Celia Godward's Diary

BY

MARY H. TENNYSON

On the morning of April 18, 1900, the happiness of Harold Godward's life appeared to have reached its culminating point. Indeed, the universe might have been searched in vain for another man in quite such an ecstatic state of contentment; for Godward was entirely satisfied with his fellow-man and woman, and also with himself, that day.

He was of vigorous physique, and healthy minded on the whole, and hitherto his life had flowed so smoothly that no disturbing doubts of the permanence of his good fortune obtruded themselves to cast an ominous shadow over the greatness of his bliss.

It is said, as a truism, that to know perfect joy it is necessary to have suffered; but surely it is those who have suffered on whom those ghastly doubts obtrude with the strongest force.

From his boyhood Godward's lines had been cast in pleasant places. He was a posthumous child, but his mother had worshipped her only son, and had fostered in every way the boy's obvious talents.

His school life had been a series of triumphs, triumphs which were not grudged to the brilliant lad, who combined athleticism with Latin verse; and who, considering what a clever chap he was, was singularly free from "side."

At Oxford, whither he went in due course, his career was an honorable one; and, returning to his mother's home at the age of twenty-seven, he stated his intention of taking up literature as a means of increasing their somewhat limited income. And the doting, gray-haired mother rejoiced in her son's determination, being fully assured in her own mind her darling would be an honor to whatever profession he might select.

For a few months Harold worked with a will, writing short stories and magazine articles to try his strength, and then a new interest came into his already full life.

At the house of a college chum he met the most beautiful and amiable girl in the world; and forthwith the young man fell deeply in love, so deeply that the silent applause he perceived in Celia Dent's lustrous soft blue eyes, when he had been persuaded into reading to a few privileged friends one of his stirringly dramatic romances, was more precious to him than his mother's outspoken praise, or the demonstrative approval of his college cronies.

He was already engaged to Celia Dent, and the marriage day was fixed, when his mother fell ill, and in three days died. Her son mourned her loss truly, but it was not unnatural that he was able to find consolation in the soft pressure of Celia's hand and the liquid tenderness of her eyes.

The devoted mother, with her dying breath, had begged her son not to postpone his wedding; and, therefore, six weeks after she had been reverently laid to rest, Harold married the beautiful girl, and a month later they commenced their lives together in the pretty house in Kensington in which he had been born.

On April 18, 1900, Harold and Celia had been married for a year and a half; their little son was four months old, strong and beautiful as a cherub, and on the previous evening Godward's first modern comedy had been produced, with triumphant success, at a leading London theater.

But, although the previous night the almost frantic delight of the audience in the discovery of a new playwright, who, even in his 'prentice days, could move them to tears or laughter at his will, was a joy to the young author, the noise and excitement of the situation had been almost overwhelming; and, moreover, his pleasure had been to some extent dampened by the fact that Celia had not witnessed his glorious success.

He could not find it in his heart to argue when she had said that her duty to their child forbade her presence at the theater. How proud he had been of her when she had declared her determination to nurse her darling herself; how beautiful to him had been the spectacle of the tender mother and her baby. He dared not attempt to persuade her to neglect for once her sacred duties; but in the midst of his triumph his eyes had grown humid with sympathy, sympathy for the joy she had missed, and with himself that he could not raise his eyes to hers, and see her soft lips part in the sweet smile of silent approbation which, to him, was so fraught with meaning.

At night when he had come home she had already gone to bed. He knew that this would be so, for she had told him that for the little son's sake she dared not risk late hours and overfatigue; and when, quivering with excitement and love, he had looked into her room, he had resolutely stifled the slightly chilling sense of disappointment that had crept over him, as in the dim light he perceived her lying with her child upon her arm, fast asleep.

He had murmured a prayer for the two, but his voice was unsteady, and he shook his head impatiently when he gained his own apartment.

"What a fool I am!" he muttered. "I am altogether overwrought. I am not supersensitive as a rule."

But here Harold Godward made a mistake. Throughout his life he had never lacked his full meed of appreciation; hitherto his self-love had received not even a prick, and, therefore, he was not aware that self-love existed in his composition.

But a night's sound sleep had entirely restored his equanimity, and now, as he sat after breakfast with his pipe in the corner of his mouth, in the midst of a veritable sea of newspapers, reading aloud the notices of his play to his young wife, his happiness was complete.

For an hour and a half he continued to read, while Celia nodded and smiled at him, and then he perceived that she grew restless.

"I can't bear to interrupt you," she said, softly; "but I ought to go to baby now."

"Oh, let nurse bring him down," he answered quickly; "nobody will come in here. I have left the two most important papers to the last on purpose."

The baby was brought, and then Harold settled himself squarely in his chair, and took up the journal generally admitted to be the most critical in matters dramatic. A column and a half of unstinted praise was devoted to the new play, and Godward's voice actually shook with emotion, as very huskily he read the peroration:

"Indeed, it is many years since we have witnessed a play so entirely satisfying. Brilliant from a literary point of view, intensely interesting, and breathing a spirit of benevolence that warms the heart and cheers the spirit. Here vice is punished and virtue rewarded, as they should be always, the true mission of art being to soothe and strengthen. We feel the better for a play like this, which enlarges our sympathies, while it upholds our ideals, and with open arms we welcome this strong and pure-minded dramatist, who makes us weep for the sins of the world, but teaches us to judge with charity."

Unable for the moment to express the proud delight that almost unmanned him, Godward looked up at his wife, his strong, well-cut mouth tremulous with happiness, and then the tears rose in his eyes, and one or two tiny drops gathered on the lashes.

Celia sat with her baby at her breast, pressing her treasure tenderly to her with outspread, delicate hands; her beautiful face was flushed, her lips were parted in a smile of rapture and her slightly distended violet eyes shone with a lustrous light.

He gazed at her for a moment with almost reverent admiration. He could read her so truly. At last she was satisfied for him.

He had remarked that during the time he had been reading to her, although she had smiled and nodded encouragingly, her satisfaction had been somewhat superficial, and he had wondered at it; but now he understood, and his heart yearned with love.

This was the first notice in which the praise contained no drop of leaven. All the critics had been unanimous in their commendation; but this man, the head of them all, alone had had the courage to say the work, as it stood, was absolutely beyond improvement, and his wife was satisfied with him.

Her whole countenance glowed, and as plainly as though she had spoken he could read her thoughts. "At last it has come! This is what I have waited for. This man rates my husband at his true worth."

Celia was not looking at him, her rapturous eyes seemed to be gazing into a distant paradise, nor did she move when the author's voice stopped with an abrupt catch of emotion; and in a minute he rose softly, and folding the mother and child in his arms, pressed his lips to hers.

"That is good enough, isn't it, little woman?" he said, trying to speak lightly.

He felt her start strongly, as though it were almost painful to her to have had her proud dreams interrupted, and he regretted that he had disturbed her, for her expression now was comparatively tame, as, raising her face, she returned his kiss.

"Yes," she murmured, placidly, "it is very good. I am so glad. You must be pleased, after all your hard work."

Again, as when he had returned from the theater overnight and found her sleeping, Godward was conscious of a slight sense of disappointment, and again he pulled himself together. He recognized the danger of growing exacting. Surely enough and to spare had been said in praise of his play. His wife was not in the habit of expressing all she felt, he had known that from the beginning; her eyes at all times spoke the thoughts of her heart more plainly than her tongue.

Smoothing the soft cheek of the sleeping child with a tender touch, he said, cheerily:

"I wish the boy were old enough to pat his father on the back with all the rest. Who knows, Celia? That child may be an infant Shakspeare. In that case I had better set to work again at once. I must make hay for us all while the sun shines, for if he turns out a very big genius, he won't be self-supporting most likely. Good-bye, my treasures."

"Are you going out, Harold?"

"Yes, I must run down to the theater. I expect they will most of them look in between 12 and 1, though there is nothing to alter, so far as I can tell."

He kissed her again, and went out into the bright spring morning. Then, jumping into a hansom, and leaning back luxuriously, once more he reviewed his delightful circumstances.

The play being such an undoubted success would bring him in a large sum of money, there could be little question of that, though this being his first dramatic venture, he had received in the original instance only a small sum from the manager. In the future, therefore, Godward felt that he would be justified in giving up the magazine work at which he had labored incessantly during the first year of his married life, and in devoting himself exclusively to the writing of plays, in which direction he had always believed his literary strength lay.

He felt himself entitled to a short holiday, however; he had worked almost night and day for the last six months in the composition and production of the play; indeed, it seemed to him he had scarcely had leisure even to notice the growth and development of that wonderful little son of his. He would take a month, at any rate, to revel in home pleasures—he had promised his wife a few weeks at the sea—and then he would buckle on his armor again, and the second play should be better than the first, for he was not so conceited that he did not recognize, after all, there were weak points in the first. The second act, for instance, was not up to the others.

The next play should be more evenly balanced, and Celia should be there on the first night, in the author's own box, and she could take her little cousin Marion with her. He smiled as he recognized Marion's disappointment that she had not been able to go the night before.

The stage seemed full of people when Godward entered the dimly-lighted theater, and a moment after he was the center of a group of excited men and women, who clapped him on the back and shook him by the hand in the fervor of their congratulations; the leading lady, an irreproachable young matron, being sufficiently carried away to take the young author by the coat lapels and kiss him on the cheek.

Then the members of the orchestra, who were present in case there should be any alterations in the music cues, struck up an improvised version of "See the Conquering Hero Comes." And at that everybody laughed, and the tension of the prevailing excitement was, to a certain extent, relaxed.

It was nearly 4 before Harold could get away from the Cecil, where he had lunched with Walter Chester, the manager of a rival theater. Godward's face was radiant with gratification. Everybody had been so good to him. Not a soul had seemed to grudge his easily-earned triumph; and, after all, it had been easily earned, for he had reveled in the writing of the play. Chester followed him to his hansom.

"You'll give me the refusal of the next, then. You promise?" he said.

"Yes, I promise."

"And you think you can turn it out in six months?"

"There or thereabouts. I am going to take a month off at Eastbourne with my wife, I tell you, to study my kiddy. I scarcely know the little chap. Give a fellow time to breathe."

"A little time only," Chester replied, with a smile; "the public will be waiting impatiently for your next. Don't let them cool, Godward."

Softly whistling a graceful melody that occurred more than once in the new piece, Harold let himself into his house with his latch-key, and, throwing off his light overcoat, looked into the drawing room. Celia sat at her inlaid escritoire, writing busily in a bulky volume.

The smile deepened on the husband's face. Of course, she was occupied with her journal. She always devoted an hour in the afternoon to it. He could very well imagine she had plenty to say that day, and he could also understand that to women to whom speech is difficult, when their hearts are full, a journal must be a great comfort.

He advanced a step, and she looked up quickly, and then, as usual, drew a sheet of blotting paper over the half-covered page.

"Harold! I didn't hear you come in!"

"So absorbed in your literary occupations, eh?" he responded, bending his head to kiss her.

She smiled, but made no answer, and then he walked away and seated himself near to the cozy hearth, on which there burnt a bright fire.

"Everything all right at the theater, Harold?"

"Splendid!"

"That's a good thing," Celia replied, dipping her pen again into the ink. But before she could recommence her writing there came a knock at the door, followed immediately by the entrance of a white-gowned nurse. With a start the young woman rose to her feet.

"What is it, nurse?"

"Oh, nothing particular, ma'am, only I wanted just to show you those new socks of baby's."

"I'll come at once."

The young mother tossed her journal into the writing table and turned the key hastily in the look. In another moment she had quitted the room, and then Harold walked to the window and looked out into the street.

He wished the nurse hadn't come at that precise moment, he wanted to tell Celia about the offer for the new play, and the leading lady; he knew how her soft eyes would kindle when she heard of that enthusiastic kiss. He laid his hand on the escritoire, and the lid moved. His wife had not locked it, then.

Idly he lifted the lid, and then a sudden gleam of half mischievous excitement leaped into his eyes.

His wife's journal! He must look at it just for once. He must see what she had said about his triumph.

He remembered her dreamy gaze of rapture over that glorious Press notice. He knew her heart had been too full for speech, but he had so longed to add hers to the outspoken chorus of praise that had sounded so sweetly in his ears. His mother! What would not she have said had she lived to see this day? Surely there could be nothing really dishonorable for a husband to peer into the recess of a heart that he could swear was altogether pure and faithful.

Nevertheless, Godward glanced nervously over his shoulder, as he seated himself and opened the volume.

He saw where the new writing commenced, and began to read there. The home tale was taken up on the evening of April 17.

"Had dinner early on Harold's account. Sat in the bedroom in the evening. Baby slept like a cherub. He takes wonderful notice now. I was quite struck with his intelligence in his bath this afternoon. I dropped the soap into the water, and he stretched his hand out after it. Nurse says she never saw a child like it at his age. Put him into his cot, and sat building castles in the air about him until 10, then nursed him and went to bed. A happy, peaceful time. Harold's play produced at the King's. I asleep when he came home."

Godward's hands were as cold as ice, and in that warm soft atmosphere he shivered slightly as he turned the leaf, and rubbed his eyes. Was it really dusk? Was there a palpable gloom in the air, or was it only a trick of his fancy? Setting his teeth, he read on:

Friday, April 18—Feel very tired this afternoon. Trust I am not going to have anything the matter with me; what should I do about baby in that case? He appears so extraordinarily impressionable. When I smile at him, he answers directly; but if I look at all grave, the corners of his dear little mouth go down at once. A fine day. Nurse able to take him out in the gardens for three hours. Says she's certain he noticed the crocuses. I shall go out with them to-morrow to see—I can hardly believe it at his age; but, then, baby is not ordinary. Harold's play seems to have been a success last night. He read me no end of newspaper articles on it. I very soon got hopelessly muddled with them. However, now I suppose the thing is off his brain. He has been awfully absorbed in it lately. While he was reading I made up my mind about baby's future. Last night I fancied I should like him to be a doctor, but now I want him to be a clergyman; it is surely the noblest of all professions. I quite lost myself in a dream about my darling. A good thing Harold didn't know. He claims so much attention, poor fellow, his mother spoilt him! Harold thinks baby may grow up to be a writer. I trust not. One author in a family is quite enough. Harold not at home to lunch, so baby sat on my knee while I ate mine. He looked so astonished at all my proceedings. Nurse very much amused. He's really the sweetest companion. His feet are growing so—"

There was no more, but Godward did not move; still he sat there staring at the pretty writing, his face gray with pallor. Could it be true? Was this his wife? This babbling, unsympathetic creature?

He raised his hand to his brow, whereon drops of sweat stood thickly; and then there came a loud knock at the outer door.

Dropping the lid of the escritoire he stumbled to the chair at the fireside, and wiped his glistening forehead. In a moment the drawing room door opened noisily, and there entered a girl of about eighteen, who, running to him, laid her eager hands on his arm.

"Harold!" she cried. "Oh, I am so proud and happy! How splendid, how splendid it all is! I waited in the library newsroom until the evening papers came out. I have read them, every one, morning and evening. I have been there nearly all day. I think the people must have thought me half crazed. I had to bite my tongue to prevent telling every one that it was my cousin's husband who had written the new play. Oh, isn't Celia off her head with pride?"

He could not speak, but he looked up into the young face. It was not a pretty face. Marion was delicate and thin, and, as a rule, somewhat wan; but to-day her eyes sparkled with enthusiasm, and her cheeks were flushed.

She was too excited, however, to notice the emotion in his face, and the door opening at that moment, she sprang to Celia's side, and threw her arms around her cousin's neck, kissing her heartily.

"Congratulations, congratulations!" she sang out. "Oh, Celia, when will you take me to see it? When? When?"

The young wife shook her head smilingly.

"You must be patient a little longer, Marion," she answered; "I will take you presently, but I shall not be able to leave baby for any length of time for eight weeks yet."

"Eight weeks! Oh, Celia! Then Harold will take me, won't you, Harold? I can't wait, and I shall not be here in eight weeks."

"Not be here?"

"No, my stepmother says I must go out as a nursery governess now at once; and, oh, Celia, I'm not so very fond of children, I'm afraid. If I could only get some shorthand secretarial work."

"Well, dear, I'm sorry," Celia said, softly; "but we can't all choose our ways of living."

Rising, Harold Godward stood for a minute looking down into the fire; and then he spoke, and neither of the women noticed how carefully and slowly he articulated.

"If you want a secretary's post, Marion," he said, "I can offer you one."

"Harold!"

"I should get on quicker if I dictated my plays," he explained; "and Chester wants a new piece from me at once."

"Not at once, surely, Harold?" Celia cried sharply. "You are going to take us to Eastbourne for a month?"

"I cannot do so now," he responded, calmly; "Chester presses for the play. I will send you down with baby and nurse."

"Oh, very well, dear; you must do as you think best," Celia answered, contentedly.

His rage rose at her ready acceptance of his absence, and he turned; but his wife remarked nothing unusual in her husband's aspect, though Marion wondered at the curious hard lines round his mouth.

"Marion, can you be here at 10 o'clock every morning?" he asked.

"Oh, earlier than that, Harold!"

"From 10 to 4 I should like you to stay," he continued. "You can lunch with us, and I will pay you 30 shillings a week to begin with. Will that do?"

With a sob the girl went to him and clasped his cold, clammy fingers in both her hands.

"I can't thank you," she gasped. "I am too happy. Heaven bless you!"

And Celia, examining the heel of baby's new socks, smiled as she said:

"Then that's all right. You won't be lonely now, Harold, while baby and I are away."

On Jan. 18, just eight months later, Harold Godward sat in his study with a heap of newspapers littering the floor. One lay upon his knee, crumpled fiercely in his clutching right hand. The clock struck, and he raised his haggard eyes to it.

"Eleven," he muttered. "Then she doesn't mean to come. Poor child, I expect she's upset. I wish she hadn't been there last night, and I hope she hasn't read this. But if she has she won't understand all it means to me. Thank heaven, she, at least, is innocent."

Then once again he smoothed the paper out and reread the words, which appeared to scorch his eyes. It was the same writer whose praise had raised him to the summit of his joyful pride eight months ago:

"Chilled to the heart, cruelly disappointed, we watched the curtain descend on the most cynically depressing play we ever remember to have witnessed; and we came away in a state of actual bewilderment, for only half a mile away we knew that a theater was ringing with plaudits for the work of the same author, a pure human work, which in contrast to this is as light to darkness. If such things were possible, it might be supposed that the writer of the present pesimistically repulsive drama had come under the spell of some malignant personal influence during the last few months, which had twisted and warped his sense of right and wrong; but there are no witches nowadays, and the enigma why the same man should have given us within a year a play that excites our noblest aspirations, and another that scoffs at all we hold sacred, is one that we cannot hope to solve. The piece is undoubtedly brilliantly clever, and will in all probability draw the town, which, considering the morbidly unwholesome tone of the plot, is a fact that may well be regretted by all true lovers of art. We can only offer our sympathy to the artists who had to represent some of these most repellant characters."

"It is true," he muttered. "I have gone to the bad, to the bad utterly. Marion doesn't know it yet; but how long shall I be able to keep silence? It tears my heart out that she stays away to-day."

He sat another minute, with grimly compressed lips, and then, with a stifled groan, he rose. He must go down to the theater, a rehearsal had been called for twelve. He went out of the room, and met Celia in the hall.

"Going to the theater?" she asked brightly.

"Yes," he responded, curtly.

"Then baby and I will not expect you to lunch. Come, Harold, cheer up! You can't expect that all your pieces will be equally successful. And it doesn't matter half so much in this case, since the play was bought outright. That was a real bit of luck for us."

With a soft smile the young woman turned away, and Godward opened the house door.

There was a fine sleet falling, and the outlook was as utterly cheerless as the author's heart; before he had taken a step, however, a messenger boy ran up.

"Harold Goodward, esq.?"

Goodward nodded, and the lad put into his hand an envelope with a typed address. It appeared an entirely uninteresting communication, yet Godward was conscious of a curious shrinking sense of chill as the note was given to him. Instinctively he turned to the study and shut and locked the door; and then, removing his hat, he seated himself and opened the note.

As his eyes fell upon the writing of the enclosure, he gave a sigh of relief.

"Marion!" he cried, under his breath. "I am glad she has written."

"Harold," the letter commenced, "I have typed the envelope because I do not want anyone to know that I have written to you to-day. I am more unhappy than I can say. The notices are so cruel—so terribly cruel. Harold, I cannot come to you any more. Do not try to persuade me. I will not come! Never again! Oh, try, try to do differently in the time to come. You are clever; there is no one who can approach you. I would say, try for my sake; but it would not be right. I am going straight away to-day, a long way off. If we ever meet in the future, please Heaven you will be your old self again. Burn this letter at once. I beg it of you as a favor. Tell no one I have written. Remember, tell no one. Heaven bless you!"

His eyes were scared, and his breath came quickly, as he dropped the letter into the fire, muttering as he did so:

"I will not give her up. I will find her wherever she hides."

It was 9 o'clock when Godward re-entered his home. He removed his hat wearily, and then he looked into the drawing room. Celia was seated at her writing table, and an evil gleam came into his eyes as he saw that her journal was open before her.

With a sullen frown he strode to the fire, and then he became aware that his wife was crying.

"Dear me, your diary appears to be affecting," he said, sarcastically.

She wrote another word or two, and then she raised her streaming eyes to his scornful face.

"I have had some very bad news," she said. "I am putting it down at once. I am afraid it will shock you. Perhaps you had better look at what I have written."

She gave him the book, and, half frightened, he glanced at the still wet ink.

"A sad shock!" Celia had written. "Poor Marion slipped on the platform at South Kensington this morning at 12 o'clock. She fell in front of a train and was killed instantly!"

For a moment Harold Godward stood motionless, actually stunned by the enormity of his horror, and then his wife started back with a shrill cry of terror.

With a shriek of horrible laughter the man held the fatal book on high, shaking it and waving it in a delirium of hysterical agony. And then, groaning and panting, he tore at the leaves—tore at them with his fingers and with his teeth until the ground was strewn with the white paper.

Even the cover he rent asunder, while his pale wife watched him, scared and trembling; and then, as in his maddened frenzy he trampled the fragments under foot, his brain suddenly reeled, and with a choking moan he fell heavily, senseless in the midst of the litter.

And all this happened because a foolish woman kept a diary and a man could not control his curiosity.

[Copyright, 1902.]

THERE ARE OTHERS.

Miss Cutting—She suffers a great deal for her beliefs.

Morton—What are her beliefs?

Miss Cutting—She believes she can wear a No. 2 shoe on a No. 4 foot, and a 25-inch corset on a 22-inch waist.

OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

If the Mississippi valley were as densely populated as Massachusetts it would have 350,000,000 inhabitants.

The average life of $1 and $2 bills from issue to redemption as mutilated currency is little more than two years.

It is suggested in France that increase of population be encouraged by giving government positions only to men having large families.

Another step in the commercial annexation of Canada is the taking by New Yorkers of 5,000 shares, at $250 each, in the Royal Bank of the Dominion.

It is estimated that the recent increase in the pay of railroad employes throughout the United States affects 660,000 men, involving a cash outlay for 1903 of $38,350,000.

The average European is five feet six and seven-tenths inches high; the average American five feet seven and eight-tenths. Their respective weights are 138 and 141 pounds.

Quito, the capital of Ecuador, is to have a cotton mill. The machinery for it must be carried on the backs of mules to an altitude of 16,000 feet in the Andes in sight of Chimborazo.

The Aleuts are rapidly dying off since civilization has led to changes in their habits and clothing. The vices of our civilization destroy every aboriginal people exposed to them.

Trackwalkers for certain Massachusetts railroads are now required to wind a registering clock at certain points every hour, and records are kept, to be examined weekly by the superintendent.

In Italian cotton mills men receive 42 cents a day, women 33 cents and children 16 cents. Of the cotton used last year 93,000 tons came from the United States, 14,000 from India and 7,000 from Egypt.

That the people of the United States do not eat rice is shown by the statistics that a population of 80,000,000 consumes less than five pounds per capita per annum of the 400,000,000 of clean rice now produced annually.

A full set of the "Almanach de Gotha," from 1764 to 1900, was recently sold in Paris for $1,300. Of course, its value is largely that of a literary rarity, but the old volumes are extremely useful to special students.

It is said that the profitable hen eats sixteen times her weight in a year. Her eggs are six times her own weight, and worth six times the cost of her food. Feed plenty of wheat, oats, grit, clover and bone and less corn.

To such an extent does religion prevail at Gonoatoa, in the South seas, that every man, woman and child on that island two days out of every week goes to church at least three times a week is liable to be arrested and fined, the fine going to the King.

The telephone is in more general use in Sweden than any other country. Rates average $1 a month, and distance messages are 8 cents for three minutes if under 150 miles. A reply is always forthcoming from the central station in about ten seconds.

Judge Dick, of Columbus, O., has discharged Eva Earle, a woman who was prosecuted for accepting a fee to pray at the bedside of a sick person. He declared that any invalid had the right to hire another to pray for him if he wished to do so.

A somewhat remarkable text-book for the use of young German soldiers has just been published. It deliberately instructs soldiers to inform their superiors of all kinds of offenses committted by their comrades. Services of this character are stated in the text-book to be a high duty and worthy of commendation. If the soldier hears anything derogatory to his officers or the Kaiser, he is to fetch a policeman.

The skin of the diamond-back rattlesnake is utilized in Florida as a barometer. When preserved like rawhide and hung up the skin will begin to emit beads of moisture at the first indications of a storm, even though several hours before the arrival of the atmospheric disturbance.

The steamship Sierra, which has arrived at San Francisco from Australia, reports that while steaming at a rate of sixteen knots she struck a huge whale, breaking its back and cutting it so deeply that the monster's carcass stuck fast to the stem.

During the past year on all railroads of the United States 167 persons were killed in railroad accidents, 3,586 passengers were injured. During the same period on British roads not a single passenger was killed and only 476 were injured in railroad accidents.

Among the Turks bath money forms an item in every marriage contract, the husband engaging to allow his wife a certain sum for bathing purposes. Should it be witheld, she has only to go before the cadi and turn her slipper upside down, and if the complaint be not then redressed it is a ground for divorce.

A singular strike of priests has taken place at friary at Lisbon. Three priests, members of a religious congregation, were suspended, whereupon others, in sympathy with them, declined to act till their colleagues were pardoned. Their superiors are much embarrassed, and the difficulty has not yet been solved.

A German professor has been investigating the causes of insanity among women and has come to the conclusion that if women are admitted into competition with men the inevitable result will be a tremendous increase of insanity among the women. He finds that the percentage of women teachers who become insane is almost double that of the men teachers.

Probably the first railroad ever built in the United States principally to haul watermelons will be a branch line which the Burlington is getting ready to construct in southeast Missouri this spring. The line will be fifty miles long, and will run through a district which is distinctively the home of the watermelon. Enough melons are said to be produced there to keep one railroad busy during the season hauling them.

New Road from the Gateway.

Salt Lake Tribune.

The Chinese Steamship Company, which, with four ships, is to begin commercial operations between Hong-Kong and San Francisco, first stopping at a port in Mexico to discharge its load of coolies to work in that country, is likely to cut an important figure in Pacific ocean freights. The Chinese can carry freight cheaper than other peoples can, by reason of their cheaper labor, and the owners of the line are reported to be shrewd, enterprising men. They will naturally push their venture for all that it is worth and we may look to see lively competition. Our west coast is surely destined to be the gateway of the world to the Orient.

HOW IT HAPPENED.

He—Poor Jack! If it hadn't been for his wife he would have spent his fortune in a year.

He—How was that?

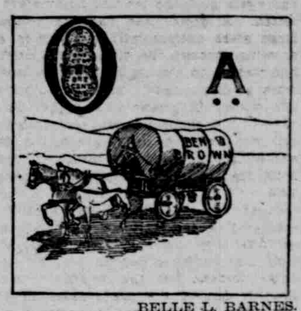
"Well, she spent it for him."

SPHINX LORE

Enigmatic Knots of Odd and Ingenious Kind for the Leisure Hour.

[Any communication intended for this department should be addressed to E. R. Chadbourn, Lewiston, Maine.]

438.—A BOOK AND ITS AUTHOR.



BELLE L. BARNES.

439.—ANAGRAM.

"DON'T COME IN THERE, OR—"
Or what? Gosh! That's the question.
Is thar a hint o' war
Veiled by this vague suggestion?
Or will ole Uncle Sam,
Obleegingly enuff,
Jes' shet up like a clam
If Yewrup calls his bluff?

This principle for years
Hez caused great irritation,
An' roused the jealous fears
Of each asplirin' nation.
Land-hungry rivals long
Tew put it tew ther test,
But dassn't face ther strong
Young giant o' ther West.

We dew not want a fuss;
It hain't our avocation,
But if some bumptious cuss
Riles up ther Yankee Nation,
Then let ther eagle scream,
An' that rambunctious Kaiser
May wake up from his dream
A sadder man an' wiser.

A. F. HOLT.

440.—DECAPITATED NUMERICAL.

1. We came to a mountain cabin where the hens were scratching and the pigs 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9, thus 2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9 little opportunity for human conversation amid the barking, crowing, grunting, and 4-5-6-7-8-9 of the premises. It was 5-6-7-8-9 to this that we again mounted our wheels, glad to be, as it were, once more on the 6-7-8-9. Jack said, "That is what you may expect if you try to take a little rest in one of these cabins."

2. He really believes in a lot of Oriental rubbish, 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13 among other things, and has become almost the 3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13 of mysticism. He always looks dapper dressed in white, with a gay 5-6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13 or two about him. He thinks we are a very materialistic 8-9-10-11-12-13, only one 11-12-13, as it were, lacking them toward making any real national entity to found a race 12-13.

DOROTHEA.

441.—PALINDROME.

This vessel that sailed the South seas
Had a queer cosmopolitan crew
Of Lascars, Hawaiians, Chinese,
And assorted Caucasians a few.

The cook of the dark-colored crowd
Used to serve some remarkable dishes,
And Sarah, the stewardess, vowed
That "sich cookin' would pison the fishes."

She peeped in the galley one day;
There were never eyes keener than Sarah's;
And then, no great cause for dismay,
*a*a* *a* a *a*a*a *a** a*a*.

M. C. S.

442.—GEOGRAPHICAL WORD DELETIONS.

1. From a city of the Southern States take an island of the Malay archipelago, and leave a bundle. 2. From one of the United States take a department of France and leave an abbreviation of the State. 3. From a city of Massachusetts take an English borough and leave a city of Rhode Island. 4. From a Burmese city take a conjunction and leave an Asiatic peninsula. 5. From a South American river take one and leave a state of Brazil. 6. From an Italian city take a printer's measure and leave a city of the Indies.

W. J. D.

443.—CHARADE.

'Twas quite a ONE, the TOTAL thought,
To hear the brown bee fret,
While from her tiny TWO he sought
Its hidden sweets to get.
"Mankind a TWO may need," he said,
"'Tis true some of them do,
To make them earn their daily bread;
Bees don't." And off he flew.
And then the TOTAL smiled—if flowers
may smile—
And sought some other rover to beguile.

SPICA.

444.—SOME LETTERS.

(Example: A sewing letter. Answer: A-mending.)

1. A sorry letter. 2. A dramatic letter. 3. A divided letter. 4. A sharp letter. 5. A beaten letter. 6. A roving letter. 7. A genuine letter. 8. A soldierly letter. 9. A cutting letter. 10. An exquisite letter.

EVANGELINE.

445.—ENIGMA.

I circled round the festive board
So many times, I fear,
I've almost killed with kindness
And have saddened with good cheer.
But "like cures like," or so they say,
And so I come again;
The only thing his nurse allows
While on this bed of pain.

DOROTHEA.

ANSWERS.

422.—Bump, dump, gump, hump, jump, lump, mump, pump, rump, sump, tump.

423.—Valentine.

424.—Mississippi river; George Washington; Chaucer; Roger Ascham; Homer; Herodotus; Francis Bacon; John Marshall; Aeschylus; Abraham; Satan; Izaak Walton.

425.—No; I trot no contortion.

426.—The value of the half dollars in cents is even, as is also the value of the dimes, and likewise the value of the nickels (for the number of nickels is even.) Since the total value is even, the value of the quarters must be even, too; therefore, the number of quarters is even, and they are in Bag C.

427.—1. Son-net. 2. For-got-ten. 3. Inspire.

428.—Holmes, Wood, Field, Lillie, James, Hale, Hardy, Child, Poe, Cooke, Lamb, Baker, Warner, Burnett, Butterworth, Motley, Pyle, Foote, Garland, Hawthorne, Curtis, Dodge, Howe, Knox, Bangs, Seawell, Baylor, White, Greene, Longfellow, Harte, Dunn, Ladd, Mable, Very.

429.—Spot, post, pots, tops, stop.

A GENERAL "HEALTH DAY."

Not a Bad Plan in View of the Prevalence of Microbes.

Philadelphia Record.

The tenacity with which disease germs cling to life is one of the marvels which impress the bacteriologist. Nothing short of boiling or the application of a powerful antiseptic can insure their destruction. They may remain imbedded in ice for a long time without their power of reproduction being impaired. What is more serious, they may make their lair in carpets, curtains, upholstery or even wall paper indefinitely, and when the conditions become favorable they may develop their specific maladies. The late Professor Tyndall traced a case of scarlet fever in the Scotch highlands to a hobby horse which had been sent from Glasgow on the death from that disease of its little owner. For nearly a year the germs were inactive, but at the first opportunity they were capable of inducing disease of a virulent type. The need, therefore, of the thorough disinfection of everything in a room where a patient has been confined by a zymotic disease is obvious.

It is because of this remarkable persistence of microbes that a member of the Utah Legislature has introduced a bill to appoint a general health day, a day when it shall be compulsory for every person in charge of a dwelling, store, office, theater, church, public hall of any kind, factory, etc., to clean and thoroughly disinfect the premises. It is provided that the State Board of Health shall prescribe the disinfectants to be used, and city councils, town boards or county commissioners shall see that the law is enforced. Local inspectors are to be appointed, and a fine of $50 will be imposed for any failure to clean up.

That the rigid enforcement of such a law would make an impression on the mortality from infectious diseases is beyond a doubt. While it is most often the case that typhoid fever, diphtheria and scarlet fever are propagated by means of polluted water or milk, the sudden appearance of these diseases has sometimes been traced, to a failure to disinfect the rooms of the sick. People cannot protect themselves from the carelessness or ignorance of some of the victims of infectious maladies. Persons with smallpox have been known to sell their infected clothing as rags, and workmen in paper mills have been stricken as a consequence of handling the clothing. Pneumonia patients and consumptives often expectorate on floors, and when the sputa dries the germs fill the air and are breathed by unsuspecting people. Only through disinfection can the dangers from this source be dissipated.

Perhaps the chief benefit of a general health day would be its educational influence. In spite of the enterprise of health officers in distributing tracts, there are many people in every community who are densely ignorant of the simplest facts of sanitation and who know nothing about the existence of microscopic creatures which are capable of producing the most dreaded maladies. The compulsory cleaning and inspection would do more to teach such persons the need of care than the tracts of the health department can do. The proposed law is wholly reasonable and expedient, and it is fair to assume that in time it will be enacted in every State.

So Parisian.

New York Post.

A certain Broadway restaurant, known for the Parisian quality of its cooking, is also acquiring for its cafe a flavor of smart Bohemianism, which is profitable in the extreme.

"Half of New York wants to be thought recklessly and spectacularly giddy," the proprietor says.

At any rate, he has solved the secret of success. Every night the small, marble-topped tables are plentifully occupied. It is especially good Bohemian form to loll upon the leather-cushioned window seats and call for a writing portfolio, ink well and pen. After all, those who look on may imagine one as dashing off a rondeau, or even such a difficult verse form as the villanelle. The proprietor does not begrudge his guests the paper and pens. They are valuable as theatrical properties, and he knows it.

The air is heavy with Tschaikowsky, the bouquet of liqueurs and the fumes of Egyptian cigarettes. One is conscious vaguely that the women talk very loudly and do not know it.

Old Salt's Comment.

Sea Breeze.

Sea language will stick to an "old salt" many years after he has quit seafaring. As a gentleman was carving the Christmas turkey, the waiter, who had been an old sailor, watched as long as he could bear it while his master tried to draw the stuffing through the side of the bird, then he ventured in a hoarse whisper the suggestion: "Further aft, sir; further aft."