THE BONES OF OUR ANCESTORS.

MY sister Mary Ann had just returned from boarding-school. The admiration I felt for her was unbounded, although not unmixed with awe, for a three years' absence had developed that mysterious charm called "style," and all Laketown felt itself wanting before this new shibboleth of nineteenth-century beauty. We were together in our own room after an evening of conversation with visitors, and Mary Ann was unlacing her dainty boots, and reviewing the evening with satirical scorn. "Such a dull town! such commonplace people! such plebeian names! Think of receiving a Simpkins, a Jones, and a Stubbs!"

"Laugh at the others as much as you please, Mary Ann, but do not say any thing against Joe."

"I am not saying any thing against him, Nora—only against his name. Joel Stubbs! What a weight! He might as well have a millstone hung round his neck."

Now Joe was father's partner, a fine-looking, energetic young man, who had admired Mary Ann through childhood and girlhood, continued faithful during her long absence, and now stood ready to devote bouquets, concert tickets, French candy, and himself to the fair débutante. I liked him with a younger sister's liking, and it annoyed me to see the scorn on Mary Ann's face as she ridiculed his unfortunate name. "I do not see that Stubbs is any worse than Bilson," I said, with some asperity.

"You are right, Nora; it is not. Bilson and Stubbs! The very sight of the firm name is depressing. I have, however, a hope for the future. I did not intend to tell you so soon, but the conversation has led me on. Look, Nora, what do you think of that?" said my sister, rising majestically and pouring a stream of water from the pitcher down upon the floor.

"You will ruin the new carpet!" I exclaimed.

Mary Ann vouchsafed no answer, but taking off one stocking, she deliberately put her little bare foot before the miniature river, and watched its slow advance with eager attention.

"You will take your death of cold, Mary Ann."

"See! it runs under the instep. Come and look. It runs directly under the instep," exclaimed my sister, proudly. "Now, Nora, you will be prepared for what I have to say. This test is an infallible proof of aristocratic descent. Somewhere back in antiquity we have knightly blood, and I have determined to devote myself to the quest. When I left home three years ago I was shamefully ignorant of the importance of genealogy, and quite unconscious of the plebeian character of our family name. But Madame Hauton's school is eminently aristocratic, and in a few days a deputation from the dormitory inquired for my ancestral tree. Fortunately I did not betray our want of any such document, and as my foot stood the test which is always applied to new-comers, I was allowed to take my place on an equality with the rest, especially as I did not contradict the pronunciation which was given to my name—Marion Beelsohn, instead of the odious Mary Ann Bilson. But during these three years I have given the subject careful study, and have made great discoveries. There is a possibility—yes, even a probability—that our name is not Bilson, but Belleston; that we are descended from a noble English family of that name in Staffordshire, whose ancestral residence is called Perton Hall, described in the guide-books as 'venerably aristocratic.' Now, Nora, I have come back determined to pursue the quest. Father is rich, and we only need a noble name to be received into the highest circles of the land. I flatter myself there is nothing else to prevent our immediate entrance into the circles where we belong," said my stately sister, with a glance at the mirror.

"I thought America had no aristocracy," I answered, timidly.

"Not an acknowledged aristocracy, perhaps; but let me assure you, my little novice, that the invisible lines are as closely drawn here as in foreign countries. There is the old Dutch hierarchy and its descendants, the Plymouth Rock root and its branches, the Palmetto stock and its offspring. Beauty, brains, and money scintillate through these grand divisions like so many comets. But as we can not claim any of the three in the extreme effulgence required, we must try to make good our claim in some other way. To-morrow I will show you the documents I have collected. You must help me to awaken the proper interest in papa's mind. We must go East and visit the graves of our ancestors, and I confidently expect to return to Laketown an acknowledged Belleston."

"I wonder what Joe will think of it," I said, after a pause.

"His opinion is a matter of perfect indifference to me," replied Mary Ann, turning out the gas. "Of course a Stubbs could have no adequate conception of the case."

"I thought you liked Joe, sister?"

"You little provincial! I like Mr. Stubbs very well in his proper sphere, but with these important researches before me, I can not be interrupted by his constant visits. I shall endeavor not to hurt his feelings, but really he must be made to understand his position."

"Father depends upon Joe, Mary Ann."

"In the business, do you mean? Ah, yes. But I hope soon to induce papa to give up all active employment, and take us East, to the old homestead in Massachusetts. He

might build a country-seat there, and call it Perton Hall, after the residence of our English ancestors."

I fell asleep with haunting visions of English country residences on Massachusetts Bay, howling east winds without, and within an assemblage of transcendental minds in highly aristocratic bodies communing upon the mysteries of the soul.

The next morning at the breakfast-table a beautiful bouquet stood beside Mary Ann's plate. "What lovely flowers!" I exclaimed.

"The card spoils them," said Mary Ann, tossing away the offending pasteboard.

I read the little missive—"Joel Stubbs to Miss Mary Ann."

"What is the matter with the card, Mollie?" asked father, surveying his pretty daughter with affectionate pride.

"The name! It is so essentially plebeian. But I have something to tell you, papa, which can not fail to interest you;" and forthwith my sister plunged into her subject, her color rising, her eyes sparkling, and her face lighted up with so much animation that father and mother exchanged admiring glances, and even the boys paused in their onslaught on the buckwheat cakes to listen to her tale. "Now, papa, is it not wonderful? Will you not help me to find the missing link?" concluded Mary Ann, earnestly.

"Well, my daughter, when I find time I will see about it. To-day, Stubbs tells me, some of the country customers are to be here, and—"

"Never mind Stubbs, papa. Look at your hand as it lies there—notice those shapely fingers! That hand never belonged to a Bilson *pur et simple;* it is the hand of an aristocrat," said Mary Ann, stroking father's hand affectionately.

"It's not so bad, that's a fact," replied father, surveying his fist with some pride.

The boys instantly spread their fingers, sticky with sirup, upon the table-cloth. "There's a stumpy paw for you," cried Tom, pointing triumphantly to his brother's fat fingers. "*You* ain't an aristocrat, Johnny Bilson, anyway."

"I am, too," howled Johnny; "that's where Jim Peters gashed me with the bat last summer."

"Hush, boys! Thomas, don't tease your brother," said father, sternly.

"Just wait till I get you out in the back-yard," muttered Tom to Johnny, in an appalling whisper.

After breakfast Mary Ann brought in her documents—extracts from early histories of the New England colony, copies of genealogical papers, tombstone inscriptions, town records, letters from antiquarians, and a flourishing ancestral tree, going back from Thomas to Joseph, from Joseph to Thomas, generation before generation, until the date of 1660, when the original Thomas made his first appearance in the records on the occasion of his marriage to Sarah, daughter of Deacon Samuel Hyde. Where he came from, who were his parents, no one could tell; and yet at that early date the names of all persons arriving in New England and the record of all births were carefully kept.

"Who, then, was the original Thomas?" demanded Mary Ann, with impressive earnestness. To this question none of the family could reply. "Listen," said Mary Ann, surveying her audience majestically. "In 1625 Captain Belleston, son of Sir Thomas Belleston, of Perton Hall, Staffordshire, England, sailed to this country and founded a settlement, which he named Mount Belleston: I believe it is now Quincy. He brought with him a number of retainers, a chaplain of the Church of England, and established daily service, a May-pole, and various other usages of the old country, which brought down upon him the ill-will of the Puritans even during his presence in the village. After remaining a year at the Mount, Captain Belleston sailed south, toward Virginia, for the purpose of finding a warmer climate, intending to return and move his colony southward, away from the inhospitable abode of the Puritans. Leaving his wife and an infant son behind, he sailed south, and the records are silent as to his fate; undoubtedly the vessel was wrecked, and all on board were lost. Soon after his departure, however, the Puritans assembled, marched out to Mount Belleston, and 'in a grave and righteous manner' sacked the town, 'overthrowing the idols thereof'—meaning, I suppose, the altar in the little church—causing 'the priest of Beelzebub to flee for his life,' and 'compassing the inhabiters of the cursed town with brimstone and destruction.' I find nothing more concerning either the settlement or the name until 1660, when our original Thomas Bilson appears upon the scene, aged thirty-four years. Now as that would have been the exact age of the son left behind by Captain Belleston, and as there is no mention of the arrival of any one named Bilson in the carefully kept records of the day, is it not probable that the two were one and the same? For some reason, probably Puritan jealousy, the original Thomas was obliged to make a slight change in his name, but in my mind there is not a doubt of his connection with Sir Thomas Belleston, of Perton Hall, whose coat of arms is three mullets pierced, a crown issuant, and a griffin rampant."

We all listened to this statement with breathless interest. "I'm glad I'm not a Puritan," said Tom. "After this I won't speak that old piece any more—the one about 'the breaking waves dashed high on a stern and rock-bound *coast,* and the woods

against a stormy sky their giant branches *toast.*' I say, Mary Ann, what's a griffin?"

"A fabulous animal, with four wings, four legs, and a beak," replied his sister.

"Whew!—he must be a stunner, sis! I wonder how he roars, now! Something like this, I suppose;" and Tom gave a howl of ferocious power in a deep minor key.

"Go to school, boys, directly," interposed father. Then, when the room was quiet, "Well, daughter, your theory is quite interesting, and we must try to find the missing link."

"Yes, papa. But before you go just listen to what I have gathered from English sources as to the characteristics of the Belleston family: 'The men are above the common height, erect, valiant, and eagle-eyed; they are keen, thoughtful, and given to invention.' There, papa! Your patent wrenches and screws prove you a true Belleston." Father smiled as he went away, but I noticed that he held himself more erect than usual.

From that time on we were devoted to genealogy. Catalogues were procured, volumes selected from their pages and sent for at random, letters written to the four quarters of the earth, books on heraldry obtained, histories of Staffordshire studied, town-clerks paid for exploring old church-yards and transcribing MS. records, and the artists of Laketown set to work on the coat of arms. Mary Ann attended to the correspondence, and her pretty hands were in a chronic state of inkiness. She altered and enlarged the family tree from day to day, she pored over dusty tomes until she acquired a slight stoop, and she spent so much time in her researches into antiquity that her toilet, her music, and her flowers were sadly neglected. As in the course of her correspondence Mary Ann had discovered that the Lumry family possessed claims to aristocratic descent, of course mother's heart was won toward the new dispensation. Mother was a Lumry—Prudence Lumry, of Utica. Father read the written abstracts of the day's work every evening, and paid the increasing bills without a murmur. The boys made chalk designs of griffins and mullets (they persisted in drawing the latter heraldic device like a fish) all over the fence, and practiced new ways of roaring in the back-yard. Joe Stubbs and I lived in the vortex, and swam round with the current as well as we could.

The spring found us far advanced on the road to greatness. We had Captain Belleston's ancestry by heart away back to Caractacus. We knew the exact boundaries of the estate given by Charlemagne to Raoul Beaujeulx, "l'homme du roi;" we had learned the names of all the retainers at Mount Belleston before the Puritans righteously smote them under the fifth rib. It is true, we had not been able to trace the connection between "Old Tom," as the boys irreverently called him, and the noble captain; but, as Mary Ann remarked, that was the only missing link; and the winter's work had, on the whole, been of immense importance in elucidating the general history of our ancestors.

During these busy months, Joel Stubbs had continued faithful in his devotion to Mary Ann. Fresh bouquets filled the parlor with fragrance, new books lay on the table, fruit and confectionery were heaped in the Sèvres dishes; but the blossoms withered untended, the book leaves remained uncut, and the boys gorged themselves with the dainties, as Mary Ann's ideas grew more and more lofty. She made us call her "Marion;" she insisted upon calling me "Eleanora;" she altered the dinner hour so that we were obliged to have, practically, two regular dinners every day—one for father and the boys at noon, and another for the family at six o'clock. She deserted our pew in the Presbyterian church, and attended daily service at St. Mary's, and she tried visiting the poor like the young ladies in English novels, and came home much displeased with the "dangerous spirit of insubordination among the lower classes."

When the June sun shone upon our Anglican household, it was at last decided that we should go East to visit the bones of our ancestors. Joel Stubbs was to accompany us, much to the delight of the boys. We were to go first to Northampton, the home of the Lumry family, then to Boston, Watertown, Weston, Quincy, and other places—wherever we could hear of an ancestral tombstone.

The principal portion of our baggage consisted of documents, as Mary Ann insisted upon taking all the winter's correspondence. In addition father carried a tin case containing the latest family tree, carefully engrossed on parchment. Mother had the MS. history of the Lumry family on gilt-edged paper; and to me was intrusted the album containing sketches of our ancestors, enlarged and colored by Joel Stubbs from one or two rude drawings obtained from the early histories of the Massachusetts colony at great expense. It is true the Bellestons were all patterned after a grandson of the original Thomas; but then, as Joe observed, the physical characteristics of all great families are preserved through many generations, and where you have one Belleston nose, you undoubtedly have them all. So first came Captain Belleston on a prancing horse, with velvet, lace ruffles, white plumes, and a jeweled sword; then the original Thomas, supposed to be his son, likewise in rich attire; then a long line of Josephs and Thomases, interspersed with Hannahs, Thankfuls, and Wealthys, fair, prim maidens, growing more

and more modern and fascinating, until the procession ended in a charming likeness of Mary Ann, surmounted by the coat of arms.

At the last moment, when we were ready to start for the dépôt, the boys were missing. Search was made, and anxious voices called in every direction. At last they appeared from the barn, carrying a box with leather handles, and holes in the lid.

"What have you there, boys?" said father, impatiently.

"Only our baggage," replied Tom, carelessly, hurrying on so fast that short-legged Johnny, unable to keep up with his end of the burden, stumbled and fell flat.

"You flat-footed Bilson!" cried Tom, in great wrath, as he snatched the baggage from his fallen brother; "the captain wouldn't have had you at no price, you clod-hopper!"

"Tom," said father, "what have you in that box? Open it directly."

Tom reluctantly put down his baggage and opened the slide. There sat our old black hen in a marsh of bread-crumbs, worms, and corn meal, two extra gray wings carefully adjusted to her back, and two extra legs mysteriously protruding from her feathers.

"There she is!" cried Tom, triumphantly. "I've taken such pains to get her up—a regular griffin, you see—four legs, four wings, and a beak. Don't she look first-rate, Mary Ann? I'm going to feed her and take care of her all the way, and you'll see how those Yankee boys will stare!"

Needless to say, this heraldic bird was dispensed with, and old Blacky released. The boys began the journey in sorrow—Tom because of the failure of his ornithological design, and Johnny because of Tom's dark hint, "You'll pay for this before night, young man!"

Before reaching Northampton we read over the gilt-edged annals of the Lumry family, so that we might intelligently appreciate our greatness. "The family of Lumry came from L'Hommeraye," ran Mary Ann's chronicle, "a picturesque hamlet near Point d'Orrilly, on the Orne, part of the estate given by Charlemagne to a favorite knight who bore the title of 'l'homme du roi.' The ancestors of our maternal family in England went over with William the Conqueror, and received for their services sixty manors in Devonshire. The characteristic traits of the Lumry family are courage, perseverance, and an ardent devotion to civil and religious liberty. The Lumry arms are a lion rampant, holding a lance in his dexter paw, with the motto, 'Virtutis fortuna comes.'"

"It really reads very well, Thomas, does it not?" said mother, with some pride, as she handed the manuscript back to father.

"Perhaps, mamma, we may find among the Lumry descendants in Northampton some heir-looms from the old country," observed Mary Ann; "parts of the antique armor, a banner, or some ancient furniture from L'Hommeraye."

"Yes," said Joe, with enthusiasm; "no doubt they loaded several ships with furniture, and after conquering England with William, in 1066, sailed to America and landed their ancestral heir-looms at Northampton about the year 1200."

"I am well aware, Mr. Stubbs, that aristocratic studies can have no attraction for *you*, but I must beg you at least to treat the subject with proper respect in *my* presence," said Mary Ann, severely.

We arrived at Northampton in the afternoon, and, after removing the dust of travel, set out in a body for the old church-yard, Mary Ann armed with blank-book and pencil, mother carrying the Lumry documents, and Joe the sketching materials. The peaceful inclosure, with its ancient trees, aroused in our hearts a vivid interest. There they lay, the descendants of the French knight, our noble ancestors! We pushed aside the shrubs and read the names. "Medad Lumry, died June 10, 1716, aged 86 years." Four wives and innumerable children lay around this patriarch, the names of Eldad, Ebenezer, and Eliakim alternating with Experience, Hepzibah, and Mercy.

"Strange that they did not have their coat of arms cut into the tombstones," said Mary Ann. "What would I not give to have seen this venerable man, as he appeared at the head of his household, the consciousness of noble blood showing itself in his courtly manners and kind consideration for his humble neighbors! I can imagine him dispensing hospitality, regulating the laws, as lord of the manor, and relating to his descendants legends of their titled ancestry. Ah! already I am repaid for all my labor," said my sister, enthusiastically, culling a few flowers, and arranging them on Medad's grave with pious care.

That evening Joel Stubbs drew the outlines of a picture—the patriarch of the Lumry race, in curling wig and velvet coat, seated in a brocaded chair in his richly furnished library, a group of tenants listening respectfully to his advice, and two Indians standing awe-struck at the door. Mary Ann was much pleased with the design.

The next morning Joe proposed that we should look over the town records. "It may be that we shall find something about the heir-looms," he suggested. Mary Ann looked up quickly, but the young man's face was serious, and as we still had some hours to spare, we sauntered about the pretty village, and at length found the place where the musty volumes were deposited. An old man, the guardian of the records, heard our request, and turned over the leaves slowly as he eyed us through his spectacles.

"Lumry, eh? Oh yes; plenty of Lumrys here. Related to them, eh?"

"They are our ancestors on the maternal side," replied Mary Ann, with dignity.

"Ancestors, eh? Oh yes; the Lumrys allers had a heap of relatives. There's one living here now you'd admire to see—Judge Seth Lumry, member of Congress for this district—"

"We do not care for the present generation," interrupted Mary Ann; "they are, no doubt, good commonplace people, but we wish to learn only what the records say concerning those of our ancestors who lie in the old church-yard, especially the original proprietor of the village—the first lord of the manor."

"Lord of the manor!" repeated the old man. "Who may you be talking about, miss?"

"Medad Lumry, who came from his Devonshire estates to this country in 1650," said Mary Ann, impatiently.

"Why, land sakes, miss! Old Medad wasn't a lord! He was a blacksmith, and so were all his sons after him. His anvil is here yet."

It was only too true! The records showed that Medad Lumry was renowned for "making horseshoes craftily," and his first wife, Eunice, was the daughter of "Eliakim Hyde, the carpenter."

As we walked back to the hotel, Joe fell behind with me. "Did you ever hear the *Harmonious Blacksmith*, Nora?" he asked, carelessly.

"No," I replied, scarcely daring to look at Mary Ann.

"There is the 'Anvil Chorus,' also. Boys, you remember the 'Anvil Chorus?'"

"*I* should think so," said Tom, emphatically; then, as though struck by a sudden thought, he darted away, followed by Johnny, as fast as his short legs could carry him.

"There is a touching poem called the *Village Blacksmith*, Nora; it begins in this way, 'Under a spreading chestnut-tree the village smithy stands.' If you wish, I will repeat it all," said Joe, gravely.

Here father was seen to smile.

"There is also a religious song, with the refrain, 'Stand like an anvil.' I am not quite sure about the tune, but I will try it if you insist upon it," said Joe, clearing his throat.

"Mr. Stubbs," began Mary Ann, turning around, with flashing eyes, "this levity is ill-timed. I never expected to gather much from the records of this little village. The early inhabitants were probably jealous of the L'Hommeraye family, and naturally were tempted to malign them as much as possible. This, however, was only a side issue at best. The main object of our journey is to visit the tombs of our Belleston ancestors. There, fortunately, no mistake is possible; we have the documentary evidence almost complete. I shall be able to prove our relationship with the Staffordshire family, and, with papa's permission, I intend to spend a year or two in England."

Joe was sobered immediately. I don't think he cherished a very warm affection for the Bellestons of Perton Hall.

As we entered the parlor of the hotel, a tremendous uproar greeted us. Tom was seated at the piano, playing the 'Anvil Chorus,' loud pedal down, fortissimo; Johnny was clashing the shovel and tongs together; one of the landlady's sons had a drum made of a tin pail, and the other kept up a harmonious accompaniment with the dinner-bell.

"Thomas," said father, "what are you about?"

The orchestra paused.

"Oh, it's only the *Lumry Grand March*, father. I've been drilling the boys, and they know how to do it real well now. The landlady's out, and I've explained to Pete and Jim all about Medad—how he came over with King David, and set up an anvil, with a ramping and a roaring lion for a sign. Just hear us go through it once; we can do it first-rate."

We left Northampton on the next train; mother packed away the record of the Lumry family; and we journeyed on toward Boston, "where the east wind bloweth, where the tall coon groweth, and the song of the cod-fish is heard in the land" (Joe).

Bright sunshine and a good breakfast restored our spirits; we already felt the Boston self-satisfaction, and discussed our plans in words of four syllables. Father, in his business-like way, arranged the programme—one day for the bones of Quincy, another for Weston and Watertown, and a third for a final search among the Boston records.

Before starting for Quincy, we had time to visit the ancient burial-ground at Copp's Hill.

"It always gives me a melancholy pleasure to wander among unknown graves," said Mary Ann, pensively. "Although none of my relatives sleep under this turf, still, after all, these are also my brothers and sisters, bound together by a common humanity, common joys, and common sorrows. Alas that the latter predominate!"

"It is indeed sad," said Joe, mournfully. "I feel a strange melancholy creeping over me. Ha! what do I see? Miscreant, avaunt! Desecrate not this sacred spot with your earthly marbles!" cried Joe, seizing two little boys by the collar. "Away, ruffians! Let me weep in peace over the bones of my ancestors;" and carefully opening a large pocket-handkerchief, the young man buried his face, and sobbed aloud over an ancient tombstone. Mary Ann walked on with her head high in the air, but I could not resist stopping to look at the inscription which

had called forth this sudden burst of woe. It read as follows:

ETHAN ABIMELECH STUBBS,
Died Dec. 10, 1708, aged 75 years.
JERUSHA,
Wife of the above, died June 2, 1709, aged 70 years.
Pious, prudent, and genteel.

Father having procured a light carriage, we drove rapidly through the pleasant country toward Quincy. As we stopped to water the horses at one of the numerous villages, father asked its name. "Belleston," replied the boy.

"What!" exclaimed Mary Ann, in great excitement. "The very name! Oh, let us stop; let us get out; we shall certainly find some relics of the past."

Father drove under a shed, we all alighted, and after fastening the horses we swept through the town like a company of raiders, asking questions from house to house with praiseworthy pertinacity. But our search was vain: Belleston was a new settlement: there were no old records, no old graves, no old women, no old traditions, and nobody knew any thing about the origin of the name which had excited our hopes.

After many disappointing interviews, and a cross-fire of questions from the other side, we were obliged to give up the quest, and going back to the shed, we got into the carriage and drove away toward Quincy, leaving every man, woman, and child in Belleston staring down the road after us.

The ancient town of Quincy welcomed us with a host of antiquities; every thing was old, and the very air was hazy with the dust of the past. As we had lost so much time at Belleston, we drove directly through the town to the old church-yard. Our appearance seemed to attract great attention; people ran to the windows, opened the doors to gaze after us, and called to their neighbors to look. Troops of boys followed behind the carriage, little girls with baby-wagons joined the procession, and when we stopped at the cemetery, a curious crowd assembled to see us alight.

"Can't understand what it means," muttered father.

"Probably they have heard of us," said Mary Ann, with dignity; "legends of the merry days of Mount Belleston may still be lingering among the old families here. It is possible that the Belleston features may have been recognized."

As father jumped out, an exclamation burst from his lips. We turned, and there before us was the cause of the village curiosity. The back and sides of the carriage were covered with griffins, neatly executed in chalk, a large one behind being calculated to strike terror into the stoutest heart. While we were hunting for heir-looms at Belleston, the boys had remained behind in the shed, and devoted the time to this heraldic blazonry. Joe burst into a peal of laughter, in which the crowd joined with hearty good-will; the guilty decorators disappeared among the tombstones; mother tried to excuse them; and Mary Ann and I walked into the inclosure as rapidly as was consistent with dignity, leaving father to efface as best he could the soaring bird of the English aristocracy.

"It is too bad," said Mary Ann, angrily; "those boys are always encouraged in their tricks. Just hear Joel Stubbs laugh!"

We could not find either a Belleston or a Bilson among the sculptured names in the church-yard; the town records gave us no information, and we were preparing to leave when a voice from the crowd that still followed us suggested "Old Squire Grimes." "Sure enough," said another voice, "he knows every thing about the first settlers, and he'd admire to tell you all about it." After expressly stipulating that the boys should not be admitted, Mary Ann led the way to the square white house with its funereally closed blinds, and, after some delay, we were ushered into a close dark room, the best parlor, when the squire, a precise old gentleman of true Puritan aspect, received us ceremoniously. After hearing our story and exchanging the formalities of old-fashioned politeness, the squire brought in a roll of MS., and carefully wiping his glasses, began to read at the rate of three words a minute, stopping every now and then to make a remark, and invariably losing his place, and re-reading a large portion of the page before he found it again. The document seemed to be a minute history of the Massachusetts colony, whose every detail was as familiar to us as the alphabet, and after half an hour father gently suggested that we had studied the general history of the colony very carefully, and the object of our visit was to discover, if possible, some data respecting Captain Belleston and his settlement at Mount Belleston.

"I am coming to that, Sir, shortly," said the squire; and the reading began again. Another half hour, and father excused himself, saying he must see to the horses; mother accompanied him, murmuring something about a "headache." Eight pages more, and Mary Ann took advantage of a pause to observe that it was growing late—if Mr. Grimes would oblige us with a short abstract concerning the Belleston colony.

"In due order, miss," replied the squire; and we were impaled for another half hour.

"Ah, yes—deeply interesting," broke in Mary Ann at length; "but have you no information respecting the fate of Captain Belleston and his infant son?"

"I have never pursued that branch of the subject," replied the squire, stiffly; "my time has been more profitably employed with the history of the pious men who suc-

ceeded that profligate Englishman at Mount Belleston. I have the whole record down to the present day; if you care to hear it, I shall be most happy—"

"Thank you, thank you," interrupted Mary Ann, rising hastily. "We really must tear ourselves away. And so you know nothing concerning the fate of Captain Belleston?"

"Nothing, miss. Nor do I care to know more concerning that depraved follower of Laud. No doubt he came to a bad end," said Squire Grimes, severely.

"Narrow-minded old Puritan!" exclaimed Mary Ann, as we turned the corner. "I maintain that King Charles was a hero," she continued, with feminine irrelevancy.

This declaration woke up Joel Stubbs, who was always a firm champion of Oliver Cromwell, and a discussion began which lasted all the way back to Boston, nor was it over when they sat on the balcony in the moonlight. At least I heard something about "love and loyalty," so I supposed they were still talking about it.

The next morning we went to Weston. Here, at least, there would be no disappointment—here, at least, one ancestor's bones reposed! We drove through the town to the church-yard, and after some search we found the venerable tombstone of the original Tom:

THOMAS BILSON,
DIED NOVEMBER 10, 1698,
AGED 72 YEARS.

We stood in a group around this baffling progenitor.

"If our graves were only like the ancient tombs, we might find the missing record inside," said Mary Ann, with a sigh.

"Let's dig him up," cried Tom, in great excitement; "me and Johnny could do it in no time. I say, Johnny, run for a spade;" and Tom began to take off his jacket.

Father put a veto upon these plans, and the boys were much disappointed; they disappeared, nor did they join us until, after an hour or two, we were all summoned to dinner. During this meal we were much annoyed by faces flattened against the window-panes. The sky had grown overcast, and, as the air was cool, the windows were closed, and these persistent children darkened the lower sash, and climbing the fence, glared in upon us through the upper panes. They lingered around the door, making raids into the room when it was open, and inspecting us through the key-hole when it was shut. We could not imagine the cause of this public curiosity.

"I wonder who they take us for?" said father, as a new spy was discovered under the sofa and hauled out by the waiter.

"They do not often have an opportunity of seeing people of our class," said Mary Ann. "I am sure their curiosity is quite excusable, poor little urchins!"

Here Joel Stubbs coughed so violently that we were quite alarmed, and after dinner, seeing him on the piazza with father, I went out to offer him some cough lozenges. They were both shouting with laughter. It seems that Joe had overheard in the wood-shed, before dinner, a conversation between Tom and a village boy upon the subject of our visit to Weston.

"We've come to dig up the bones of our ancestors, young man," said Tom, calmly. "We've been all over Massachusetts, and we've got bags of 'em in the carriage, besides the boxes that have gone on by express."

"What are you going to do with 'em?" asked the small Westonite, with dilated eyes.

"Clean 'em, string 'em, and sell 'em to the doctors," said Tom, gravely. "They bring lots of money out West, I can tell you. We've got ten thousand dollars' worth already, and we expect to double it before another month. Father, he digs; Joe Stubbs picks up the bones, mother and the girls string 'em, and Johnny and me sells 'em."

"No wonder we had an audience at dinner," said father, as Joe finished this recital. "We had better get away as fast as we can, or we shall be mobbed, Stubbs;" and again the two burst out laughing.

On our way back to Boston we stopped at Watertown. The skies were lowering, but Mary Ann's determination blinded her eyes; and even when one or two drops rippled the brook, she saw "nothing but flies on the water, the water; nothing but flies on the water."

"I am almost afraid to leave you here," said father as we approached the cemetery. "Perhaps we had better drive back to Boston immediately. We may escape the heaviest part of the storm."

"Oh no," exclaimed Mary Ann; "it will not rain hard—only a few scattering drops, and I am particularly anxious to see this cemetery, and also to look through the town records."

"Well, I will go back and put the horses under shelter," replied father, as Mary Ann jumped out.

"I think I won't get out," said mother, looking at her handsome traveling dress. "Boys, if you stay with me I will try to find some cakes and apples for you."

"I will go on to the hotel too," I said, as a drop fell on the dash-board.

This wholesale desertion roused Mary Ann's pride.

"Pray do not trouble yourself to come with me," she said to Joel Stubbs, who stood by the gate. "I can not expect you to be interested in these subjects, and besides, I shall enjoy the walk more if I am alone."

"Pardon me, Miss Bilson," said Joe, with

a low bow, "but a cat may look at a king; and if there are any aristocratic skeletons near by, I should never forgive myself if I did not pay my respects to them. I will, however, humbly follow in the rear."

We drove away, leaving the bone-hunters progressing through the church-yard, Mary Ann in front, her silken draperies and gray feather forming quite a *Bazar* picture through the trees, and some distance behind her handsome attendant, hat in hand, glancing back at us with a merry light in his brown eyes. An hour afterward we were sitting in the hotel parlor in company with two ladies who had also sought refuge from the rain, when one of them, a beautiful girl of about eighteen, suddenly exclaimed,

"Oh, auntie, do look at those poor drenched creatures crossing the street!"

Involuntarily we all turned. There were our bone-hunters, wet, draggled, and forlorn.

"Oh, Mary Ann, how wet you are, child!" cried mother, in dismay, as they entered the parlor. The gray feather drooped dismally, the silken draperies were sadly collapsed, the brown tresses out of curl, and the dainty boots covered with mud.

"It is of no consequence," began Mary Ann, when she caught sight of the stranger, and took in with one glance the perfection of her flounces and the crisp fluffyness of her golden hair.

"What a beautiful face!" murmured Joe, gazing at the stranger with rapt admiration. Mary Ann heard the whisper, and seated herself in the darkest corner after a futile attempt to expand her limp skirts.

"I say, Mary Ann, you look just like a soaked hen," said Tom, with brotherly frankness.

"Well, daughter, did you find any thing in the cemetery to reward you for your trouble?" began father as he entered the room, newspaper in hand. "Bless my soul, child, how wet you are! What is the matter with your face? It is all spotted!"

"It is only the rain that dripped through Miss Bilson's hat and veil," said Joe, with a glance at the fair complexion of the beautiful unknown. "We found nothing at the cemetery, Sir; but in the town records we came across this item concerning the original Thomas, the descendant of the noble Bellestons of Perton Hall."

Father put on his glasses, and read aloud from the slip of paper: "Thomas Bilson, a freeman of the colony, was this day fined and reprimanded for allowing unseemly music in his tavern on the Watertown road within twelve hours of the Sabbath-day."

"A tavern-keeper! What next, Mary Ann?" said father.

Mary Ann made no answer, but the boys from behind the sofa gave vent to a succession of griffin cries of peculiar and appropriate melody.

After a rainy drive back to Boston, fresh attire, and a hot supper, our party assembled in father's private parlor, but, to tell the truth, we were not in our usual spirits; mother was tired, father restless, Mary Ann unusually silent, and the boys disposed to be turbulent. Joel Stubbs did not appear at all.

"I wonder where Joe is," said Tom, in a discontented voice; "there's never any fun unless he's around."

"I don't think he would have gone out for the evening without speaking of it," said father. "Do you know where he is, Mary Ann?"

"I know nothing of Mr. Stubb's movements," replied my sister, with a lofty air.

"I say, Mary Ann, do you know you're growing to look like a regular griffin, and a lean one too," interposed Tom. "If I was you, I wouldn't go after any more bones as long as I had so many to show at home."

"Thomas!" called out father, in a severe tone.

"Well, I don't care," muttered Tom; "Joe is worth ten of her, any day."

At length there was a knock at the door, and the waiter appeared with a card:

MR. AUGUSTUS FITZWILLIAM BANGS.
Brindleton Club. ROYAL HIGH LOWS.

"Ah," said father, "I forgot to tell you that I made this gentleman's acquaintance down stairs to-night, and he appeared so much interested in what I told him about our probable origin that I asked him to drop in this evening and see you all." Then to the waiter: "Show the gentleman this way."

In a few moments the stranger appeared —a short, pursy man, with luxuriant side whiskers, lavender gloves, and a flower in his coat.

"'Appy to know you, ladies," he murmured, bowing low, hat in hand. "Hi'm proud to make the hacquaintance hof a descendant hof the Bellestons hof Perton 'All."

"You know the family, then?" asked Mary Ann, quickly.

"Hi may say that, miss; hi know them hall well; 'ave dined with them frequently."

This was enough. Mary Ann seated herself, with a beaming smile, and the conversation grew absorbing in its interest as Captain Bangs described Perton Hall, the present Sir Thomas and his family—especially the son and heir, Algernon Chandos Belleston, a young man of twenty-five, "'andsome as Hapollo, and strong as 'Ercules." We listened to these details with secret pride; even father straightened himself with a lordly air, and Mary Ann's face fairly shone with patrician splendor. At length, when the papers were brought out, and Captain Bangs assured us that there could be no doubt of our connection with this noble—he might almost say royal—family, father's heart overflowed, and in the warmth of his feelings he

ordered some Champagne to celebrate the discovery. We were all sipping our wine, the boys were carousing in their corner, and Captain Bangs was talking gayly with Mary Ann, when the door opened and Joe Stubbs came in. He looked surprised, and acknowledging the introduction of the Englishman somewhat curtly, sat down near the door, and looked on. But Mary Ann grew more and more gay; arrayed in fresh and expanded draperies, with sparkling eyes and many smiles, she entertained the captain without one glance toward Joe. Even an officer in the Royal High Lows, however, can not talk forever, and at eleven o'clock Captain Bangs rose to take leave, accepting Mary Ann's invitation for the next evening "with hall my 'eart."

"I shall have my letter ready to send by you to my cousins at Perton Hall," said Mary Ann, with a last bewitching smile.

"Hah, miss, Halgernon will be so 'appy to hanswer hit," said the gallant captain, with a final profound salam.

He was gone. We were alone. The wine was exhausted, and the boys asleep. A silence seemed to have fallen upon the party. "We missed you, Stubbs," said father, after a pause.

"I have been over to the rooms of the Genealogical Society," replied Joe; "I thought I might find something among their books of reference."

"Well, how did you succeed?" asked father, yawning.

In reply Joe produced a pamphlet from his pocket, and approached the table where Mary Ann sat, busy with pencil and paper.

"To-morrow will do," she said, coldly. "At present I am occupied with my letter to Perton Hall. Do you think I had better write to Algernon, or to Sir Thomas himself, papa?"

But father did not answer; he had taken up Joe's pamphlet, and stood transfixed by the table. "Good Heavens!" he cried; "what's this?" We all rushed to his side; he held the fatal book in his hand, and read aloud as follows: "In 1650, October the 10th, was that notorious pirate and evil-liver, Captain Belleston, formerly of Mount Belleston, caught and hung on the Long Island coast by the worthy Zebedee Pettingill, master of the good ship *Tribulation*. This Captain Belleston sailed away from his noxious and pestilential colony in the year 1626 with the avowed intention of seeking the Virginia Land, but instead thereof, he did hoist the bloody flag on the high seas, and hath ever since been a terror along our coasts. His infant son, left behind at Mount Belleston, seeming in our eyes a goodly youth, we have changed his ill-savored name to the honest title of 'Bilson,' and he now liveth among us soberly, a tavern-keeper on the Watertown Road."

So ended our search for the bones of our ancestors.

Captain Bangs turned out an ex-hairdresser. The boys learned *Captain Kidd*, and sang it all the way home.

As for Mary Ann, she cried for a whole day. Then she sulked two. Then she—well—ask Joe.

MY NEIGHBOR'S GARDEN.

Up to the border of my small domain
My neighbor's garden stretches wide and sweet;
His roses toss against my window-pane;
His jasmine wreathes my porch and doorway seat.

My threshold every May is carpeted
With pale pink petals from his peach-tree blown;
His tallest lilac lifts its plumy head
Up to the casement where I sit alone.

Waking, I hear, as dawns the morning light,
My neighbor busy in his bordered walks,
Noting the added beauties born of night,
Pulling the weeds among his flower-stalks.

From early March, when the brave crocus comes,
Edging the beds with lines of blue and gold,
Till the consoling, kind chrysanthemums
Contend against December's cruel cold,

My neighbor toils with wise and patient hand,
Scarce pausing in his work for sun or shower,
Evolving gradually from mould and sand
The germ, the leaf, the perfect bud and flower.

A rare magician he, whose touch transmutes—
Helped by the sprites which rule the airs and dews—
Dry dormant seeds and dark unlovely roots
To graceful shapes and richest scents and hues.

His garden teems with glad and brilliant lives;
There wheel and dive the gauzy dragon-flies;
Bees gather tribute for their distant hives;
And gray moths flutter as the daylight dies.

Sparrows and wrens sing songs which need no words;
And over flower-cups scarce more bright than they,
Green-winged and scarlet-throated humming-birds
Hang, tranced with sweet, then whir and dart away.

From branch to branch, beneath my watching eyes,
His net a black and golden spider weaves;
And scores of many-colored butterflies
Waltz in and out among the dancing leaves.

My neighbor in their midst—thrice favored one!—
Delves, plants, trains, weeds, and waters patiently,
Studies the alchemy of rain and sun,
And works his floral miracles for me.

For me! not one enjoys this Paradise
As I, within my overlooking room:
It is not seen even by the owner's eyes
At once—the whole wide stretch of growth and bloom.

With sight and mind absorbed, he little thinks
How all his garden's sweetness drifts to me—
How his rich lilies and his spicy pinks
Send incense up to me continually.

Yet still he labors faithfully and long
My loneliness to brighten and beguile,
Asking for all this fragrance, bloom, and song
Not even the small repayment of a smile.

Unconscious friend, who thus enrichest me,
Long may thy darlings thrive, untouched by blight,
Unplagued by worm or frost! and may there be
No serpent in thine Eden of delight!

And ye whose spirits faint with weariness,
Count not your work unvalued and unknown:
Cheered by your toil, some silent soul may bless
The hand which strives not for itself alone.

ELIZABETH AKERS ALLEN.