

## ST. TAMMANY FARMER.

COVINGTON, DECEMBER 14, 1878.

### THAT VOICE.

A day in June, 1903, and one of the loveliest early summer days the world ever beheld.

On the lawn in front of the elegant mansion of Leon Fishback, Esq., a party of young people are playing "Follow, follow, follow me," a game somewhat resembling (so their mothers and grandmothers tell them) an old game called "Puss in the corner," played a quarter of a century or more ago, only, instead of beckoning to each other, they beckon to a group of metallic balls, around which they stand in a circle, and he or she who proves to have the most magnetic force the balls follow with a rush, while the remainder of the players rush as wildly in their efforts to secure the place left vacant by the flying one.

At this moment the balls are rolling pell-mell, helter-skelter, knocking against each other with a pleasant ringing sound, after a pretty fair-haired maiden, whose little feet, clad in slippers all gleaming with silver and gold, flash in the sunshine, beneath the blue satin Turkish trouserlets, as she springs lightly over the greensward, amid the exquisitely modulated laughter—no one shouts loudly in this refined twentieth century—of her merry companions.

In the back garden, on the green clover-sweet grass-plot, stands a broad, deep bucket of newly washed, snowy white linen, and a hanging-out machine, planted firmly in the middle of the plot, is industriously raising and lowering its wooden arms, grasping the various pieces in its wonderfully constructed hands and hanging them upon the stout no-clothes-pin line, which is slowly revolving around it, and to which they adhere without further trouble.

In the dairy the rosy-cheeked maid is reading a love poem, while the automatic milker is milking the beautiful white cow that stands just outside the door; in the kitchen the cook is rocking indolently to and fro in a low rocking chair, watching the "magic rolling-pin" roll out the paste for her pies, ready to stop its pendulum-like movement the moment the crust is smooth and thin enough; and a small servant-boy, with his hands in his pockets, lounges in one corner near a tall stool, whistling to himself as he waits until the pair of shoes the electric blacking brush is polishing thereon attain the proper degree of brilliancy and mirror likeness.

This is a prosperous place, this domain of Leon Fishback, Esq., and Leon Fishback himself is a tall, handsome, energetic, positive man of one-and-thirty—a bachelor, who gives a home to his widowed sister and her four half-orphaned children, and in return is taken care of by her, with the assistance of the old house-keeper.

Still, people, as people will—especially people with grown-up single daughters—wondered that he had never married. It was not for

want of opportunity he had not done so—oh, no indeed—for a dozen lovely girls, half a dozen, more or less, charming widows, and several ladies of neither class, had, since his coming into the property of his uncle and godfather, Leon Fishback, Sr., (whose ashes in a solid gold casket stood in a sort of shrine, made of a hundred rare woods, in the south drawing-room,) intimated to him, in every way that the shrinking sensitiveness of womanhood would allow, their perfect willingness to assume the role of mistress of the Fishback mansion.

But Leon had walked calmly among them, dispensing hospitality, kind words and gracious smiles, with the strictest impartiality, distinguishing none by the slightest preference, until a few weeks before this beautiful June day.

Then came to visit his sister an old school friend, Laura Beardsley, who had been residing in a far distant State, but with whom the sister kept up a warm correspondence ever since they parted at the college door, the day on which each was publicly hailed with loud acclamations as "Mistress of Arts."

Miss Beardsley is a lovely woman of eight-and-twenty summers, looking at least five summers less, with an exceptionally sweet voice, bright smile, graceful figure and winning ways. And to this bewitching woman has Leon Fishback, the hitherto apparently unimpressible bachelor, devoted himself since the moment he first took her slender little hand in his and bade her welcome to his home. And it is by her side he loiters, untempted by the merriment without, in the deep, pleasant, vine-enwreathed bay-window of the library, as the fair-haired girl comes flying across the garden, pursued by the tinkling bells.

Laura starts from her seat with a blush, and leaning from the window, entreats, "Coax them away, Bella dear, they are dancing on the flower bed." And as the girl obediently turns and speeds in the opposite direction, she draws back her pretty head, and, looking at her companion, says: "How much Bella is like her sister Teresa—that is, when Teresa was only sixteen."

"Is she?" asks Mr. Fishback.

"Why, don't you remember?" said Laura.

"I do not," replied Mr. Fishback, with emphasis.

Miss Laura makes two interrogations points with her silken eyebrows, opens her mouth to speak, thinks better of it, closes her red lips firmly, and turns to the window again as the merry-makers stop playing and gather in a group, with their eyes fixed upon a small aerial car, which is gently swaying between heaven and earth, decorated with flags, as it slowly descends toward the lawn. In a few minutes it touches the ground, and a handsome young fellow leaps out and is greeted with many exclamations of pleasure and surprise.

"Your brother Reginald," says Miss Beardsley. "So soon returned London? Why, he only started a few days ago."

"Yes; flying ship American Eagle—fastest of the Air Line. I heard

of her arrival just after breakfast this morning, when it was shouted by the telephone at the station below."

"Thirty miles away!"

"Oh! that's nothing. We expect to be able to hear news from a hundred miles away before many years are past!"

"May I not be in the immediate vicinity when that news is shouted!" says the lady, with an involuntary movement of her pretty white hands toward her pretty rose-tipped ears, "for I should expect to be deaf forever more."

"Never fear, my dear—I mean Miss Beardsley. Such a misfortune as that shall never occur, even though you should chance to be at the very side of the shouter. Edison is at this moment perfecting an instrument that begins to deliver its messages in a moderately loud voice, which increases in volume as it is carried forward, until it reaches the most distant point it is intended to reach, thus maintaining an even tone all along the route. How glorious all these Edisonian inventions are!" he continues, with a glow of enthusiasm, "and what humdrum times our ancestors must have had without them. Why, they are the very life of the age! There's the phonograph, for instance—but I beg pardon; you are looking bored. I can not expect you to take as much interest in these subjects as I do. Is not Reginald coming this way?"

"He is not," answered Miss Laura, demurely; "he is still holding Bella's hand, and totally ignoring all the other welcoming hands extended to him."

"Ah! the old, old story, that is ever new!" quotes Mr. Fishback, as he peeps over the shoulder of his fair guest at the new arrival; and then, suddenly rising and confronting her, he exclaims: "You must have heard that story very often, Laura—forgive my calling you so, but you used to permit it in the days we went blackberrying together, some ten years ago; and forgive me again, but, upon my word, I can not help asking you, impelled as I am by some mysterious power, Why have you never married?"

A blush rises to her cheek, but she looks up in his face, and calmly replies: "I don't remember the blackberry episodes, and I have remained unmarried because I vowed, when a young girl, never to marry unless convinced that I was the first and only love of the man whose wife I became."

"Laura, I have never loved another."

"Mr. Fishback, you forget my old friend Teresa, the sister of the girl to whom your brother Reginald is now making love on the lawn."

"Good heavens, Laura, how mistaken you are!"

"It was with her you looked for blackberries. I never knew you to find any, not with me, sir."

"Laura, how blind you were! I sought her society, only to be near you. I declare, upon my word and honor, I lingered by her side for hours and hours, in the hope that you would join us for a moment or two during the time, and when you

did, in that moment or two was concentrated the joy of the whole day. You were so proud, so cold, so reserved, I did not dare to approach you, save through your friend; and—"

"And you did not bury yourself in seclusion for two years after she jilted you and married Frank Huntington?" she asks as he pauses.

"Great heavens! How preposterous! Laura, I swear—"

But, as he is about to swear, a procession of small nephews and nieces entered, the leader of which carried an odd looking box.

"See, uncle!" the bright eyed little fellow calls out as he approaches, "I found this old phonograph on the top shelf of your closet, where I was looking for your fish line to play horse with, and it talks like everything."

With this he begins to turn the crank, and a voice—a somewhat shrill young voice—the voice of Teresa, sister of Bella, begins to speak:

"Yes, Leon, my own, I will grant your impassioned prayer, and breathe the words you long to hear into this magical casket, and then, when you are lonely or inclined to doubt me, jealous one, you can call them forth to bring back the smiles to your dear face, and joy to your dear heart. I do return the love you so ardently avow, and I will marry you when mamma gives her consent. Until then no lips shall touch the lips made sacred by your kiss; no hand shall clasp the hand that wears your lovely diamond ring. But oh, Leon, dear, try to like Laura a little for my sake. I know that she is all that you say she is—affected, cold-hearted, haughty and disagreeable; I am just naughty enough to be pleased when you tell me her beauty, so much admired by others, fades into utter insignificance beside that of your own little Teresa; but, my Leon, try to tolerate her, for, strange as it may appear to you, I am quite fond of her. Good night, beloved. Dream of your Teresa."

"That plagued phonograph," said Mr. Fishback; "I thought I destroyed it long ago," as he angrily took it from the hands of the small discoverer.

"What did our humdrum ancestors do without these glorious inventions!" murmured Laura, as she quietly fainted away, for the first and only time in her life.

"If ever you go prowling around my room again," continued Mr. Fishback, addressing his unfortunate nephew, and supporting Miss Beardsley with one arm, while he flung the tell-tale phonograph out of the window, "I'll apply the double back-action self-acting spanking machine until you roar for mercy."

The procession then left the room on the double-quick. Mr. Fishback, looking upon the inanimate form he held in his arms, exclaimed: "She will never, never look at me again!"

But she did, and what's more, married him a month after. And—oh, the wonderful progress toward perfect womanhood in this twentieth century!—although they have been married for some twenty years, she has never once said to him, "That voice."

### DRIPPINGS FROM THE PRESS

"Duty before pleasure," as the Customhouse officer said when he seized a lot smuggled cigars.

Thirty years ago there were no less than two hundred prisons in Scotland. The number at present is fifty-six.

The editor of an Ohio paper publishes the names of subscribers who pay promptly, under the head of "Legion of Honor."

A waiter boy in a hotel at Ningam lately wrote home to his mother: "The hotel season is all over here, but the Falls are goin' on just the same as ever."

"What is love?" A disciple of Johnson is ready with the definition: "A prodigal desire on the part of a young man to pay some young woman's board."

The other day a father said to his little five-year-old who came in late to dinner from school, "Robbie, why are you so late? Didn't you hear the bell?" "Yes, father," replied Robbie, "but I couldn't hear it plain."

"My son," said Mr. Jones, kindly, to his youthful heir, "accustom yourself to be polite to the footman to the parlor-maid, the coachman, and to all the servants; thus you will come in time to be courteous to all people—even to your parents."

"It seems to me," said a customer to his barber, "that in these hard times you ought to lower your price for shaving." "Can't do it," replied the barber. "Nowadays everybody wears such a long face that we have a great deal more surface to shave over."

The Duke of Wellington stood as godfather to the Duke of Connaught. On the Prince's birth the warriors received an odd rebuff from the nurse. He asked, simply enough, "Is it a boy or a girl?" and received the crushing reply, "It is a Prince, your grace."

A very bad rider who possessed enormously large feet was seen, to the astonishment of everybody, riding a horse which, though quiet in harness, was difficult to manage in connection with a saddle. The animal's meek behavior was eventually explained by a looker-on, who remarked, "He evidently thinks he is between the shafts."

Bishop Potter, of New York, in excusing himself from making a speech at a luncheon after a church dedication at Boston, told the story of a man who was always bragging of any speech he made, and accordingly once told a friend that he had just been down to Boston, where he made a speech. "Oh, did you?" said his friend. "I am glad to hear it. I always did hate those Bostonians."

During the performance of "Othello," at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Birmingham, in the bed-chamber scene in the last act, where Othello, in his wild despair, is in the act of taking the life of his wife, an old lady in the pit broke the stillness of the tragic scene, and caused a good deal of amusement at an inopportune moment, by making a dash toward the stage, exclaiming: "Oh, you wretch!"