Saint Mary's Beacon

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MY FRIGHTS.

There are some people who aver that they have never been frightened. As I am far from being a strong-minded woman, I cannot say as much. But I am too easily alarmed. I am, for instance, afraid of a cow. It may be very silly; but I cannot help it. All the pleasure of a country walk through a fine landscape has been often spoilt for me because of cattle in a field. If I pass through them without being tossed or gored, the recollection that I have to come back remains with me for the rest of the day. As for a bull, I would rather never see the country than run the chance of meeting with such a creature. A dog is thought to be a very harmless animal—a domestic animal—and the 'friend of man.' He is not, however, the friend of woman—or at least of a nervous woman like me. I should be afraid to write down how often I have been prevented from calling at a friend's house by the presence of a little poodle or terrier upon their doorstep. I should as soon have thought of disturbing an adder—The Romans (a people quite remarkable for their courage) used, I am told, to paint *Cave canem*, 'Beware of the Dog,' at their front doors; but such a warning would have been unnecessary in my case. I am always fully 'Beware' of it. Every farmer in the country has a dog, and that is why I don't like farmyards.

My widowed sister-in-law (the fat one) and myself once lived in such a place a whole summer, during which I lost more flesh than if I had been all the time in a Turkish bath. From sunset to sunrise I was in a perpetual fright, from fear of robbers; and when the days grew shorter, and the nights longer, the place became insupportable, and I fled from it. The usual nightly programme was as follows: My sister-in-law, who occupied the same apartment as myself, would fall asleep as soon as her head touched the pillow, and leave me, as it were, alone, a prey to my terrors. She always reminded me of the irritating bedfellow described in ghost stories, who will not wake while the apparition is peeping through the bed-curtains at you, and who, when all the dreadful things are over, cannot be persuaded that they actually occured. Next to ghosts themselves, I dislike people of this cast, and would almost as soon have no companion at all. If the wind was up, I at once began to picture to myself a band of ruffians effecting a forcible entry into all the rooms below stairs, and giving shouts of triumph at the ease with which they accomplished their purpose. We could not afford to keep a man servant, and even if we had done so, I should always have imagined him the accomplice of the burglars, or coming up-stairs upon his own account with a carving-knife concealed in a skuttle of coals, as I had once read of in a book. Our house pretended to no means of resistance, and I always placed the plate-basket and its contents upon the landing of the stairs, in hopes that the gang might take what they came for and go away without asking for my money or my life. On a particular occasion, being unable to sleep, I fancied that I heard the approach of robbers up stairs. Being no longer able to contain myself, I, with an effort, aroused Charlotte, who, however, pooh-poohed the whole affair, and dropped to sleep again, leaving me to my fears.

However, one very wet and dark night she got a pretty fright herself. It was a little past midnight. The drip, drip, drip of the rain was ceaseless, but for all that, as I lay awake, I could hear men's steps without, splashing in the pools it made, as the wretches walked around the house looking for the most convenient point of entry. Then I heard the back door 'go'—it burst open with a sort of muffled violence, like the sudden outpour of a waste pipe—and then that 'pat-a-pat' I knew so well, of feet coming up the stairs. Then a pause of frightful significance.

'Charlotte!' cried I, in an agony, 'they are really here. They really are, this time. Wake, wake!'

'Rubbish!' cried she. 'I am wide awake, and I hear nothing.'

'They are just outside the door,' whispered I; 'they are listening at the keyhole. Hark!'

'I certainly hear eaves-dropping,' was her heartless answer (she was a woman who enjoyed a joke, and her fat sides wobbled with mirth at this one;) 'but it's only rain from the roof.'

'I tell you,' said I solemnly, 'there are robbers in the——'

Here something fell in the drawing-room beneath us with a hideous crash.—In an instant, and before I could recover from the sort of collapse into which this shock had thrown me, Charlotte flopped out of bed, seized the lamp, and was about to hurry from the room. 'No,' said she, pausing in the door-way: 'It is better that they should not see me, but that I should see them.

It was certainly much better, considering Charlotte's very slight attire, that the robbers should not see her; but why she should want to see the robbers was quite unintelligible to me.

'Stop!' cried I; but the fatal deed was done, and I was left in darkness.

Dreadful as it was to accompany her upon such an expedition, it seemed a thousand times worse to remain in the room alone, and trembling in every limb, I hurried after her.

To reach the drawing-room, it was necessary to pass through the dining-room. It was pitch dark, but I could hear her breathing hard (for her stoutness made her very short of breath) as she made her way round the table that occupied the centre of the room. Fear lent me wings, and I hurried round the other way to meet her, and rushed into her arms just as she was feeling for the drawing-room doorway. Directly I did so, she uttered a shrill scream, and fell on the floor in a dead faint. I had forgotten that the poor dear did not know I was pursuing her, and she very naturally took me for the robbers. I suppose I fainted too, for the first thing I remember was hearing a loud purr close to my ear, which proceeded from our favorite cat, who, having knocked down the fire-irons in the next room (which was the noise we had heard,) had come, as it were, to assure us that there was nothing the matter.—That was the last night we spent in our country-house; and I remained in town for three whole Summers afterward.—Though fresh air and 'change,' I was told, was indispensable, I resolved to do without them, since one might just as well die as be frightened to death.

In the July of the fourth year, however, I received an invitation to the seaside, which I really thought it safe to accept. My host and hostess lived at Disney Point in Cornwall, a very lonely spot, it is true, but one in which no burglary had ever been committed within the memory of woman. 'There were no bad people,' wrote my friends, who were aware of my nervous peculiarities, 'within a hundred miles of them.' When I reached their house, I was really inclined to believe that this was the case. A more beautiful and retired spot than the little village in which they dwelt, or one inhabited by a more simple and innocent set of people, it was impossible to imagine. It was situated in a wooded ravine, through which a front-stream ran down to the sea; and upon the hill-top, between it and the ocean, were the most picturesque church and church-yard I, or anybody's eye, ever beheld. From the house we could only hear the distant whisper of the waves, like the murmuring hum of bees, but they were giant waves, and the rocks were torn and split with their fury into weird and horrid shapes. It was the grandest seacoast I had yet visited, and all day long I sat beside it with a sketch book, or merely watching the white wrath of the breakers, and listening to the thunder in the caverns at my feet. I was not at all afraid of the sea—when I was upon the land. Indeed, I am not alarmed at anything (notwithstanding what some people say to the contrary) unless there is a reasonable cause for fear. For instance, I am not afraid, at least I was not, until the terrible catastrophe occurred which I am about to relate—of supernatural apparitions. When I announced my intention one evening, of going up the hill to sketch the churchyard by moonlight, there arose quite a rude titter in the drawing-room. 'Surely not alone, Mary Ann? Let one of the girls go with you,' said my hostess.

'What is there to be afraid of in a churchyard? No, I thank you,' replied I, proudly. 'The miserable superstitions of the country do not affect me, I do assure you.'

'But it is so lonely up there, my dear!'

'What of that? Solitude and stillness are the fit accompaniments of such a solemn scene. I had much rather go there by myself.

I was resolved to exhibit my independence, as well as to do away with any false impressions my excellent hostess might have received from Charlotte or others with respect to my courage; but at the same time she need not have reminded me that it was 'so lonely up there.' I did not expect to find Disney churchyard the center of fashion, or the scene of an excursion picnic at ten o'clock at night, of course; her remark was officious and unnecessary, and at the same time it made my blood run cold. However, when the moon rose, so did I, and, sketch-book in hand, toiled up to the old church, which was also, from its prominent position, a landmark used by sailors, which taught them to avoid the rocks at Disney Point. Whatever might be the matter, there was always a wind up there, and even in that still Summer night it was wandering about the grasses of the graves, and whispering into the ears of the stone gargoyles of the church, which seemed to grin in malice at its news of storm and wreck to come.

I seated myself on my camp-stool, just in front of the porch, and began what I intended to be a hasty sketch, just a few strokes, to be filled in at my leisure, for I felt the situation to be 'uncanny,' and already wished myself at home. My fingers shook a little, certainly not with cold, and, though the architecture was said to be a fine specimen of the perpendicular,' it did not appear so in my sketch-book.

Suddenly I heard a subdued sob; the utterance, as it seemed to me, of some poor creature of my own sex in distress. It came from an obscure corner of the churchyard, where the graves were not so well cared for and tended as the others were—a spot, I had been told, where those were laid whom the pitiless sea had drowned. When a ship was cast upon the rocks yonder, it was rare even for one of its crew to reach that rock-bound shore alive; and after a great storm, whole ship's companies were sometimes buried at once in the churchyard of Disney Head.

I listened with beating heart, and the sound was repeated; and this time I felt sure it was as I had supposed. Doubtless some woman had come to weep in secret over the grave of her sailor son or husband; there was no need to be frightened in such a case. It might be that I should be able to give her comfort. I rose, and moving toward the wreck-corner (as it was called,) could dimly make out a woman's figure kneeling at the head of a grave.—In the presence of so great a sorrow, I seemed to lose all selfish fear, and ventured softly to address her. She did not reply, nor even as much turn her head, though I felt certain she must have heard me; and since she was a woman and did not speak, I felt there must be something very wrong with her. As I drew nearer I beheld a spectacle that overwhelmed me with pity. The unhappy creature before me was naked to the waist, and with her arms straight down by her side, was gazing on the grave beneath her with a look of indescribable despair. She shed no tear, but her eyes wore a look of hopeless woe and yearning beyond all ordinary sorrow.

'You are killing yourself, my poor woman,' reasoned I, 'to kneel there in such a plight. The dead you mourn can ask no such sacrifice as this that you should join them.'

But again she answered nothing; and then, to my horror, I observed that she had dug another grave, at the head of that she was watching, and was already buried in it up to her waist! Was she then bent upon committing suicide, or was she herself an inhabitant of the tomb, like those around her, and were the graves, indeed, giving up their dead at that witching hour of night, as I had read of, but had not believed?

In an agony of terror, such as even I had never before experienced, I flung down my sketch-book, and rushed from the churchyard and down the hill.

'What is the matter, Mary Ann?' cried my amazed hostess, who was sitting up for me with her husband in the parlor, as I tore into the room shrieking for help.

'Matter!' cried I. 'There is a poor young woman, with nothing upon her, half buried alive in the wreck-corner of the churchyard. She has already lost her sight and hearing, for she took no notice of me at all.'

'Impossible!' cried my hostess.

'But I've seen her,' cried I. Not a moment is to be lost.'

'Ah, bless you! we've seen her too,' said my host, laughing. 'It's the figure-head of the Bella. When the ship came ashore we stuck it up at the captain's grave, by way of headstone—poor fellow! She has not got much on her, it's true; but I don't think she'll hurt.'

AN EVENTFUL LIFE.—Here is the lesson of a life. Born of a good Knickerbocker stock, the boy breathed the air of Broadway, smoked Broadway cigars, strolled through the lobbies of Broadway hotels as if he owned them. His weakness was horseflesh. At 20 he was to do smashing business and drive a four-in-hand.—He began with the patrimonial capital, and at 30 he sat amid ruins. So he tried in succession telegraphy, insurance and brokerage. Still he failed, and still his dream of horses grew apace. At 30, says the New York *Graphic*, sowing; at 45, reaping; at 30; struggles; at 45, passions. Then he held a position in the post office, where he seemed to have found his mission. From one place of trust he rose to another; he had a commanding figure, a bland manner, unbounded assurance, a tight handclasp, and a brave eye. During 1869, 1870, 1871 this man drew a salary of $2,750, and he was spending at least $15,000 per annum. He lived on his splendid estate at Plumfield, N. J., and kept his stud of twelve horses, most of them blooded stock. He was never absent from duty. The head books were under his charge; but these books were falsified. It was the modern story—he borrowed, speculated, lost; but the crash came. The postmaster was brought to bitter grief, and all who had trusted him were made to feel the pangs of shame, and ruin, and disgrace. It was the life of Norton, the defaulter. There is a solemn moral contained in this story, or, rather, a number of them. Never be a Knickerbocker and attempt to speculate upon a moderate capital of brains; don't live in New York, or you will be sure to be appointed to a post office; avoid horses, for they cannot be supported upon a moderate income; don't appropriate the money of the Government, for when you are old it will be taken away from you.—"Neither a borrower nor a lender be"—Shakspeare. All which morals the intelligient reader will please arrange to suit himself.

☞ A philosophical victim advertises as follows:—'If the person who took a fancy to my overcoat was influenced by the inclemency of the weather, then, contrary to the weather, all is serene; but if he did so from commercial considerations, I am ready to enter into financial negotiations for its return.'

(Written for the Beacon.)

RETROSPECTION.

LINES TO OAK LAWN.

Once more upon my childhood's bower,
After years of fearful strife,
I muse on pleasures that have flown,
And the vicissitudes of life.
I dream of happy boyhood days,
Of friends I used to know,
Whose smiles from earth have passed away
Since ten short years ago.

In thought again I call the flowers
Beside the old oak tree,
Whose foliage oft in sunny hours
Has sheltered friends and me.
No leafy branch is standing now
For the gentle winds to blow;
Its lofty boughs have passed away
Since ten short years ago.

I view once more the hallowed spot
Where the old house used to stand
And curse the fate of those whose lot
Was to desecrate the land.
No flowers now are on the lawn,
Where once they used to grow;
Those little gems have passed away
Since ten short years ago.

I walked beside the little brook
Where I've watched the fishes play;
Its waters now so silent look
Beneath the sun's bright ray.
No brambles grew upon the bank,
O'er it their shade to throw,
Alas! they too have passed away
Since ten short years ago.

Once I paused awhile to see
An old familiar place,
Its past scenes in my memory
O! how I love to trace;
It brought me back to boyhood days,
Tho' there was nothing left to show
Its pristine beauty now past for aye
Since ten short years ago.

SELIG.

MR. MAYNARD'S HIRED MAN.

"Hickory, dickory, dock,
The mouse ran up the clock;
The clock struck one,
And down he run;
Hickory———"

"Oh, my good gracious! how dare you?" Fanny laid the pink bundle down in a rocking chair full of pillows. The bundle protested with a vigorous movement, and in another moment the rocking chair and the baby came down together.

"Now, you awful man, the child is sick!" cried Fanny with a scared look, as she lifted the tiny morsel from the floor; but the pillows had protected it, and the startled baby, after the effort at curling her lips, broke into a charming smile.

"No harm done; and I trust I am forgiven," said Matthew Donn.

"No, you are not forgiven. I shall never forgive you, Mr. Matthew Donn; so please leave baby and me. I have nothing more to say."

"Well, I—I'm going."

"You can go, sir."

The young man went softly, slowly out; but he looked neither grieved nor angry; on the other side of the door he smiled.

The circumstances are these:

Fanny had been amusing her sister's child, and the little cherub seemed never to tire of musical sounds; so Fanny, who had "Mother Goose" by heart, liked nothing better than to sit in the cosy sitting room, which was really in the nursery, and sing those old, old melodies.

Matthew Donn was the hired man, and on this particular morning had stolen in quietly behind Miss Fanny, and tempted of—what? Surely not of the Evil One—had bent over and kissed her on the forehead.

And this he had dared to do; knowing that Fanny was a city young lady, living in a fashionable quarter, and used to the best society.

Fanny's sister had married a rich farmer; not quite two years before. People talked of these Brysons burying themselves alive; but both Olive and Fanny loved the country better than the town. Every Summer Fanny was glad to leave the "stuffy old house," as she called it, and almost by one leap find herself in paradise, breathing air redolent of white clover and sweet briar. During the Winter the sisters corresponded regularly; and Olive had sung the praise of Matthew Donn, their hired man, so often that Fanny found herself thinking of his acquaintance as one of the pleasant probabilities of her next visit.

"We don't intend to treat him as help," wrote Olive, holding her baby on one knee and steadying the paper with a bronze weight; "for he is not in the least like the men in these parts. I should be ashamed not to ask him to come to the table; and just for the novelty of it, I want you to peep into his room. Harry calls him *rara avis*: and the two really enjoy themselves together almost like brothers; he is nearly as handsome as my Harry; he, you know, is the handsomest man in the world!"

And the pleasant pen ran on and told about planting, the prospective sweet corn, and pea blossoms, and how the grape vines were full of tiniest branches, and the young peach trees, were going to do splendidly; and Adela had two cunning milk-white teeth, and I know not how much more loving nonsense.

Now Fanny had a rich lover, and, like most such lovers, he was not prepossessing in his personal appearance. In her own written language to Olive, he pestered her to death. To be sure it was pleasant to see his splendid equipage in front of their door, with the two superb grays, for on rare occasions Fanny yielded to his solicitations to take a ride; and he always managed to drive her by his castle of a brown stone front, to tempt her; for Fanny was fond of beautiful things as women seldom fail to be, and was aware of the advantage which money can give.

Both her father and mother were anxious she should marry the Hon. Ebenezer Wolcott, but Fanny was high spirited and they seldom advised her. The girl knew that they were living beyond their means for her sake, and this knowledge had been bitterly earned. She and Olive had many conferences over it.

"I think if you were married," said Olive, "papa would come here and taken small house; then business need not press him so in his old age."

Ebenezer had done the proper things—had offered Fanny his heart, his house, his carriage and his horses, and although he was known for a pugnacious old gentleman, terribly set in his way, he was honorable, and he loved beautiful Fanny Bryson with all his heart. And Fanny had told him that she could not then decide—that she was going for the Summer months to sister Olive's—at the close of her visit she would give him an answer.

"And may I come out there sometimes?" asked Eben.

Fanny gave a reluctant consent, and wished with all her heart that she had refused him; so, with the understanding that he was to call as a friend, the two parted.

At the depot Fanny found her sister's carriage in waiting, and was accosted by the handsomest as well as the tallest man she had ever seen. Six feet high, and proportionately majestic, he seemed like Apollo and Hercules in one.

"Can this be the hired man?" thought Fanny; and then looked at his dress—Not a trace of servitude about him; but he treated her with the utmost deference, said but little, drove with the precision of a man accustomed to horses and drew up before the cottage in grand style.

Fanny was in her sister's arms, and after her, the baby came in for a fair share of kisses.

"Well, is that your hired man?" queried Fanny, after her comfortable installment in one of the luxurious easy chairs.

"Yes, dear; that is Matthew Donn. How do you like him?"

"He looks like a gentleman," said Fanny after a little pause.

"He is a gentleman, dear, in the best sense of the word; I told you that."

"And does he speak English well?"

"Why, child, he isn't a foreigner," laughed Olive.

"I mean gramamtically," said Fanny.

"Oh, yes, I presume he has a common school education," replied Olive, "and something better. I know there are certain classical books in his room; whether he ever reads them or not I can't say."

"Why in the world does he hire out;" cried Fanny, with dismay in her voice.

"Why, shouldn't he?" asked Olive, laughing heartily again. "He likes the country, is used to horses, and—and I suppose he can't get anything better to do."

"But a man like him might—be somebody!" ejaculated Fanny, with vehemence. "My patience! has he no ambition. I'm afraid I shall despise him."

"Perhaps, dear, he wouldn't mind if you did," said Olive, hiding her face in the white neck of her baby. "He is so very independent."

Surely, why should he care what she thought of him? soliloquized Fanny, her cheeks flushing.

The next day she met him at the table. It seemed strange enough to sit down with hired help, but she was forced to confess that in nothing did he give the impression of being a menial.

"Shall we take hold of that five acre lot this morning?" he asked, respectfully, of Mr. Maynard, Olive's husband.

"No; I prefer you should look to the drainage of that patch east of the hill," was the answer. "There'll be no rain yet awhile, and I want to prepare that land for potatoes."

Fanny watched Matthew Donn out on the sly, and Olive caught her at it.

"I want to see what kind of dress he works in," said Fanny with tell-tale cheeks.

"Don't you think him a little handsome in his blouse and heavy field boots?" asked Olive.

"He is certainly very handsome," said Fanny, frankly; "but why in the world—however," she said, stopping short, "it's none of my business; but such a man as that should surely work his own land."

"That's true," said Olive quietly.

Time passed on. Fanny became accustomed to eat, sit, and even talk with the hired man. One day Olive took her up into his room. Fanny stood aghast. It was exquisite in its way as a lady's boudoir.

"He furnished it himself," said Olive in reply to Fanny's look of surprise.

"A Wilton carpet," murmured Fanny; "marble-top set; that Psyche! those—those flowers!—and what is this?"

She lifted a lovely little miniature from the table,—one of the most beautiful and refined faces she had ever seen.

"Oh, one of his friends, I suppose," said Olive, in her undemonstrative way. "And see how perfectly neat everything is kept; always in this beautiful order.—Do you wonder Harry calls him a *rara avis?*"

'Indeed, I cannot,' said Fanny, slowly, 'but he must spend every cent he earns to furnish himself in this extraordinary manner.'

'He has nothing else to do with his money, dear,' said Olive; 'he don't even buy cigars. For my part, I think he is perfectly elegant.'

Fanny said nothing, but she found herself wishing that she knew who was the original of that lovely miniature, and trying to reconcile the tastes and surroundings of the man himself with his servile occupation. Not but what the work was good enough, and honorable for any man; but why wasn't he laboring for himself instead of another?

For days she thought of the miniature. Every time she met him, heard him talk or sing—he had a fine voice, and was not averse to using it—up popped the mysterious face with the Spanish eyes and the clustering curls.

Mr. Eben Wolcott, meantime, had taken advantage of her reluctant permission and brought his dashing team to Winnicut. Poor Fanny, at sight of his respectable aldermanic person, his gold-bowed spectacles, and thick grey whiskers, felt a strange sinking at the heart. Why would that six footer rise up in her imagination and cause by mere force of contrast a repulsion so terrible?

'It's positively wicked for me to seem to encourage that man,' she said, almost passionately, one morning, the day after a drive.

'Which man?' asked Olive, innocently, and their eyes met.

The red blood flew all over poor Fanny's face: she felt hot to the crown of her head—and yet why should she?

'That's a pretty question to ask!' she exclaimed, nearly angry.

'Well, dear, but how am I to know who 'that man' is?' queried Olive, with a conscious look.

'You know it is Mr. Wolcott, said Fanny, nearly crying.

'Well, he is a good man, and a rich one,' was the answer. 'I know girls who would jump at the chance; as the saying is I would either marry him or cast him off.'

'Pshaw!' said Fanny, biting her red lips, and a few moments after she left the room conscious of a new, a painful, and at the same time a strangely delightful experience. No use to try to conceal it to herself—not the slightest. She loved Matthew Donn, her sister's hired man.

How she paced the room half distracted, sobbing without tears, forming wild resolves, and then throwing herself down with a sense of her utter helplessness, I shall not describe. How could she ever meet him again? Could she ever keep her almost painful secret, and did Olive guess at it? What would Olive think—counsel her if she knew?

Only the next time that Mr. Eben Wolcott came out she quietly dismissed him, and then made up her mind that she must go home. If she could only fly to the ends of the earth.

But Fanny did not go, for Olive would not hear of it. A slight cold confined Olive to her room, but one evening she sent Fanny out and bade her peremptorily to take Harry and go for a walk. Then she summoned her husband to give him his orders, but when he came down stairs Fanny was gone, and Matthew, with a wicked little smile, was taking down his hat.

'That's right, Donn,' said Harry, breaking into a laugh; 'she ought to know better than to be alone. By the way I happen to know that she has dismissed that old alderman.'

Donn smiled again and went out, closing the door behind him. There was a bright moon, displaying flower, leaf and bud. Supposing that Fanny would only make the round of the place, he ran swiftly down to the back gate, and met her just as she had reached the great elm that stood guarding the lane.

She started at sight of him.

'You will allow me to walk with you?' he said. 'There is a squad in the neighborhood, and some one might molest you.'

Fanny could not say no; could not talk, even, for with ready tact he took all the conversation on himself. What did he not touch? Opera, art, nature, city, county—all derived new beauty from the glamour of his tongue. Was it strange that Fanny found herself leaning on his arm and listening with rapt attention to the eloquence of his speech? From that time there was a certain tacit understanding between them and all went smoothly till the morning he kissed her. For that Fanny was angry at herself but she was angrier with him. All day long she was full of moods, changing from grave to gay, from fits of reflection to the wildest merriment.

'Fanny,' said Harry, coming up to his wife's room after tea, Mr. 'Donn wishes to speak with you, down stairs.'

All the lovely color faded out of her face at this announcement. She longed to assert herself; but might they not read the truth in her eyes if she refused.

Slowly she went down stairs.

Donn was in the parlor, walking back and forth. He came to meet her with outstretched hands.

'I want you to forgive my rudeness of this morning,' he said, 'In my assumed character I had no right to take such a liberty, or in my own.'

'Your assumed character!' she exclaimed, trembling as she sat down.

'Yes. My friend Harry met me a year ago, when we were both traveling. I was a good deal run down in health, and the doctors said that were I a laboring man I might overcome the disease that wasting me. So I contracted with Harry to work for him, like any common farmer, and he was to keep my real name and position a secret.'

He saw the change in her beautiful eyes.

'My real name is Don Mathews,' he added, smiling, 'and there is no need of my working for a living; but I really think I shall go into partnership with my friend Harry and turn farmer. But you have not told me yet how you forgive me.'

'I—I don't know,' retorted Fanny, half laughing, half crying.

'Fanny, Fanny, if you knew how I love you,' he cried, suddenly stopping in front of her, 'I do think you would.'

'I—I am so glad.'

It was not, politic, perhaps, this confession but it was very natural.

'And I think I can match your alderman's house,' he added, taking her hands in his; 'dear, dear Fanny.'

'And his horses,' laughed Fanny, looking up with beaming eyes.

'Yes, dearest, and perhaps—himself,' and the ringing laugh, united, resounded through the house.

Of course Harry—who had an inkling—and Olive came down stairs, and of course everybody was happy over it.

'Harry,' said Don, after a moment, 'I think I am cured.'

AN EXPENSIVE JOKE.—A man who plays practical jokes upon his wife deserves to be punished, and Slatterly of Muncy was punished. His wife has a dread of cats, and before retiring at night she always looks carefully under the bed to see that no stray puss and no man, on robbery intent, are concealed there. A few nights ago, after Mr. and Mrs. Slatterly had retired, Slatterly, who has been learning ventriloquism, thought he would amuse himself and scare his wife by gentle yowling and make the sound go under the bed. Mrs. Slatterly instantly sat up and exclaimed:

'Josiah, I do believe there is a cat in this room.'

'Oh, nonsense,' grunted Slatterly; and then he made the noise again.

'I tell you Josiah,' exclaimed Mrs. S., 'I hear a cat under this bed. I wish you'd get up and drive it away.'

'Oh, go to sleep, Matilda,' said Slatterly, 'I don't hear anything. There's no cat about.'

Then Josiah, with his mouth beneath the covers, uttered a louder screech than before.

'Well, if you won't clear the cat out, you brute, I will,' said Mrs. Slatterly.

So she reached over, picked up Josiah's boots, and put them on in bed in order to protect her feet and ankles from the infuriated animal. Then she took Slatterly's cane and stooped down to sweep it around beneath the bed. Just as she did so, Josiah emitted a fearful yell which might have come from a cat in the last paroxisms of hydrophobia. This startled Mrs. Slatterly so that she sprang backward, and, in doing so she stumbled against the dear baby's cradle, which was overturned, and she went headforemost against the twenty-five dollar looking glass on the bureau, while the cane flew out of her hand and lighted with considerable force on Slatterly's head.

The screams of Mrs. Slatterly aroused all the neighborhood and even brought out the fire department, so that by the time the baby was rescued from the wreck and the broken glass picked up, two engines and streams played upon the house, and the front door had been burst open by the police; and the firemen were engaged in dragging a wet hose over the entry carpet and up the front stairs just as Slatterly came down to explain things. That feline ventriloquism cost him just ninety dollars for carpets and looking-glasses, and a contusion on the head, which the people of Muncy to this hour believe he received in a pugilistic encounter with his wife.

TOUGH ON THE FISH.—A devout clergyman sought every opportunity to impress upon the mind of his son the fact that God takes care of His creatures; that the falling sparrow attracts His attention, and that His loving kindness is over all His works. Happening, one day, to see a crane wading in quest of food, the good man pointed out to his son the perfect adaptation of the crane to get his living in that manner. 'See,' said he, 'how his legs are formed for wading! What a long slender bill he has! Observe how nicely he folds his feet when putting them in or drawing them out of the water. He does not cause the slightest ripple. He is thus enabled to approach the fish without giving them any notice of his arrival.'

'My son,' said he, 'it is impossible to look at that bird without recognizing the goodness of God in thus providing the means of subsistence.'

'Yes,' replied the boy, 'I think I see the goodness of God, at least so far as the crane is concerned; but after all, father, don't you think the arrangement a little tough on the fish?'

THE LARGEST BRIDGE IN THE WORLD.—The bridge to be constructed over the Firth of Forth, will be by far the largest in the world. According to the London *Builder*, its height will be 150 feet, and the number of spans nearly 100. The smaller spans will be 150 feet wide, which is beyond the average width of the largest spans in ordinary bridges; but the crowning marvel of the whole structure is the great span in the centre, which is to be 1,500 feet, or nearly one-third of a mile in width—an extent unparalleled in any existing structure of the kind. The entire cost of the bridge will be at least ten millions of dollars.

To determine whether a man is drunk or not get him to say, 'The scene is truly rural.' If he says 'trural rury,' you may put him down as drunk.