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GUILD'S SIGNAL.

NEAR DARTE.

Low, quaint and clear,
That was the signal that Guild, the engineer,
Gave to his wife at Providence,
Through the sleeping town and the deserted
Out in the night,
On to the light,
Past the farms lying
Sent a greeting, scant and
To the women looking out,
Watching and waiting, no serenade
Save song or midnight roundelay
What that whistle seemed to say
To my trust true
So love to you!
Working or waiting, good night

Drink young bagmen, tourists fine,
And commuters along the line.
Brakemen and porters glanced ahead
Startled at the signal, sharp, intense,
Pierced through the shadows of the
"Nothing amiss,
Nothing—it is
Only Guild calling his wife."

Summer and winter, the old refrain
Rang o'er the billows of ripening grain,
Pierced through the bidding boughs of home,
Sew down the track when the red leaves
Like living coals from the engine spirted,
Sang as it flew:
"To our trust true
Of all duty—good night

And then one night it was heard no more,
From Stonington over Rhode Island shore,
And the folk in Providence smiled and said
As they turned in their beds, "The engineer
Has once forgotten his wife
She only knew
To his trust true
Sold by under his engine

A WIFE'S STORY.

From the Kansas Monthly Magazine.

It was a little sweet face that came to me past at a time when my bark was fast nearing the billows. It was but a short time—three years—that I called her mine; but looking back upon all the past, I tremble to think what might have been had her presence never brightened my life and taught me my duty.

It was just before the late war between the North and South that I became the wife of a navy officer. He was many years my senior, but it was a union of hearts for all. He was reserved and dignified as became his position; I was gay and light-hearted almost to frivolity, I think now. He often pleasantly chided me for my gayety; saying I ought to settle down now I had such an old-fashioned husband. But I knew he was most pleased when I was most cheerful, so accepted his chidings in the spirit in which they were administered.

At the breaking out of the war my husband had been ordered to L——, a small station created for the emergency, there to take command of a vessel being fitted up for service in the Mississippi squadron. Of course, I accompanied him. L—— was a small town, of no note until the war converted it into a naval station, thus bringing labor and money to its inhabitants. Of the society the least said the better.

There were quite a number of officers stationed there, most of them married men, who, with their wives, made up our society. We were constantly resorting to ways and means to kill time. There was one family of some pretensions in the place who frequently joined our circle, and at whose house we were quite as frequently invited; but owing to my husband's retired habits, we ourselves seldom went. This was not altogether satisfactory to one of my temperament, and when I would hear the officers' wives talking over these festivities, I longed with all the fervor of a child to participate in them.

"You are burying yourself alive," one would say; and another add, "You are old as your husband now." And Mrs. Stanhope, the wife of our surgeon, once advised me to go without him; "other ladies do," she added. But my pride and common sense forbade that. I had always considered it a wife's duty to respect the wishes of her husband, and I was a little surprised that Mrs. Stanhope, a lady at least fifteen years my senior, should thus advise me.

One night the officers were to give a ball on board the boat then in my husband's command. It was the first regular ball they had given—the previous entertainments were merely social parties. Arrangements had been made to make this quite a grand affair for that out of the way place.

My husband had not altogether approved of the measure, although he had consented to it.

"You will surely attend," I remarked, as he expressed to me his disapprobation. "It being on board your own vessel, it would hardly look well to stay away."

"Yes, I will go; but, Clara, I heartily disapprove of such festivities at a time when our country is so overshadowed with war."

The evening of the ball at length arrived. All so far had been entirely favorable, and a delightful time was anticipated.

The dance had already commenced when an orderly came in search of my husband. There had come a dispatch, ordering my husband to report to M—— at once. "I leave you in charge of Lieutenant Morris," he said, as he imparted the news to me, at the same time bowing to the lieutenant, who was with him.

"I accept the trust," he replied gravely.

"I shall probably be back the day after to-morrow at the farthest," he continued, and, bidding me good by, we parted.

Lieutenant Morris was the oldest officer in the squadron there except my husband. He was unmarried, very affable in his manners and upright in deportment, and a general favorite.

Flushed with excitement, I entered into the enjoyment of the hour with a keen relish.

"You are a fine dancer, Mrs. B," said my companion, as he led me to a seat after the quadrille. "How is it you have never attended our little select dances before?"

"My husband does not enjoy them," I answered.

"Is that a sufficient reason?" he asked in a half-whisper.

"I think so," I replied a little haughtily.

"Then you are no champion for women's rights," he answered gayly.

"Is it fair to judge me by that?"

"Perhaps not. But see, they are going to waltz. You waltz, do you not?"

"Not often, and I must beg to be excused tonight."

He bowed, and went to seek another partner, and soon I saw him whirling down the cabin with Miss Cheesebro, a niece of Governor West's.

To say that I was pleased with the entertainment and the attentions I received, would but express very faintly my delight. I was charmed, intoxicated with it, and, loyal as I was, I scarcely gave one thought to my absent husband, who, at the time I sought my state room, was riding fearlessly through the storm of midnight in obedience to orders.

The day on which my husband had expected to return came and passed, and the next also; still he came not; and I, though accustomed to disappointments in his character, grew restless and uneasy.

To return the compliment to the officers, Governor West had issued invitations to a ball, to be given at his residence just one week from the night of ours.

A number of the *élite* from the neighboring city had been invited, and the affair promised to be a very brilliant one.

This may be thought a very short time in which to prepare for a ball, but it must be remembered that the boats were daily expected to leave the station, and there was no time to spare.

"Of course you will go," said Mrs. Stanhope to me.

"I am undecided," I replied. "If my husband returns it shall be as he says. If he does not return I hardly expect to go."

"But you are in my charge," said Lieutenant Morris, "and he, as your guardian, shall insist upon your going."

"Stop, Lieutenant! as I understand it, I was only put in your charge for that evening," I answered playfully.

Oh, no, Mrs. B; there was no time specified. You are still under the shadow of my wing."

We bantered each other for a time. I far from feeling the gay spirits I assumed, I secretly very much wished to attend the ball, and I knew if my husband returned my going was doubtful. The day passed, and another, when, instead of my husband, there came this dispatch:

"I am unexpectedly detained. It will be impossible for me to be with you for at least ten days. Meantime enjoy yourself as best you can. Lieutenant Morris will see that you are comfortable."

At any other time I should have been ready to cry at the prolonged absence of my husband, but I confess to a secret gratification upon receiving the dispatch. He could not be at home in time for the ball, and had he not expressed a desire for me to enjoy myself? I showed the dispatch to Mrs. Stanhope, who instantly advised me to accept the escort of the lieutenant and attend the ball. I think it was a knowledge that she would thus advise me that prompted me to show her my letter. Still I did not feel at rest. I had a sort of pride that rebelled against appearing in society without my husband; but Mrs. Stanhope's arguments and the lieutenant's entreaties at length scattered my scruples, and I resolved to go.

My early life—my girlhood days—had been passed in strict seclusion, and my husband's quiet tastes had made my married life almost as solitary in regard to society. Is it so much of a wonder then that I was almost carried away by its gay scenes?

The evening came, and in company with Dr. Stanhope and wife and Lieutenant Morris I went to the ball. The Lieutenant was exceedingly attentive, and I received many attentions from others; still I was ill at ease. Several times I caught myself wondering if people would think me unmarried, or worse still, his wife; and once or twice I fancied that the Lieutenant half smothered the Mrs. when introducing me to his friends.

"Have you enjoyed the evening, Mrs. B?" he inquired as we walked homeward.

"Oh, very much," I replied, with much fervor.

"I hope nothing will keep you away from such gatherings in future."

"That is more than I can promise myself. You know that Captain R. does not enjoy balls."

"But it is unfair to keep you from them. Perhaps in his younger days he was more favorable toward them."

"Perhaps so," I replied; "but he is an old man yet!"

"That depends upon what comparisons one might make," he replied.

I saw, or fancied I saw, in his remark an allusion to the disparity in our ages, but I made no reply.

The next day brought my husband.

"Do you care that I went?" I asked after I had told him how I had employed my time.

"Not at all. It is very lonesome here even when I am with you; it must be intolerable when I am gone. I am glad my little girl enjoyed it."

"There is to be a horseback party to-morrow," nervously toying with the buttons on his coat.

"Is there? Well?"

"Shall we go?" I asked.

"It would be hardly any pleasure for me, as I have been in the saddle for nearly ten days."

Although I said nothing, my face must have expressed my disappointment, for he very soon said:

"Do you wish to go Clara?"

"Very much."

"Would you be satisfied to go without me?"

"Hardly."

"Then suppose we stay at home. I should enjoy reading this volume with you more than riding out," and he tossed a beautifully bound little volume into my lap.

At another time I should have screamed with delight, for it was what I had so much longed to see—a copy of Enoch Arden.

But now there came no response, no word of thanks from my lips. He seemed disappointed, but said nothing as he went out.

I was just in a mood to feel unkindly toward every one, and most unkindly of all toward my noble husband. What right had he to make me conform to his tastes. Then I fell to thinking how cruel it was to bring me away from all my earlier friends and bury me alive in that miserable, dull town. Surely all men were not so reserved or so fogyish as he, and wondered if I should not have been more satisfied with one nearer my own age. Then I found myself making comparisons, eager and dangerous train of thought for a wife. Somehow, uppermost in my mind during all this mental harangue was Lieutenant Morris, with his handsome face and genial ways. I blush now with shame as I recall those thoughts, but I was angry and disappointed then, and just in a mood to think myself very much abused.

I must have behaved shamefully all that day, for in the evening my husband came up to where I was sitting, and laying his hand upon my shoulder said in a very low calm voice.

"Clara, I would not willingly give you pain or deny you one pleasure. I can not attend you to-morrow, but if you wish will provide you an escort."

"Oh, do!" I exclaimed, so eagerly that the calm look in his eyes grew painfully penetrating as he fixed them sadly upon my face.

I went with the party, nominally under the escort of Dr. Stanhope and wife, but it was Lieutenant Morris who rode by my side, who praised my riding, my figure and general appearance with more warmth than pleased even my insatiable vanity.

After that day my husband seemed different. He was as kind to me as ever, even indulging me more than formerly, but the old tenderness was gone. I missed the stolen caress, the pet warmth—the thousand little tendernesses that had before made my life so sweet.

Had any one given me a whispered hint that my heart was growing disloyal to my husband, or that Lieutenant Morris sought my society with pleasure, I should have repelled the accusation with indignation. I had no thought of anything wrong. But then, why was I so pleased with his society? Why did I care so little whether it was he or my husband who rode by my side, who walked with me, and seemed always ready to attend me? It was because I loved flattery, and he paid my vanity to intoxication.

The summer had ripened into autumn, and autumn was fast merging into winter, still, contrary to all our expectations, we were yet detained at the station. Mrs. Stanhope had set her active brain to work conjuring up festivities for the winter, and her programme was the promise of oyster suppers, card parties, and balls enough to suit the liveliest taste; and I, so far from being satisfied with society and pleasure, was almost beside myself with the delightsome prospect.

The old home delights of reading and conversation that had once been so pleasing to me were now disliked and neglected, except at intervals when prudence and duty would assert their sway.

My husband never rebuked me, but seldom accompanied me to those gay scenes; but I had become so accustomed to appearing without him that it scarcely mattered anything whether he attended me or not.

Where all this blind foolishness might have led me I shudder to think. But a merciful God interposed. With pitying eye He saw my folly, and sent a messenger of grace—a sweet pledge of love—to snatch me, it may be from ruin. I was about to become a mother. When the fact first became known to me I was very angry and mortified. I had planned such a gay winter, and to be disappointed was so sore a trial. I fear that if I had then studied my own heart I should have discovered that the loss of Lieutenant Morris' society and flattering speeches was what would disappoint me most. But as months passed on I became reconciled to all this, especially as it brought back all the old memories of my husband, and the pleasant hours of social intercourse so long neglected and unappreciated. In May, my child, a beautiful little daughter, was born. All the maternal love within me was born with it, and society, gayety and adulation were all forgotten in the dear, sweet treasures of home.

Oh, how I loved that child! I often wondered if all mothers thus loved their children. And from the love born with its birth there sprang such a new feeling of tenderness toward my husband that I had never dreamed could exist. Had I realized then, as I do now, the mission of that child, I should have been prepared more for what follows. But that was not revealed to me till my heart throbbing with the agony of desolation.

For three years this messenger of love and peace cheered our home and hearts. Then death robbed me of my treasure. Never was death more desolating nor sorrow more deep and murmuring, followed by a sweeter, calmer, holier submission.

Though years have passed since then my old love of gaiety has never returned. The whispers of vanity have been unheeded, the loyalty of my heart has never been questioned, because I find a purer joy in a life of devotion to Him who, when folly had well high ruined me, raised His holy arm in my behalf. And to-day, as I scatter fresh spring flowers over the grave of her whose guileless soul led her mother's feet back to duty and right, I bless in my inmost soul Him "who gave, who took, who will restore—who doeth all things well."

The Insanity of Cain.

The following are the closing paragraphs of a remarkable article in *Scribner* for May, on "The Insanity of Cain:"

In judging of Cain, look at the situation. On the one hand, a terrible family mystery; no schools, no churches, no lectures, no society, no amusements, no apples! On the other hand, the whole burden of humanity borne for the first time; paternal discipline; undue phrenological developments; monotonous employment; antediluvian monsters; antediluvian parents, and an antediluvian good brother, in whose mouth butter would have remained intact for ages.

Undoubtedly that brother had an exasperating smile. He was happy because he was virtuous. He had a way of forgiving and forgetting that for a time would deprive the offender of reason itself; above all, he had a cool, collected manner of his own, added to a chronic desire to be an angel. His offerings always fulfilled the conditions. His fires needed only to be lighted, and the smoke was sure to ascend with a satisfied, confident curl far into the sky.

Cain's, on the contrary, refused to burn. We can see it all. The smoke struggled and flopped. It crept along the ground, and, clinging to his feet, wound about him like a serpent. It grew black and angry, shot sideways into his eyes, blinding and strangling him.

And there stood Abel beside his pile, radiant, satisfied, wanting to be an angel.

It as but the work of a moment. The pent-up, disorganizing influences of a life time found vent in one wild moment of emotional insanity. Abel was no more!

Why dwell upon the tragedy? The world is familiar with its sickening details. We shall not repeat them here, nor shall we question the justice of the punishment that came to Cain—the remorse, the desolation, the sense of being a fugitive and a vagabond on the face of the earth. He had killed his brother, and the penalty must be paid. Sane or insane, a terrible retribution must have overtaken him. But how about his guilt? Would it have been the same in either case? Are hereditary organism, temperamental excitability, emotional phrenzy not to be considered? No, a thousand times no! What "competent juror"! would acquiesce in such a proposition?

Friends, the time has come when this case must be taken up. Its mighty issues can no longer be set aside. If Cain was not sane at the moment of the killing, the stain of murder must be wiped from his brow now and forever. This tardy justice may at least be done him. Our children and our children's children must be taught to speak of Cain, the man slaughterer; Cain, the mentally-excitable; Cain, the peculiarly-circumstanced. But Cain, the murderer? Never!

A man's own testimony shall not convict or acquit him. But are we not to take into account, as indicative of his state of mind, actions and declarations coincident with the commission of the crime alleged against him? If at or about the time of the fatal deed, there was positive evidence of incoherence—what then? Witness the last recorded words of Cain:

Every one that findeth me shall slay me!

Is this the utterance of a sane mind? *Every* one that findeth me shall slay me! Gentlemen! Cain, at this point, was not only crazy—he was the craziest man that ever existed. No ordinary lunatic, however preposterous his terrors, expects to be killed more than once. But to this poor creature retribution suddenly assumed a hydra headed form. His distracted brain, unconscious that Adam was the only other man in the wide world, instantly created an immense population. He saw himself falling again and again by the strokes of successive assassins, even as Abel had fallen under his hand. His first dazed glimpse of death expanded and intensified into a horror never since conceived by mind of man. His happiness overthrown, his reason a wreck, a prey to fears that stretched before him forever, with no possible hope of final destruction—the only consolation is that he could not foreknow the merciless verdict of posterity. He did not recognize in himself the first murderer. Rather than dream of such ignominy as this, was it not better that he should cry in his ravings, Every one that findeth me shall slay me!

We leave the question to the intelligence and the justice of this faithful and enlightened century.

Civil Service Examinations.

Thus far the system of open competition has been applied only to the minor places in the departments in Washington, and to the offices of the Treasury Department in the city of New York. The information from all sources agrees that it has been as successful as could be hoped, while the salaries of the places are so low, and popular distrust of the sincerity of the reform is so great, and that it is surely winning its way to complete success against the clamors and misrepresentations of prejudice and ignorance, and the active opposition of all grades of politicians who see in the threatened downfall of the old system an end to their political hopes and schemes. That the success of the system has been so great is largely due to the wisdom which has been shown by the boards of examiners—composed of practical men selected from the officers of the departments—in conducting their examinations.

Thanks to the restless opposition of General Butler, who, unable to understand how men entrusted with duties so responsible could be honest, and, hopeful of unearthing some evidence of trickery or chicanery, persuaded the House of Representatives to call for copies of all the questions used in the civil service examinations, the boards have been enabled to place their examination papers before the public, and so to vindicate the wisdom and fairness of the examinations. Unlike the English examiners, who seem concerned to secure for the civil service persons of the requisite social standing rather than practical business capacity, and who have therefore set up so high a standard that only university men or others of equally high training can hope to pass it, the boards appear to have been careful to so shape their examinations as to test actual present capacity for the public service rather than mere scholastic or literary attainments. The candidate is seated at a desk, and confronted by a day's work, in the shape of an examination quite equal in difficulty to that of any place to which he is likely to be assigned. If he passes the ordeal he can not fail to be equal to the duties required of him in the department. The examinations for admission to the service are confined to elementary subjects, embracing arithmetic as far as percentage, the elements of book-keeping, orthography, syntax, punctuation, English composition, precis or briefing, and general questions concerning the constitution, geography, and history of the United States, all embodied, far as possible, in concrete and practical exercises. Judiciously chosen

In the examination for promotion the same range of elementary topics is preserved, with the addition of technical questions pertaining to the organization, practice and duties of the office, and increasing in difficulty with the rank of the place to be filled. These last mentioned questions demand from the examiners thorough knowledge and good judgment—a demand to which the board seems to have been quite equal. Great care appears to have been taken to shape the examinations with reference to the places to be filled, and so to eliminate useless, absurd and catch questions.—*Scribner's Monthly.*

Many people begin school-boys at college since they use the phrase, "He was stuck," without the least idea that it originally purport to be of classic origin. It seems that King Agesilaus, being asked by an ambassador from Epirus who, they had no walls for Sparta, replied, "We have a position, so his marshalled army, he said, "There are the walls of Sparta. Every man is a brick."

How Popes are Made.

Chambers' Journal some time ago contained the following account of how Popes are elected:

Assume a vacancy in the chair of the so-called Vicar of Christ; the Pope is dead. Who is to be his successor? First of all, the fact must be authenticated in proper form, and to do this one of the officials of the Camera visits the death chamber. Standing at the door, and striking it with a gilt mallet, the Cameolenga, receiving no reply, enters the room, taps the corpse on the forehead with a silver mallet, and then, falling on his knees, proclaims the Pope to be no more. The tolling of the great bell of St. Peter's announces to the people of Rome that they have lost their sovereign and the church her head. Consistently with the theory of personal government prevailing in the Holy City, the Pope's death is practically an announcement of the temporary suspension of all government. All political and all judicial authority ceases; the law courts suspend their sittings; anarchy reigns. This state of lawlessness continued for nine days—that is, till the appointment of a fresh Pope—and this period was for centuries distinguished by outrages that were a scandal to the government of the Holy City.

The day after the Pope's death the Cardinals meet and break what is called the piscatorial ring. This ring has a history of its own—a more romantic history, probably, than any other ring in Europe—and if it could speak it might tell of some startling secrets about the Vatican. It is, we believe, a plain gold ring, bearing the effigy of St. Peter. Its principal use is to sign apostolic briefs; and it has been used for this purpose by the Popes from the earliest ages of the church. Looking through the recently published correspondence of Napoleon I., a few days ago, we came across an interesting incident. When Napoleon issued his orders for the seizure of the prayer books and papers of Pius VII., he laid particular stress upon this ring; he wished it to be seized at all hazards; and when it could not be found his majesty ordered an officer of gensdarmes to demand it from the holy father. This was the crowning affront of Napoleon to the Pope; and Pius VII. hesitated for some moments whether to comply with the rude imperial request or not. A captive, however, and at the Emperor's mercy, it was impossible to resist; and at last the holy father, taking a little leathern purse out of his pocket, produced the fisherman's ring, broke it in two, as it is broken on the death of every Pontiff, and handed the pieces to the gendarme.

Through Prince Borghese the broken ring was forwarded to the Emperor at Paris; but it afterward found its way to the Vatican, and now frequently adorns the finger of the supreme Pontiff.

The funeral of a Pope is an interesting and gorgeous ceremony. It is not till the ninth day after his death that the Cardinals reassemble to elect a successor; and the ballot society will be glad to hear that the Pope is elected, like the member of a club, by ballot.

The right of election vests in the College of Cardinals, and this right is inviolable; nothing can touch it. It is a personal privilege, and one that survives even excommunication—the highest sentence of the church. Neither heresy nor crime can disfranchise a Cardinal; once a Cardinal, always a Cardinal, and, though beyond the pale of the church, he may present himself at the Vatican on the day of election, with his clave, and assert his right to cast his vote with the greatest princes of the church for the sovereign Pontiff.

The modus operandi is this: The Cardinals, attended by their conclavists, and accompanied by a host of high officials, assemble on the day of the election at the Vatican, and are there all locked up together, like an English jury, till they have delivered themselves of their verdict—that is, till they have named a Pope. No name is proposed; no speeches are made; hardly a word is spoken; a Quaker meeting could not be quieter. What takes place is this: In the centre of the room stands a chalice, or what we may call an election urn. Each Cardinal in turn writes upon a slip of paper the name of the candidate for whom he votes, and this slip of paper, doubled up, is by the conclavists, deposited in the chalice. When the votes of the college have been thus collected the names of the candidates are read aloud, and the number of votes announced.

The Pope must be elected by a majority of two-thirds of the college, and if any name attains this number on the first ballot, of course there is an end to the business—the Pope has been picked.

But if no one gets this number the voting papers are burned, and the people outside the college, waiting for the verdict, know when they see the puff of smoke that they are still without a sovereign. A second ballot is then taken, and if necessary, a third. But it is understood that at the third ballot no Cardinal will vote a second time for the same candidate. If, therefore, he still adheres to his first choice, he writes *nemine* on his voting paper, which, being interpreted, means that he votes for no one, and thus, at the third ballot, by this process of casting out, a majority of two thirds is obtained, and the Pope is made. No; not quite made; for the courts of France, Spain and Austria possess each, in turn, a veto upon the vote of the College of Cardinals, and they may exercise this veto without a word of explanation. It is a simple case of black-balling. We do not find that it has been very frequently exercised; but as lately as 1830 the court of Madrid exercised its right by black-balling Cardinal Guistiniani.

This power, however, can only be exercised once; and there are cases on record where the college, having set their hearts on a man whom they knew to be obnoxious to one of the courts fear to France, have first of all put up a Pope in buckram—that is, a cardinal whom they knew must be black-balled by France, and then having cleared the ground, elected their own man without risk. Portugal and Naples have at different times put in their claims to the privilege of black-balling the Pope; these have never been allowed by the Sacred College; and now that Spain has thrown off the Bourbons, she, too, we suppose, will lose her right of controlling the election of the next Pope. France also, since the deposition and death of the "eldest son of the church," will have no right to interfere, so Austria alone will retain her voice in the selection.

Perhaps there is one more fact which we ought to mention—that is, that the Pope need not necessarily be a cardinal, or even a priest. The Sacred College may, if they think fit, make a pope out of a layman. They did it on one occasion.

A Cure for Egg Sucking.

The country gentleman suggests a way to prevent hens from eating their eggs. It is to fill an egg with a solution of red pepper, and put the egg back in the nest. A Danbury man has tried this, and says it works like a charm. He put a pretty good dose of pepper in the egg, and placed it in the nest of the criminal. Pretty soon the hen came around and took hold. It was a brindle animal, with long legs, and somewhat conceited. It dipped in its bill and inhaled the delicacy. Then it came out doors. It didn't gallop out, we don't mean, but it came out—came out to look at the scenery, and see if it was going to rain. Its mouth was wide open, and the feathers on the top of its head stood straight up. Then it commenced to go around the yard like a circus horse. Once in a while it would stop and push out one leg in a tone of astonishment, and then holler "fire," and start on again. The other hens came out to look on. Soon the hens from the neighbors came over the fence and took up a position of observation. It was quite evident the performance was something entirely new and unique to them. There is a good deal of human nature in hens. When they saw this hen dance around and have the fire to itself, and heard it shout "fire," and couldn't see the conflagration themselves, they filled up with wrath, and with one accord sprang upon it, and before the Danberry man could interfere, the speckled hen with the long legs was among the missing. Not a feather were. He says the experiment is a success.—*Danbury News.*

Miss Neilson, the beautiful actress, is acting in Cincinnati. As the papers of that city all contain lengthy and laudatory notices of her, it is presumable that her pleasant practice of distributing diamond rings among the critics is still continued. It seems nothing can be run nowadays without rings.—*Indianapolis Journal.*

MY CHOICE.

Yes, I know there are stains on my carpet
The traces of small, muddy boots;
And I see your fair tapestry glowing
All spotless, with blossoms and fruits

And I know that my walls are disfigured
With prints of small fingers and hands,
And I see that your own household whiteness
All fresh in its purity stands.

Yes, I know my "black walnut" is battered
And dented by many small heels,
While your own polished stairway, all perfect,
Its smooth shining surface reveals!

And I know that my parlor is littered
With many odd treasures and toys,
While your own is in daintiest order,
Unharmed by the presence of boys!

And I know that my room is invaded
Quite boldly all hours of the day;
While you sit in your own unmolested,
And dream the soft quiet away!

Yes, I know I have jackets that wear out,
And buttons that never will stay,
While you can embroider at leisure,
And learn pretty arts of "crochet."

And I know there are lessons in spelling
Which I must be patient to hear,
While you may sit down to your novel,
Or turn the last magazine near.

Yes, I know there are four little beds made
Where I must stand watchful, each night,
While you may go out in your carriage
And flash in your dresses so bright!

Now, I think I'm a neat little woman,
I like my house orderly, too;
And I'm fond of all dainty belongings—
Yet I would not change places with you!

No! keep your fair home with its order,
Its freedom from trouble and noise,
And keep your own fanciful leisure,
But give me my four splendid boys!

TO LET.

I should like to describe my hero as a young and gallant cavalier of this nineteenth century, with the beauty of an Apollo and the wisdom of a sage, but truth compels me to acknowledge that Rupert Smithson, in spite of his fine Christian appellation, was neither one nor the other. His nephew and namesake, who was called in the bosom of his family Rupert the Second, said that his Uncle Rupert was a "crusty old batchelor," and I hammer my brains in vain for a more fitting description. A crusty old bachelor he undoubtedly was, more than fifty years of age, with grizzled hair, heavy gray eyebrows, a thick gray beard, and a rough voice and manner. It is very true that he was always very careful to keep the crustiest side of his nature on the surface, and had been discovered in the act of committing secretly deeds of charity and kindness that belied utterly his habitual surly tone and abrupt manner.

Twenty years before, when the gray hair was not brown and clustered in rich curls over the broad, white forehead, when the brown eyes shone with the fire of ambition, the clear voice was true and tender, Rupert Smithson had given his whole loyal heart to Katie Carroll, neighbor and friend, and little sweetheart from childhood. Urged by love as well as ambition, he had left his home, in a small Western town, and gone to New York to win a name and a fortune to lay at Katie's feet. The fortune and fame as a successful merchant came to him, but when he returned to Katie, he found she had left her home also, to become the bride of a wealthy pork dealer in Cincinnati. Nobody told Rupert of treachery to the pretty Katie, of letters suppressed, of slanders circulated, and parental authority stretched to its utmost in favor of the wealthy suitor. He had no record of the slow despair that crept over the loving heart, when the pleading letters were unanswered, of the dull apathy yielded at last, and gave away the hand of the young girl, when her heart seemed broken. All that the young ardent lover knew was the one bitter fact that the girl he loved faithfully and fondly was false to her promise, the wife of another. He spoke no word of bitterness, but returned to the home he had fitted up for his bride, and the business he had hoped was his stepping stone to happiness and a life of loneliness.

Ten years later, when his sister, with her son and daughter, came to live in New York for educational advantages, Rupert, the first, was certainly what his saucy nephew called him, a crusty old bachelor. Yet, into that sore, disappointed heart Katie's desertion had so wounded the bachelor uncle took with warm love and great indulgence his nephew and niece, bright, handsome children of ten and twelve, who, childlike, imposed upon his good nature, rioted over his quiet, orderly home till his staid housekeeper declared they were worse than a pair of monkeys, caressed him stormily one moment and pouted over some refusal for a monstrous indulgence the next, and treated him generally as bachelor uncles must expect to be treated by their sister's children.

There was some talk when Mrs. Kimberley came to New York of making one household of the family, but the idea was abandoned, and the wealthy widow selected a residence three doors off, in the same block.

Rupert was so set in his fidgety old bachelor ways, she said, "that it would be positive cruelty to disturb him."

Probably young Rupert and Fannie did not consider their bright young faces disturbers of their uncle's tranquillity, but it is quite certain that out of school hours No. 46, their uncle's house, saw them quite as frequently as No. 43, where their mother resided. With the intuitive perception of children, they understood that the abrupt, often harsh voice, the surly words, and the undemonstrative manner covered a heart that would have made any sacrifice for their sakes, that loved them with as true a love as their own dead father could have given them.

As they outgrew childhood, evidences of affection ceased to take the form of dolls and drums, and cropped up in Christmas checks, in ball dresses, and bouquets, a saddle horse, and various other delightful and acceptable shapes, till Rupert came of age, when he was taken from college into his uncle's counting house, and a closer intimacy than ever was cemented between the young life and the one treading the downward path to old age.

There had been a family gathering at Mrs Kimberley's one evening late in the month of March, and a conversation had arisen upon the traditional customs and tricks of the first of April.

"Senseless, absurd tricks," Rupert Smithson had called them, in his abrupt, rough way, "fit only to amuse children or idiots!"

"Oh, pshaw, Uncle Rupert!" Fannie said saucily, "you played April fool tricks, too, when you were young."

"Never! Never could see any wit or sense in them. And what's more, Miss Fannie, I was never once caught by any of the shallow deceits."

"Never made an April fool?"

"Never, and never will be!" was the reply. "There, child, go play me that last nocturne you learned. It suits me. I hate sky rocket music, but that is a dreamy, lazy air, and I like it."

"The idea of your liking anything dreamy or lazy," said Mrs. Kimberley. "I thought you were all energy and activity."

"When I work, I work," was the reply, "but when I rest, I want to rest."

"Uncle Rupert," broke in Rupert suddenly, "what will you bet I can't fool you next week?"

"Bah! The idea of getting to my age to be fooled by a boy like you."

"Then you defy me?"

"Of course I do."

"I'll do it. Keep your eyes open."

"Forewarned is forearmed! But come, stop chatting. I want my music."

Pretty, saucy, mirth-loving Fannie, with her dancing black eyes and brilliant smile, did not look like a very prominent interpreter of dreamy, lazy music," but once her hands touched the keys of the grand pianoforte, the girl's whole nature seemed to merge into the sounds she created. Merry music made dancing elves of her fingers as they flew over the notes; dreamy music drew a mask of hushed beauty over her face, and her great black eyes would dilate and seem to see far away as the room filled with the sweet, low cadences. She would look like an inspired Joan of Arc, when grand chords rolled out under her hands in majestic measures, and sacred music transformed her into something saintly. Once the music was ended, the pretty, winsome Fannie Kimberly again.

There were few influences that could soften the outer crust of manner of Rupert Smithson, but he would hide his face away when Fannie played, ashamed himself of tears that started, or smiles that hovered on his lips as the music pierced down, down into that warm, loving heart he had tried to conceal with cynical words and looks.

So when the final chords of the nocturne melted softly into silence, the old bachelor stole away and left the house, bidding no one farewell. They were accustomed to his singular ways, and no one followed him, but Mrs. Kimberly sighed, as she said:

"Rupert gets older and crustier every year."

"But he is so good," Fannie said, leaving her piano stool with a twirl that kept it spinning round giddily.

"Why don't he get married?" said Rupert. "It's a downright shame to have that splendid house shut up year after year, excepting just the few rooms Uncle Rupert and Mrs. Jones occupy."

"I mean to ask him," Fannie said, impulsively.

"No, no," said Mrs. Kimberly, hastily, "never speak of that to your uncle, Fannie, never!"

"But why not?"

"I never told you before, but your uncle was engaged years ago, and there was some trouble. I never understood about it exactly, for I was married and left Wilton the same year that Rupert came to New York. But this I do know, the lady, after waiting three or four years, married, and Rupert has never been the same man since. I am quite sure he was very much attached to her, and that you would wound him, Fannie, if you jested about marriage."

"But I don't mean to jest at all. I think he would be ever so much happier if he had some one to love, and some one to love him in return. It must be dreadfully lonesome in that large house with no companion but Mrs. Jones, who is one hundred years old, I am certain."

"He ought to marry her," said Rupert, "she always calls him 'dearie.'"

"Don't, children, jest about it any more," said the mother; "and be sure you never mention the subject to your uncle."

The first of April was a clear, rather cold day, the air bright and snapping and the sky all treacherous smiles, as became the coquettish month of sunshine and showers.

Uncle Rupert, finishing his lonely breakfast, thought to himself:

"I must be on the lookout to-day for Rupert's promised trick! He won't find it so easy as he imagines to fool his old uncle. Who's there?" The fast two words in answer to a somewhat timid knock upon the door.

It was certainly not easy to astonish Rupert Smithson, but his eyes opened with a most unmistakable expression of amazement as the door opened to admit a tall, slender figure in deep mourning, and a low, very sweet voice, asked:

"Is this the landlord?"

"The—the—what?"

"I called about the house, sir."

"What house? Take a seat"—suddenly recalling his politeness.

"Is not this No. 49 W—— place?"

"Certainly it is."

"I have been looking out for some time for a furnished house suitable for boarders, sir, and if I find this one suits me, and the rent is not too high"—

"But"—interrupted the astonished bachelor.

"Oh, I hope it is not taken! The advertisement said to call between eight and nine, and it struck eight as I stood upon the doorstep.

"Oh, the advertisement!" So, so, Master Rupert! This is your doings, is it? Will you let me see the advertisement, madam?"

"You have the *Herald* in your hand, sir," she said, timidly. "I did not cut it out."

"Oh, you saw it in the *Herald*," and he turned to the list of houses to let.

Sure enough, there it was.

"To let, furnished, a three-story, brown stone front, basement," and rather a full description of the advantages of the premises, with the emphatic addition, "call only between 8 and 9 A. M."

"So as to be sure I am at home, the rascal!" said Rupert Smithson, laying aside the paper. "I am sorry, madam," he said, "that you have had the trouble of calling upon a useless errand."

"Then it is taken?" said a very disappointed voice, and the heavy crape veil was lifted to show a sweet, matronly face framed in that saddest of all badges, a widow's cap.

"Well, no," said the perplexed bachelor, "it is not exactly taken."

"Perhaps you object to boarders?"

"You want to take boarders," he answered, thinking how lady-like and gentle she looked, and wondering if she had been long a widow.

"Yes, sir, but I would be very careful about the references."

"Have you ever kept boarders before?"

"No, sir. Since my husband died six years ago (he failed in business, and brought on a severe illness by mental anxiety) my daughter and myself have been sewing, but we have both been in ill health all winter, and I want to try some way of getting a living that is less confining. I have kept house several years, but I have not capital to furnish, so we want to secure a house furnished like this one, if possible."

Quite unconscious of the reason, Rupert Smithson was finding it very pleasant to talk to this gentle little widow about her plans, and as she spoke, was wondering if it would not make an agreeable variety in his lonely life, to let her make her experiment of keeping a boarding house upon the premises. Seeing his hesitation, she said, earnestly:

"I think you will be satisfied with my references, sir. I have lived in one house, and have had work from one firm for six years, and if you require it, I can obtain letters from my husband's friend in Cincinnati."

"Cincinnati?"

"He was quite well known there. Perhaps you know of him, John Murray, street?"

"John Murray?"

Rupert Smithson looked searchingly into the pale, sad face that was so pleadingly raised to his gaze. Where were the rosy cheeks, the dancing eyes, the laughing lips that he had pictured as belonging to John Murray's wife? Knowing now the truth, he recognized the face before him, the youth all gone, and the expression sanctified by sorrow and suffering.

"You have children?" he said, after a long silence.

"Only one living, a daughter seventeen years old. I have buried all the others."

"I will let you have the house on one condition," he said, his lips trembling a little as he spoke.

She did not answer. In the softened eyes looking into her own, in the voice suddenly modulated to a tender sweetness, some memory was awakened, and she only listened, with bated breath and dilating eyes.

"On one condition, Katie," he said, "that you come to it as my wife and its mistress. I have waited for you twenty years, Katie!"

It was hard to believe, even then, though the little widow let him caress her, and sobbed upon his breast. This gray-haired, middle-aged man was so unlike the Rupert she had believed false. Even after the whole past was discussed, wronged, but not by Katie, it was hard to believe there might be years of happiness still in store for them.

Rupert Smithson did not "put in an appearance" at his counting house all day, and Rupert the Second went home to his dinner in rather an uneasy frame of mind regarding that April fool trick of his.

"I must run over and see if I have offended beyond all hope of pardon," he said, as he rose from the table.

But a gruff voice behind him arrested his steps.

"So, sir, you have advertised my house to let," said his uncle, but spite of his efforts, he failed to look very angry.

"How many old maids and widows applied?" inquired the daring young scapegrace.

"I don't know. After the first application, Mrs. Jones sold the other house was taken."

"Taken."

"Yes, I have it upon a life lease," here he opened the door—"my wife."

Very shy, blushing and timid, "my wife" looked in her state-colored dress and bonnet, as her three hours' husband led her in, but after a moment's scrutiny Mrs. Kimberly cried:

"It is Katie Carroll!"

"Katie Smithson!" said the bridegroom with immense dignity, "and my daughter, Winnifred."