For ever and for ever,
Yes everywhere he goes,
Hard though he tries to hide it,
He wears a broken nose,
And ever the sad reflection,
As it passes through his head,
Will make him forget the maidens
And look aloft instead.

D. W.

The Legend of an Old English House.

In England, quite a good many years ago, when life and property were not so secure as at the present time, the old houses or castles were often furnished with concealed chambers, the very existence of which was unknown to any one save the inheritor of the estate and titles. This and the secret of entrance to it were solemnly revealed, usually on his deathbed, by the sole possessor of the knowledge.

The facts related below, which are founded on authentic history, were influential in producing an act of Parliament which decreed that thereafter the existence of all secret chambers should be made known to the state and to Parliament.

In one of these old castles lived Henry Blanc (ancestor of the late Mr. P——), a man about thirty-five years old, cultivated, of high literary tastes, and withal much given to the writings of Lord Bacon. He was subject to periods of mental aberration, which sometimes lasted for several years at a time, and were liable to be brought on by any great excitement. At these times he seemed to lose all connection with his former life and surroundings, to merely exist, when suddenly he would emerge from this cloud and resume his life as though no break had occurred.

For years there had been a strong attachment between himself and his cousin Beatrix, though it had been steadily opposed by her parents because of political feuds, which were very fierce in those days, between the families; and to settle the matter finally the girl was married to a man for whom she had no affection, but who had large influence at court and would prove a strong ally.

The result of this was of course unhappiness, and Beatrix had her thoughts more than ever directed towards her cousin. . . . At last it appeared that she could bear it no longer, and she resolved to leave her husband’s house and fly with Henry. Their plans were laid for leaving England and travelling on the Continent, and it seemed as if nothing could happen to prevent their success. It was the fall of the year, and preparatory to sailing the next day a room had been made ready for the fair cousin in the old castle, with a bright, cheerful fire and numerous lamps, and they having arrived about twilight, Beatrix was escorted to this chamber by Henry,—and this chamber was the concealed one, whose existence was known only to him,—surrounded by huge, thick walls, with scarce an opening.

After some little time he left her, saying that he should be absent only a few moments, and went to his library to select some of his favorite books to take with them on the morrow. While there he was suddenly seized with a dizziness, and before he could reach a chair he fell, striking his head against the hard wood, and becoming unconscious. When he recovered consciousness his malady had rendered him helpless and his mental faculties were a blank. In this state he continued for years, though after a time his physical strength returned to him. Nearly seven years after the flight of Beatrix from her husband, our friend Henry emerged from his stupor, his brain cleared, and he took up his life just where he had dropped it, thinking that he had but just left his beloved cousin a few moments before. He hastened to go back. The catches of the door seemed to go hard. On going into the chamber he was somewhat surprised to find it cold and dark, but thinking nothing about it, he turned back to get a light.

And now he saw Beatrix kneeling there before the hearth. He started forward with an exclamation of delight and touched her gently on the shoulder, when, horrible to relate, the figure fell to ashes upon the floor, with a clatter of bones, kept only in place so long by the stiff silk dress! The terrible sight and the shock of returning ideas overwhelmed the poor man; he fell to the ground, and the next day was found by his people — dead. C. S. R.