn was now advancing, and Cold Harbour (as the name of the town in which my prison was should be translated) stood fully 3000 feet above the sea, I had played without my coat and waistcoat, and took a sharp chill on resting myself too long in the open air without protection. The next day I had a severe cold and felt really poorly. Being little used even to the lightest ailments, and thinking that it would be rather nice to be petted and cosseted by Yram, I certainly did not make myself out to be any better than I was; in fact, I remember that I made the worst of things, and took it into my head to consider myself upon the sick list. When Yram brought me my breakfast I complained somewhat dolefully of my indisposition, expecting the sympathy and humouring which I should have received from my mother and sisters at home. Not a bit of it. She fired up in an instant, and asked me what I meant by it, and how I dared to presume to mention such a thing, especially when I considered in what place I was. She had the best mind to tell her father, only that she was afraid the consequences would be so very serious for me. Her manner was so injured and decided, and her anger so evidently unfeigned, that I forgot my cold upon the spot, begging her by all means to tell her father if she wished to do so, and telling her that I had no idea of being shielded by her from anything whatever; presently mollifying, after having said as many biting things as I could, I asked her what it was that I had done amiss, and promised amendment as soon as ever I became aware of it. She saw that I was really

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ignorant, and had had no intention of being rude to her; whereon it came out that illness of any sort was considered in Erewhon to be highly criminal and immoral; and that I was liable, even for catching cold, to be had up before the magistrates and imprisoned for a considerable period - an announcement which struck me dumb with astonishment.

I followed up the conversation as well as my imperfect knowledge of the language would allow, and caught a glimmering of her position with regard to ill-health; but I did not even then fully comprehend it, nor had I as yet any idea of the other extraordinary perversions of thought which existed among the Erewhonians, but with which I was soon to become familiar. I propose, therefore, to make no mention of what passed between us on this occasion, save that we were reconciled, and that she brought me surreptitiously a hot glass of spirits and water before I went to bed, as also a pile of extra blankets, and that next morning I was quite well. I never remember to have lost a cold so rapidly.

This little affair explained much which had hitherto puzzled me. It seemed that the two men who were examined before the magistrates on the day of my arrival in the country, had been given in charge on account of ill health, and were both condemned to a long term of imprisonment with hard labour; they were now expiating their offence in this very prison, and their exercise ground was a yard separated by my fives wall from the garden in which I walked. This accounted for the sounds of coughing and groaning which I had often noticed as coming from the other side of the wall: it was high, and I had not dared to climb it for fear the jailor should see me and think that I was trying to escape; but I had often wondered what sort of people they could be on the other side, and had resolved on asking the jailor; but I seldom saw him, and had and I generally found other things to talk about.

Another month flew by, during which I made such progress in the language that I could understand all that was said to me, and express myself with tolerable fluency. My instructor professed to be astonished with the progress I had made; I was careful to attribute it to the pains he had taken with me and to

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his admirable method of explaining my difficulties, so we became excellent friends.

My visitors became more and more frequent. Among them there were some, both men and women, who delighted me entirely by their simplicity, unconsciousness of self, kindly genial manners, and last, but not least, by their exquisite beauty; there came others less well-bred, but still comely and agreeable people, while some were snobs pure and simple.

At the end of the third month the jailor and my instructor came together to visit me and told me that communications had been received from the Government to the effect that if I had behaved well and seemed generally reasonable, and if there could be no suspicion at all about my bodily health and vigour, and if my hair was really light, and my eyes blue and complexion fresh, I was to be sent up at once to the metropolis in order that the King and Queen might see me and converse with me; but that when I arrived there I should be set at liberty, and a suitable allowance would be made me. My teacher also told me that one of the leading merchants had sent me an invitation to repair to his house and to consider myself his guest for as long a time as I chose. 'He is a delightful man,' continued the interpreter, 'but has suffered terribly from' (here there came a long word which I could not quite catch, only it was much longer than kleptomania), 'and has but lately recovered from embezzling a large sum of money under singularly distressing circumstances; but he has quite got over it, and the straighteners say that he has made a really wonderful recovery; you are sure to like him.'