

lf, even towards real parents. Her affections revolted from those who had er claimed from her duty and affection to which they possessed no right, ve and she excited herself to indignation by perpetually reminding herself n- that they had, for their own selfish reasons, deprived her of name, position, and birthright.

de It never occurred to the proud young heart that her proper place might it- prove degrading; that her family, if found, might be accepted with resignation, rather than welcomed with delight. She did not even ask herself he whether she might prove acceptable to her discovered relatives, or be — regarded as an unwelcome incumbrance, or even suspected to be an impudent impostor. Not a thought of the kind occurred to Myra. In her ys dreams, triumph over her fickle lover and false friend were connected with e. the recovery of her parents; when restored to her family she might find o means to make them regret having flung her away.

or Mrs. Dross had proved that, whether she had been lost and found, or ! bought and sold, it was in London that the transfer was made; and while ! driving through half of the great city on her way to the quiet suburb st whither Miss Trash had directed her, she felt sure that she had reached ! the place of her birth. Her heart throbbed wildly when she thought that or her parents might pass her by unrecognised—that her sister or brother e might be gazing on her from some window or passing carriage. She looked s about with wistful and eager eyes, often regarding with a vague yearning t some stately or elegant form, and wondering if her father, her mother, h resembled them.

I Poor Myra! The mean, the commonplace, the vulgar, the ill-dressed, not once did these awaken her newborn sympathies. Stately dowagers, portly d gentlemen, lithe youths, and graceful girls abounded, especially when she e reached the western portion of the metropolis. Among such she involuntarily sought for some sign of relationship, and thus beguiled her aching s heart of some portion of its wretchedness.

! After a long day of excitement, the rattling coach stopped, at about five o'clock, before an extensive row of uniform houses, with a long level line of roofing high up in the sky, having twin-doors standing on flights of windows. t steps at short intervals, and in the intermediate space innumerable windows.

c Then Myra plunged from her flights of fancy into a reality terribly cold and menacing.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

“LOOSE LEAVES” FROM AN AUSTRALIAN'S PORTFOLIO.

BY F. S. WILSON.

Author of “Broken Clouds,” “Woonoona,” “Edged with Gold,” &c.

LEAF THE FOURTH.

A DAY AT THE CENTRAL POLICE COURT, SYDNEY.

“This is the scum of the great tide”—  
I said, “I’ll look no farther here;  
I’ll turn and see the other side,  
And leave it—not without a tear!”—J. L. MICHAEL.

THE other day, I had occasion to visit the Central Police Court, George-street, Sydney.

As a prisoner? Oh dear, no!—not as a prisoner. I had not during the previous evening, been in that particularly jolly and generally-unaccountable condition, characterised as “drunk and disorderly.” I had not been housebreaking, or “calling names” that were not pretty; or beating my wife; or knocking a blind man down and robbing him of three ha’pence, all in coppers; in short, I had not been guilty of any of those thousand and one little disreputable acts, which form the sum and substance of a police-office sheet, and are generalised under the head of “indictable offences.”

Neither was I there merely to satisfy an impulsive curiosity, or to kill an hour’s time; but I was there in the character of “prosecutor.”

I’ll tell you how it happened. On the preceding afternoon, two women walked into my shop, and after a few desultory remarks, went out again. “Nothing remarkable in that!” you exclaim, “especially in a town like this, where it is fashionable for ladies to waste their own and the shop-keeper’s time, by glancing through his stock for amusement.” Well, so I thought; and that is what made me fail to notice the disappearance of a small alabaster clock, which, prior to the entrance of the “ladies,” had been going on my shop-counter, but which had since gone altogether.

To report the matter to “the authorities,” and to get the special assistance of two quickwitted detectives, was the work of a few minutes—besides procuring the indirect help of every member of the force in town; for, as each came in from his “beat,” the circumstances were detailed to him, until the little leaven of my information had “leavened the whole lump.”

In less than two hours I was visited by one of my vigilant “h-lps” (I forget his real number, but for distinction’s sake will call him “X 09”) who intimated mysteriously that I was “wanted”—and who, there and then, without further explanation, trotted me off to a wretched house, in an equally wretched lane, somewhere at the rear of the Woolpack Inn, and in the immediate vicinity of Durand’s Alley—that place of doubtful celebrity. Truly, it was an evil-browed scowling hovel, and no less truly it matched the appearance of the evil-browed scowling hag sitting on a low settle, and sucking a short black pipe, whose wisps of smoke curled feebly up and pined away imperceptibly.

“Mag at home, mother?” abruptly questioned X09 (we had left his companion at the entrance of the alley)—“Mag at home—or out?”

"Out!" snorted the being addressed by the tender name of "mother." "Divil a blessed inch of her purty face has meself set eyes on for the last fortnight!"

"Don't tell lies unnecessarily!" said the officer—"Grasper saw her go up the lane half an hour ago; and, I suppose, she's got out through Durand's Alley. Well, we'll just take a peep upstairs, to satisfy ourselves," and he ran to the upper room, three steps at a time.

"Och! blessid Vargin! Did yez ever see the likes av thim poleesh-min?—goin' in an' out, an' all over a dacent widdy-woman's house widout so much as by your lave!"

"Can't find your clock, sir," said X 09, reappearing; "but here are a few pawn tickets for various articles, and an empty brooch case, new—I suppose the contents have been 'spouted' to-day. That Mag's baby, in the box yonder!" nodded the officer—"because, if so, take care of it. I don't believe you haven't seen Mag within the last two hours, but I do believe you won't see her again for the next three months, unless you come down to the 'Central' to-morrow. I imagine her youngster will want someone to look after it in the meanwhile, poor little wretch!—so look after it, old woman. Come along, sir!"

Up Brickfield Hill we noticed two women (moreover, the very women whom I suspected of appropriating my clock) standing before a draper's shop, feeling the texture of a web of cloth exposed for sale. With a hurried glance round, one lifted the piece of stuff and passed it to her companion, who was provided with one of those able coadjutors to shop-lifting—a large shawl. Under this it was whipped in a twinkling, and in ten minutes more, the "ladies" were safely housed in the Druit-street watchhouse—one with the stolen cloth, and the other with my clock in her possession—actually on its way to the pawnbroker's.

Such were the circumstances leading to my attendance at the Central Police Court, as I have before stated.

I arrived early—in fact, so early that the doors were not yet opened; and, in default of better amusement, I read over the various proclamations—hung, like pictures, in the portico—each headed with a lion and unicorn still "fighting for the crown," as they have been depicted for ages; and a portentous V.R., leading one to suppose that the information was all about our most gracious Sovereign, but presently elucidating the fact that one "Johnny Clarke" was "wanted," and that "£200" would be given for his capture. Then there were other dull suggestive placards, which offered far larger amounts for the capture of offenders; bills, which started off with the word "MURDER!" in four-inch capitals, and subsided at once into very small type—as if they were engaged in a subject they didn't like to speak about.

Turning from these tragical posters, there were yet others, which told, with rich humour, of horses and goats impounded—giving an elaborate detail, how much damage each animal had done—how much it had eaten—how much it had cost for driving it there—and how much for keeping it when it had been caught—forming altogether an astounding sum in addition (like a fashionable hotel bill), and showing for the satisfaction of the disconsolate owner, that if his horse had been sold at auction for the trifling sum of twelve shillings, its care and the damage done by it, and its board and lodging, amounted in all to three pounds fifteen shillings and ninepence—and what a loss that was to Government—no wonder they were in debt!

Presently the audience began to assemble in the court-yard; crowding about the entrance, as they do about theatre doors; and in the motley appearance of their faces, dress, and manners, a new study was presented to the observer.

Where did they all come from?

Some had finished their early morning overture as "out-door subscribers" to the *Herald* and *Empire*, and had come up to the police court for the after-piece. Some strolled in, smacking their lips (as if they had just finished their breakfast), while some looked eager and hungry-eyed (as if they were on the look out for theirs). The appearance of some suggested their having turned out of bed a few minutes before; while others looked as though they had been awake all night, and were only just thinking of sleep—leaning against each other for support, like tired bus horses.

All sorts—all ages—all sizes, were there. Tottering, feeble-limbed old men—loafing middle-aged men—knowing boys, thoroughly seasoned in all kinds of villany—and girls, from whose cheeks the first bright blush of innocence had scarcely faded out, and whose after-life was beginning to foreshadow itself in a careless flippancy of look and speech.

Mingled with all these were a few anxious women, whose husbands had been "overtaken" during the previous night—many of the aforesaid women possessing a black eye—that unmistakable marriage certificate! Some others were there to appear as plaintiffs or witnesses; and a general assortment of working men, idle men, and curious men, completed the assemblage.

They were not all gathered about the doors—for some preferred gazing between the iron bars from the footpaths, as if looking in at a cage of wild beasts; and, presently, the keepers filed round the corners of the watchhouse, and the "wild beasts" appeared crossing the yard in a mob, consisting of some dozen or eighteen boys, girls, men, and women—sleepy, haggard, and brazen looking, as if they had been brought up to court in sacks, and only just emptied out.

A few remarks passed to and fro among the bystanders, as the desolate troop filed over the brick causeway, to the effect that "Jim" was "in again," and that "Bet" was safe for a "sixer" (six months); then the neighbouring market clock chimed ten, in a grudging sort of way, like a

miser doling out tennence in coppers—the doors opened, and the motley crowd tumbled in, pell-mell.

The prevailing features of the Central Police Court are bare-looking walls; a few rows of notched, hacked, and time-stained seats and boxes, filled with a lot of ragged, uncombed heads; and, over all, a sickening odour of rum, tobacco, and perspiration, as if the place was a night-licensed "public," which had only just taken down its shutters.

Two magistrates were "sitting on the bench;" a constable was examining an interesting-looking information sheet, having the appearance of an immense butcher's bill; and two or three attorneys were making a second-hand book-stall of the middle table, and giving mysterious instructions to diminutive clerks with ponderous blue bags—so ponderous, that the diminutive clerks might have got in among the books and law papers, and so all have gone off in a dream together.

A man in the crowd sneezed—a stern-faced functionary, with a severe voice, called out "Soy-lence!" and the business of the day began.

Man after man bobbed up in the dock, like so many "Jacks-in-the-box." Some, with a brazen look, pleaded "Not guilty;" some, with a deprecatory look, pleaded "Guilty, your wutchips!" and hoped they might be "let off" this time; while one man, with a look "all nohow," pleaded that he didn't know whether he had been drunk or not; which was accordingly put down as pretty clear evidence against him.

Then came a case or two of abusive language, wherein the complainant (generally, in these cases, a woman) tried to prove that she was only one shade—if even that—inferior to an angel; and that the defendant (as invariably another woman) had called her—"Oh! such naughty names!"

*Bench*—"Well, but what did she say?"

*Complainant*—"Please, your worship, I'd rayther not—I wouldn't indeed! They was a sort of words I never likes to disgrace my mouth with, bein', as I am, the mother of a family—two on 'em twins—and the eldest, Sarah Jane, down with the measles, and—"

*Bench*—"But, my good woman, we can form no opinion as to the measure of the offence, unless you state what she really said."

*Defendant* (vigorously)—"Yer honour's wurship, it wasn't anything about a 'measure' or a 'frnce,' it was all along iv a hiron pot as Micky Doolan—"

*Audience* (spontaneously)—"Ha, ha, ha!"

*Crier* (ferociously)—"Soy-lence!"

*Bench*—"What is that person trying to say? You must keep quiet; we will hear your story by and bye. Now, my good woman, what did the defendant call you?"

*Complainant*—"Oh! your wurship, I'd rayther not; but if I must (beginning to cry), she called me a beggarly, mane spalpeen."

*Audience*—"Ha, ha, ha!"

*Crier*—"Soy-lence in the court!" followed up by ejecting a small boy who had just called in to see what the laughter was about.

*Bench*—"So she called you a spalpeen, did she? What is the meaning of that word; is it a term of insult?"

*Complainant*—"Yes, your wurship."

*Bench*—"What, then, is the meaning of it?"

*Complainant*—"It means—that—that—you know, your wurship—it means—just that!"

*Bench*—"Nonsense, woman! Does anyone in court know the meaning of the word 'spalpeen'?"

A vivid-headed policeman, with an equally vivid imagination, suggests that the word is synonymous with that of "bog-throtter;" but this opinion being one degree more mystifying than the other, is scouted accordingly.

Somebody here suggests that it is an Irish term applied to itinerant labourers who go round the country digging potatoes. This is considered to be something more tangible; at all events, it has an historical savour about it.

So the Bench, addressing the prisoner, continues—"You are charged with calling this woman a 'spalpeen,' which is found to mean, 'a man going about the country digging potatoes.' Have you any witnesses to call, or any questions to ask the plaintiff?"

*Defendant*—"No, yer honour's wurship."

*Bench*—"Have you any statement to make?"

*Defendant*—"Yis, yer honour's wurship. This woman an' meself lives in one yard, yer wurship—barrin' it's only parted by a lane an' two finces—an' says she to me, says she, 'Missus Maloney, says she ('that's meself, says I') have yez hard tell iv the haccident wid Jim Connor over the way byant, as married Biddy Casey's cousin's wife's sister?' 'Faix, no, says I—"

*Bench*—"Well, but, my good woman, we want to know about the case before the court?"

*Defendant*—"That's all I know about it, yer honour's wurship; that's my case."

*Bench*—"The Bench find you guilty, and fine you twenty shillings—six-and-sixpence costs—levy and distress—or fourteen days in gaol."

Such is a fair specimen of the general scenes at the Central Police Court, but sometimes very amusing incidents occur. On the morning of my appearance, a laughable interlude occurred with respect to the names of the parties interested.

*Bench*—"Call the next case."

*Crier*—"Brown! Thomas Brown!"

*Second Crier* (near the doorway)—"Ground! Horace Ground!"

*Third Crier* (according to the light that is in him)—"Crace! Norris Crue!"

*Fourth Crier* (in the dark altogether)—"Gray! Lawrence Gray!"  
*First Crier*—"Doesn't answer, your worship."  
*Bench*—"Then call on the next."  
*Little Man* (running in, very excitedly)—"Please your worship, I'm the  
 prison—no!—the defen—no!—the what is it? The man as complains—  
 the plaintiff, in this case."  
*Bench* (severely)—"Then, why didn't you come when you were called?"  
*Plaintiff*—"Please, sir, your worship, he called 'Gray,' and my name's  
 Brown."

*Bench*—"Oh! that's a horse of another colour."  
*Appreciative Audience*—"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 (N.B.—Police Office audiences always laugh at magisterial jokes; and  
 what is more noteworthy still, the stern functionary who cries "Soy-  
 lence!" if a mouse runs over the floor, allows the laugh out with grim  
 generosity.)  
*Bench* (extremely mollified, but with becoming dignity)—"State your  
 case."

And, accordingly, the plaintiff goes on to state, with minute exactness,  
 how that he was a grocer, and, moreover, kept a grocer's shop wherein he  
 sold groceries—such as shoe-brushes, kerosene oil, treacle, and other hard-  
 ware. That on the morning in question he was in the back room, parted  
 from the shop by a half-glass door, getting his breakfast (which was fried  
 mullet at four a shilling) when he saw the prisoner—

Here the prisoner, finding that all eyes are fixed on him, tries to look  
 as innocent and virtuously indignant as possible, but only succeeds in  
 looking like a person with a good deal of cunning inside his head, and a  
 good deal of grizzled hair outside.

"When he saw the prisoner with portion of a ham and an old  
 woman."

*Bench* (who have been rather remiss, but becoming alive to their duty)—  
 "Good heavens! did we understand you aright? Portion of an old  
 woman!"

*Plaintiff*—"No, no, sir! please your worship, all the old woman, but  
 only portion of a ham."

*Bench*—"Pray be clearer in your evidence, sir."

*Plaintiff*—"I will, your worship. Well, as I was saying, the ham he  
 was carrying was my property, and valued at seven shillings. The old  
 woman ran away, but I gave the present prisoner into custody."

Policeman, Q 40, corroborated the last section of this evidence, and  
 produced the knuckle of ham, tied up in a blue pocket-handkerchief.

Prisoner, in answer to the charge, affirmed that he "never see'd no 'am"  
 —"was a 'onest, 'ard-working man, when he did it," but was rather  
 "down on his luck." "Certingly did see a hold 'ooman the mornin' in  
 qvestion, who asked him to jine her in a pot of 'colonial.'" Over this  
 beverage, according to his story, he negotiated for the purchase of the  
 ham produced, and finally struck a bargain for eighteenpence. Didn't  
 know who the woman was, never having "sot eyes on her afore."

The magistrates wished to know whether it was not rather an extra-  
 ordinary circumstance for perfect strangers to treat perfect strangers with  
 such cordiality.

Prisoner admitted that such cases were rare, but still "strordinary things  
 happened sometimes, and, for his part, he on'y wished they happened  
 oftener."

While inquiries were being made as to whether the old lady referred to  
 was known to the police, a tottering, decrepid dame was escorted in, who  
 was immediately identified by the plaintiff as being connected with the  
 prisoner in the robbery. She was also proved to have been released from  
 Darlinghurst the previous day, and as she vehemently retorted the ham-  
 selling business in the prisoner's teeth, they were both sentenced to three  
 months' imprisonment.

But while there is much to smile at during a visit to the Central Police  
 Court, there is also much—ay, and much more in proportion—that appeals  
 to our finer and deeper feelings. Many a tale is unfolded there which  
 tells, simply and sadly, of the declension of human nature, till in some  
 cases "it falls, never to hope again."

There is the breach, widened by public exposure, between man and  
 wife—the recital of how one little act of neglect began to tread upon the  
 heels of another, till at last neglect merged into severity, and severity into  
 actual cruelty; and here in the public court the wan cheek, the dis-  
 coloured eye, the blotched and bruised skin, are powerful witnesses of how  
 much man can promise, and how little he cares to perform. Surely these  
 are among the saddest of police office scenes; and, to their honour be it  
 said, our magistrates seem ever to bear well in mind the divine command,  
 "not to put asunder those whom He has joined together," for all that  
 kindly advice and persuasion can do to arrange matrimonial difficulties is  
 done, and done well.

All forms of villany, and each form in all its different grades, are to be  
 met with at the Police court. Villany in old age, in slouching manhood,  
 in young girls, and down to the sharp vagrant urchin, who is brought up  
 for stealing fruit from a brother merchant's basket; respectable villany,  
 disclosing many of the secret wires by which people keep up appearances;  
 and bold, brazen-faced villany, which has grown and ground itself into its  
 victims, and now springs forth without shame or remorse.

But while I had been wandering thus in my reflections, the clock struck  
 one, the remainder of the cases were adjourned for an hour, and I, with  
 the rest of the audience, gradually surged out of the court, to get my  
 dinner with what appetite I might, and to digest it, together with my  
 morning's experience of human nature.

In the afternoon my own case was brought on, and resulted in "Mag

—"receiving a sentence of six months' imprisonment—an announce-  
 ment which she seemed to take quite as a thing of course.

Light and shadow were woven deftly together throughout the after-  
 noon's performance, but, to my mind, the latter predominated, and left a  
 melancholy impression, which was not lessened by the rattle of the huge  
 prison van, at four o'clock, swallowing up all the sentenced or committed  
 offenders, like an insatiable monster, and trundling them off to Darling-  
 hurst Gaol.

## THE FUGITIVES.

A TALE OF TASMANIAN FELONY.

IN 1822, Alexander Pierce, with six other convicts, named respectively, Travers,  
 Greenhill, Cornelius, Dalton, Mathers, and Brown, escaped in a boat from the penal  
 settlement at Macquarie Harbour; and having landed safely, they burnt the boat  
 and went into the bush. They soon felt the horrible effects of starvation, and two  
 of them died; the rest travelled on to Gordon's River, where they discussed the  
 terrible alternative of starvation. They chose Travers as the first victim, and two  
 of them kindled a fire, whilst the others murdered him; and in order to prevent  
 one from bearing witness against the others, and exculpating himself, they all swore  
 to partake of Travers's remains. In the course of three weeks, two other men were  
 butchered in the same manner, and only Pierce and Greenhill survived. After sus-  
 taining life on the remains of the last victim, they were without food for some days;  
 and now each strove to catch the other off his guard. They spent three days and  
 nights watching each other! Greenhill slept first; and after slaughtering him,  
 Pierce travelled on to the Derwent, in the hope of meeting some natives. He was  
 shortly afterwards taken, and was executed at Hobart Town. These facts were con-  
 fessed by Pierce, through the Rev. Mr. Connolly, who attended him in his last hours.  
 —Hobart Town Gazette, 1821.

ALONE, alone, my comrades gone,  
 I stand by the fatal tree,

Soon to obey His sovereign sway  
 Who shed His blood for me.

We were seven; but cursed by Heaven,  
 They one by one were slain;

They fell from me, in misery,  
 And I alone remain.

I need not tell how first we fell,  
 By the ruthless tempter's wile;

In that guilty time we thought each crime  
 Was fortune's favouring smile.

I could not rest, while the cold iron pressed  
 And ate into my soul;

As I watched the stars through my prison bars,  
 I cursed my bitter dole.

We would be free; bright liberty  
 Was ever in each thought;

We burst our bonds, escaped, and found  
 The freedom that we sought.

But bitter woe came sure and slow,  
 And followed in our path;

And we wished in vain to greet again  
 The prison's homeless hearth.

No shelter from the cold bleak storm,  
 The dank wet ground our bed;

Two men fell ill, and a Higher Will  
 In mercy struck them dead;

We left them there, we did not dare  
 To touch the corpses then;

But as time passed, and we broke no fast,  
 We sought out those dead men.

Together still we journey'd, till  
 We saw no hope to live;

And our doom was seal'd, when the fiend reveal'd  
 A dread alternative!

By single voice, the fatal choice  
 Fell on our youngest mate;

Compassion hid, we sternly bid  
 Him ponder on his fate;

Upon the ground, the victim bound  
 Writhed in his agony;

He saw the fire—a funeral pyre—  
 By which he was to die!

They raised his head; with trembling dread  
 He begged us mercy show,

But with reckless heart I played my part,  
 I struck the fatal blow!

I cannot think on that deed, but shrink  
 From a sight my soul abhorred,

That man, though base, should thus deface  
 The image of his Lord.

Each standing forth, swore a deep oath  
 To taste the loathed food;

'Neath the canopy of the starlit sky  
 We drank our victim's blood!

Days still went by, we did not die,  
 Life linger'd in our veins;

And though we would die if we could,  
 We would not die in chains.