THE BACHELOR'S DILEMMA.

Ralph Bergengren in Life.

How can I live with Phillis
When I'm sure to think of Maud?
To give a portion of my heart
For hers would be a fraud.
No, I cannot live with Phillis
Who am part in love with Maud.

How can I ever marry Maud?
For there is laughing Prue,
And Maud would raise the deuce and all
To know I loved her too.
How can I ever marry Maud
Who am in love with Prue?

And yet I would not marry Prue;
For there are Maud and Phillis,
And so I cannot wed at all
No matter what my will is.
And yet I'm very much in love
With Prue and Maud and Phillis.

COLUMBUS.

IV.

A DISMISSAL.

Picture to yourself a long stretch of meadow wherein the foot sinks into black mud at every step, but where there are what Columbus familiarly calls "tussocks" here and there. Columbus springs from one of these tussocks to another and thus gets over the ground with ease to himself, but ther he is a boy, and he is barefooted.

I am not a boy and I am not barefooted. I have on heavy rubber boots and skirts, but I have a brave spirit; I am resolved to follow Columbus to victory or death. As I toil on behind my guide I recall Gertrude's words at parting a few hours ago, nay, not yet two hours gone by.

"If there was ever an idiot in the world," she had begun, but there I had stopped her. I knew well enough what she was going to say, and I did not wish to hear it.

Sometimes Columbus looks behind and says: "Why don't ye come along?" and then I tell him that I am coming. Once, having glanced at my face, he had the grace to stop on a tussock and await my approach, as I persistently continued to put my boots down into the mud and pull them out.

"I guess you're sorry you started, ain't ye?" he asked.

"No," I answered, "I'm glad. I'm having a beautiful time. What are you stopping for?"

"Nothin'," he replied, and went on.

When another half hour had passed I called to know where the brook was, and to say that I should suppose all of these mudholes would have hornpout in them. He then informed me that he wa'n't goin' for pout, and that the brook was over the other side of White Pine Hill.

"Then why did you come round through this meadow? This isn't the direct way to White Pine Hill."

There was so much asperity in my voice that Columbus stopped short on a tussock, and I again waded up to him.

"It's jest as straight's you can come from Tim White's; 'n' I had to git a rod for you at Tim's. You're gittin' tired, ain't ye?"

He put this question, not with anxiety, but with an unmistakable exultation in his tone.

"Tired?" I exclaimed in the greatest surprise, "not in the least. I don't remember when I've had such a pleasant walk. Is it as nice as this all the way?"

The boy almost gasped as I said this. I looked him full in the face as I spoke. He hesitated an instant before he said that he "didn't know whether I'd think the paster was nice or not, but if I didn't care, he guessed we'd turn off to the paster now."

So we turned off, and after what seemed a mile, but what was really a quarter of that distance, we took our feet permanently out of the bog and put them on dry land.

It was then that my conviction became firmer than ever that I need not have gone into that meadow at all. I wonder what the mosquitoes there live on; ordinarily, I mean, for I know what sustained them while we were present. I could not make even a pretence of fighting these insects while I was pulling my feet up from the soil, but now I gave myself up to the struggle with them, for they followed us—Columbus walked in his own little cloud of them, and I in mine. He didn't seem to mind their bites. His legs were wonderful to look at, what with the black mud and the close companies of his winged attendants. I walked behind him, and sometimes lost myself in wonder at his gifts. They were not like my gifts, and for the first time I envied him.

If Columbus pushed through a thicket the mosquitoes would fly up just long enough for their victim to pass through, then would settle down again with a calmness and persistence that were admirable.

When I recall this fishing excursion and try to write about it I can with difficulty think of anything at first but Columbus's legs with the mud and the mosquitoes on them. I seem to be haunted by the sight. When I confided this fact to Gertrude she remarked that she supposed it was a case of abnormal obsession, and she was unkind enough to add that it was good enough for me. This she said to me as I sat the next day in the large armchair in the shaded sitting-room. I could not see my companion, for I had my entire face bound up in a linen cloth wet in extract of witch hazel. This application was not put on originally for mosquito bites, but for poison. The following morning my face and hands were a "sight to see," and they would have been a sight with mere bites, but dogwood had done the rest.

Gertrude did everything for me; she was unwearied in renewing the application of the witch hazel, yet somehow I had a feeling that she was wishing all the time to repeat that it was good enough for me.

But I appear to have gone ahead of my story. I have a well-founded belief that Columbus remembered that I had once said that dogwood poisoned me, and that was why he led me among the branches of it. I was already in the middle of the thicket before I noticed what I was in. Then Columbus expressed great regret for having gone that way, but said that there wa'n't nothin' that pizened him.

When he gave me this information I had a very strong wish to find something that would poison him. I know this wish was wrong, and I am trying to repent of it.

It was not until the very last of the afternoon that we came out on the other side of White Pine Hill, where there was a trout brook.

Then Columbus sat down on a stone and I sat down on another stone. The mosquitoes had followed us.

Columbus opened his worm box and made selections from it. But as he was doing this he said that he didn't s'pose we should do much with worms, anyway.

"Then what did you bring them for? And why do you keep digging worms all the time when you ought to be doing something else?"

I asked these questions so sharply that the boy began to put his elbow up to ward off a blow. It is certainly very trying to have him put up his elbow, and you can hardly be sure, after he has done it, that you have not struck him.

In reply to my inquiries he said that somehow he always felt better when he had a worm box than when he didn't have one.

After a little time he handed me the rod and line. As I had seen Columbus skilfully introduce the hook into the worm I felt a great reluctance toward using it. It was of no use for me to tell myself that this thing which had once wriggled so was of a low organization, and that it could not probably feel the hook at all, or if it could feel it it liked it. I could not quite decide in my mind whether to consider this being on the hook an animal, in the comprehensive sense of the word. If it were an animal I knew that I must not have any sympathy for its sufferings, for has not Magnan said that such sympathy "is a symptom of insanity"?

I did not wish to manifest any symptom of insanity, but I couldn't seem to feel any zest in throwing my hook into the stream. Still, I threw it in.

As I did so Columbus said we ought to have some kind of flies; great green ones, he informed me, were "fust-rate."

The brook was lovely, and so were the little hills between which it ran, hills with young birches scattered on them, and sparrows and brown thrashers flying to and fro. And the bed of the brook was a beautiful golden sand. Sometimes I saw a trout dart through the water. But none of them took the slightest notice of our hooks, which were dangling silently in plain sight of the fish.

If it had not been for the mosquitoes and for my thinking about that dogwood I should have begun to be happy.

I sat perfectly still and let myself be bitten, and I would not speak, for I knew if I did speak or move that Columbus would say if I hadn't done the one thing or the other we should have caught something.

It began to grow very dark. My longing to jump up and scream was becoming almost irresistible.

There sat Columbus, his face and legs literally covered with mosquitoes, but he did not stir a muscle. He stared into the water, his mouth shut hard, his little freckled face more than ever of a puzzle to me.

Suddenly he snatched out his line. His hook swung up and caught in the tree above us.

"Darn it all!" he cried. "It's 'cause you're long of me!"

"Columbus," I said, "do you mean to insinuate that I have made a movement or a sound?"

"Wall, I d'know's you have, but, by George! You see you're a woman, 'n' them fish have found it out."

He disentangled his hook from the tree, and flung it into the water again. I was what is called boiling with wrath, but I made no reply. I carefully took my line from the brook and cast it back just at the side of a big rock.

The gods had evidently heard the unkind and untrue remark just made by my companion, and the gods decided to champion me.

I immediately felt a little jerk at the line; then I gave a little jerk and there swung into the air a large trout, his sides looking brilliant even in that dusk.

Instantly I was intensely excited. I stood there with the pole grasped firmly, gazing at the trout.

"Pull him in! Pull him in!" yelled Columbus, who was as excited as I was. He actually jumped up and down, yelling all the time.

I swung up the pole; I thought I was swinging it in the direction of the shore, and I don't know now how it happened that the line veered off farther down the stream. The trout made a kind of contortion and splashed into the water; the next instant I saw it darting down to the still, deep pool.

"I'm glad of it," I said loudly. "I'd rather have him happy."

I never saw any one so furiously indignant as Columbus was. He kept trying to speak; he danced on the bank there. Finally he did succeed in saying:

"Biggest trout I see this summer." Then I thought he was going to cry. But he controlled that inclination. He looked at me for a moment as if I were some kind of a curiosity.

Then he turned sullenly and began to pull in his line and wind it about the pole.

Just then a clap of thunder sounded in the west.

"I ain't goin' to fish no more," he said.

I made no immediate reply. I was still possessed by a great pride in having pulled that trout up out of the water.

"It's good 'nough for me," he said presently.

"What's good enough?"

He turned savagely toward me.

"The wust thing in the world," he shouted, "to pay me for havin' come out fishin' with a woman."

It thundered again.

I was wishing I was strong enough to take Columbus by the collar of his checked shirt and fling him somewhere. This was a very unrighteous wish, but I have noticed that this boy is often the cause of unrighteous wishes in Gertrude and me. I would not reply to such words, so I said that there was evidently a tempest coming up and we would go home. When we were ready to start I requested Columbus to take the shortest way. He said he would. He really seemed a little frightened at my calmness.

I was calm because I had made a resolve.

When we were out in the open pasture I looked about me. The cloud was moving over toward the south; perhaps we should not get any rain.

"We will go by your home," I said.

He made no reply. He walked on, and I walked behind him, looking at his ears and wishing I knew what made them stick out so.

The lightning and the thunder continued; there was rain off on the hills to the south.

When we came to the home of Columbus his mother was standing at the open door with a hand on each hip.

I walked straight up to her and said:

"Here's your boy. We sha'n't want him any more. We shall try to get along by ourselves."

She stared, at first in silence. To my great amazement Columbus dropped his worm box and put a fist up to his right eye.

"What's he be'n doin' of now?" at last asked his mother.

"Nothing, absolutely nothing; he never does anything," I answered.

A slight snivel from Columbus.

"You ain't goin' to turn him off like this, be ye, 'thout no warnin'?" she inquired.

"Yes, just like this; and now I'll be going."

So I walked away as straigh, as I had come. I was conscious of a sense of joy and victory and freedom, in spite of my boots, and of my skirts, though the latter were wet and torn, and I knew I was a pretty object.

"I ain't goin' to stan' it; no, I ain't goin' to stan' it," cried the woman from the door. "I sh'll be over jes' 's quick's I can."

To this I only said:

"Come any time."

I was still somewhat exultant when I reached home; and I could not restrain my pride when I told Gertrude about pulling that trout out of the water.

"It was as much as a two pounder," I said. "Splendid fellow!"

"What of it," she was so heartless as to respond, "since you didn't get it?"

I related the particulars of the dismissal of Columbus, and she expressed no sorrow, but rather thankfulness.

"But his mother'll come over, and I'm afraid of his mother," she said.

I, however, had something else to think of—dogwood. And as I sit with hands and face swathed, I do not fear Columbus's mother.

MARIA LOUISE POOL.

The end.

ALL STOPPED TO HEAR.

From The London News.

The new Canon of Westminster is credited with a ready wit. A story is told in "The Glasgow Herald" of his having once been terribly interrupted by the incessant coughing of his congregation. Whereupon he suddenly paused in his sermon, and interjected the remark, "Last night I was dining with the Prince of Wales." The effect was miraculous, and a deathly silence reigned, as the preacher continued: "As a matter of fact, I was not dining with the Prince of Wales last night, but with my own family. I am glad, however, to find that I have at last secured your attention."

A NICE POINT OF ETIQUETTE.

From The Boston Herald.

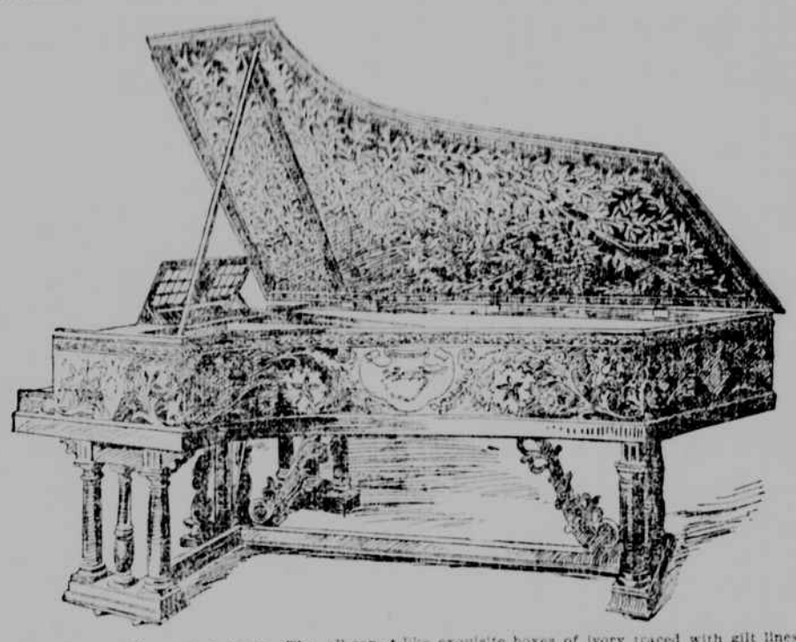
President Faure proposes to review the troops on horseback at the September manoeuvres, which no President since MacMahon has done, Grevy, Carnot and Casimir-Perier having ridden by in carriages. The chief of the protocol is trying to find out whether there is any authority for a civilian President's so doing.

THE BEAUTIFUL PIANO.

IT NEED NEVER BE UGLY.

The piano has always been a particularly arrogant piece of furniture. It follows the march of civilization, and at this moment, in cabins where space is precious and mankind sleep three in a bed, it is amusing to see this mounted oblong block consuming half the room and reflecting the humbler articles in its shining sides. Since the decorative fever has been abroad, the piano has had to yield something of its individuality. It is not so much itself as it is a part of something else. Up to a point the piano holds its own. It cannot exist but on certain conditions. As a mounted or upright rectangle or triangle with its apex knocked off, it is ugly, but these lines must be accepted.

Various efforts have been made to get around these. One form presents a harp lifting its long lines above a box of ivory keys. In another case the harplike works of a grand piano are upright and are mounted above the keyboard, with the covers opening like the wings of a triptych. The effect is very fine; the piano, however, does not prove to be a good working instrument. It is a pity, for it makes one of the most decorative pieces of



furniture that could grace a room. The all-conquering architect is the man who subdues the piano. In the music-rooms that are now a feature of all fine houses the piano conforms to the style of the room.

As these rooms are light and graceful in character, light woods are generally substituted for rosewood and mahogany. The light woods most used are the lustrous satinwood, certain sorts of maple, and, in certain cases, oak. The veneers are of wonderful beauty. There is burl, for example, a tawny wood suggesting a cross between a tiger and a tortoise-shell cat. This comes from the Caucasus, and is supposed to be a diseased French walnut. Carmina is another even more beautiful veneer. This is also a diseased growth, and comes from South America. It is several tones darker than satinwood, and its merit is that it gives better relief to painted decoration than satinwood permits.

Painted decoration is the favorite treatment for the modern piano. Carving, so difficult to keep in order, has largely gone out. The revival of Vernis Martin has in great measure been brought about by the piano. The first piano decorated in this style was made for the Newport house of Miss Catherine Wolf. It is of carmina wood, overlaid with painted panels of Saint Cecelia and Orpheus. As the piano was intended to stand out in the room, a perforated panel was introduced in the back inclosing allegorical representations of music and dancing, in color. Mrs. Thomas S. Scott, of Philadelphia, has a piano, also of carmina wood, stream with painted roses and peonies. The under side is overlaid with gold, and on the inside of the cover is an idyllic landscape in color, so that when the piano-lid is open the inner decoration rivals that without.

A favorite form of decoration is the ornamental treatment of some appropriate legend, entwined with flowers and ribbons. Colonel John Hay, in his Washington house, has a piano of carmina wood adorned with wreaths and ribbons running about a Greek legend in the original characters, that are themselves ornamental. Corot's "Dance of the Nymphs" was on a piano owned by Mr. Cottier, and wandering in and out among medallions and ribbons were these lines from Milton:

"And ever against eating cares
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse."

Pianos are often remarkable for their architectural importance. The room prescribes the piano. In the saloon of the Alva, W. K. Vanderbilt's unfortunate yacht, the piano was of mahogany, with pilars and applied ornaments in brass to correspond with the Empire style of the room. Norman B. Ream, of Chicago, has a piano of satinwood painted in color and shaped like a Turkish pagoda for a Turkish room. A piano intended for an Italian room of Sir Donald Smith, and made in this country, was oblong and inlaid with flowing ornaments of ivory, ebony and pearl. The legs were separated into clusters, united by an arch. The desire to lighten the effect of the piano in this manner is not uncommon.

Another piano, intended for a Colonial room, was treated like a Sheraton spinet, three tapering legs being used to support the front. An ebony piano is given a Japanese character for a Japanese room by perforated and solidly carved panels divided as the Japanese divide their panels, and as a separate and centre panel a cloisonné plaque bordered by inlays of ivory. Other pianos are enamelled until they look like exquisite boxes of ivory traced with gilt lines. Mr. Marquand's piano has painted panels by Alma Tadema.

It might seem from the foregoing remarks that decorated pianos were to remain exclusively the privilege of wealthy people. There would be a warrant for this assumption if a master like Alma Tadema were alone regarded as competent to decorate an instrument, if it were really necessary that the lid of the piano should bear a picture, and the sides a frieze with figures, or even with elaborate conventional ornament. As a matter of fact, the piano might be rescued from its present stereotyped and rather ugly style right in the shops of the makers, if a certain kind of decoration were widely demanded, the kind illustrated by the instrument in the accompanying illustration. That, it is true, is somewhat lavishly adorned, but the principle on which it was decorated is a simple one, and calls merely for arabesque ornament, for conventional lines and curves, for the simplifying of the legs, for such a treatment, in short, as involves taste, but no extraordinary artistic ability.

The piano here illustrated was designed by an architect, but the example he sets might be easily followed by the designers in every piano factory. It is customary now for many pianos, and to panel their sides more or less, but a super curious superstition seems to burden the makers, and they persist in turning out the inlays and the moulded panels of twenty years ago, and the legs of an instrument, no matter how "new," are just as hideous as they ever were. Now, there is no occasion for all this, there is no reason why a decoration should be vulgar, why a leg should be a wooden horror. And a change would come if the people who buy pianos were only to insist sufficiently upon it. The same workman who turns the grotesque legs now used on nearly every grand piano could follow a pattern given him on refined and graceful lines. The use of artistic ornament on the case would soon justify itself, for no one would buy a piano all heavy knobs and ridiculous curlycues, when for the same cost he could get a refined, symmetrical work of art.

The trouble is that both maker and buyer have insisted that a piano which is "a work of art" is a production built under the eye of an architect or a painter, and then embellished by the latter with the sort of work he would put into an easel picture. This is a false view. All that this "work of art" needs is good taste, refinement, simplicity, and a certain unconventional touch, which will soon come when it is seen that even pianos made to keep in stock for a while sell the more readily for a variety in their styles, a variety consistent with the qualities at which we have glanced.

MANY CALLED, FEW CHOSEN.

PECULIAR INCIDENTS OF CIVIL SERVICE PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS—THE FATAL DEFECT OF FLAT-FOOTEDNESS.

Some droll specimens of mankind come under the notice of doctors who make the specific Civil Service examinations and measurements of men who want places in the Fire Department or on the police force. If the applicant is rejected by reason of some defect in eyesight or hearing, or such other things as come under examination before stripping, there is no possible excuse for him to think that he could pass muster by presenting himself under some other name, or under the old name with such modifications as his ideas of the nonor of warfare permit. Yet, strange to say, there is on record one case of a man who passed after being dropped for three years running. This man was half an inch short. The fourth year he measured full size. Any person is always a trifle taller in the morning. The spinal column can be straightened out by lying flat on the floor or on a hard mattress. This man explained that he had added the necessary half-inch to his stature by lying in bed four days, and only arising fifteen minutes before the time of examination, then slipping in to the doctor the first one.

Another had two application papers made out. When interrogated by the doctor upon this point, he explained: "Yer see, it was rumored about in me ward dat me application paper war trowed out, so I got in another, see."

"Pat" Murphy wanted to get on the police force, but for physical reasons was never able to get the requisite certificate; but he kept on trying. The doctor knew his man at once and remembered the bar. So he said: "Mr. Murphy, haven't we had you here before?"

"You have thin, sor."

"And you were rejected?"

"I was thin."

"Do you remember what was the reason—what you were dropped for?"

"For a tindency."

"A tendency to what?"

"Ah, tindency nothin'; jist a tindency."

A most thorough examination is made of the applicant by the Civil Service doctor, covering eyesight, hearing, teeth, weight, height, chest measurement, scalp, nose, tongue, throat, neck, legs, feet, soles, toes, form of chest, heart, lungs, condition of kidneys, general condition, muscular condition, skin, flexibility of joints, identification marks, etc.

The kind of examination which a man must pass depends somewhat upon the service he is to render. The patrolman's duties are hard; he must be out in all sorts of weather and constantly on his feet. Consequently the applicant for a place on the police force must have good, sound feet. A layman would think that to be what is commonly known as flat-footed was a trivial physical defect; and yet there is a degree of flat-footedness which disqualifies a man for police duty. After many hours' standing on these feet, the owner of them is likely to be taken with most excruciating spasms of pain.

The outdoor exercise of the patrolman develops an enormous appetite. He eats, digests and assimilates a great deal of food. So in a few years he is prone to develop a paunch. The Civil Service doctor will be on the watch for this and will drop a man who has already a prominent abdomen and a tendency to flabbiness. On the other hand, your long-legged, long-necked, short-bodied man is equally ineligible. The body holds the vital machinery of the man. If the body is small, out of proportion to the neck and limbs, the driving power will be wanting; the staying powers of that man cannot be relied upon.

A greater amount of muscular activity must be shown by the exercises in the gymnasium if the man wants a place in the Fire Department than would be requisite for a police patrolman. The fireman may rest several days in the engine-house in comparative idleness; then he will be called to a great fire, be drenched to the skin, be scorched with the heat, almost suffocated with smoke, have need of all his supple agility in the perilous heights to which he must climb, and often in the jumps he must make with a child or a woman in his arms. Knowing these demands that will be made upon him, the Civil Service examiners naturally use every care in selecting a man who is quick in thought and act, with excellent staying qualities. Some apparent models of physical perfection, who have done deeds of great prowess, are barred on account of these very deeds—they have "strained hearts."

These examinations are not alone searchings after blemishes. Every man has a certain amount of pride in his own creations. The body of men selected by these examinations forms a creation of the Civil Service examiners. In this creation they take just and laudable pride. A surprisingly small per cent of the applicants are finally found eligible. The first examination, which, of course, is only a superficial one, is made by the applicant's own physician, and is given to the doctors engaged by the Civil Service Commissioners by the candidate for appointment. Then the Civil Service doctors make their physical examination; after that come the gymnastic tests, and last the examination as to intelligence and character. In a recent examination, out of 714 candidates for places as firemen, the doctors rejected 99; the athletic examination reduced the number by 66, and the intelligence and character examination found 43 wanting.

HE DIDN'T SELL THE POLICEMAN ONE.

IN FACT, THE DARKEY WAS GLAD TO ESCAPE WITH HIS PATENT MOP DRYER.

A colored man trudged along Fifth-ave., not far from Forty-second-st., on a recent afternoon. He was well on in years, was carefully dressed, and he cautiously scanned the faces of pedestrians whom he met by the way. He carried a pail in his right hand, and the pail was half full of water. In the water was a mop, the handle of which rested against the negro's shoulder. And there was something else besides the mop in the water, for the man set the pail down near the curbstone, "slushed" the mop about in the water, looked around and saw a policeman standing close beside him.

The colored man was not daunted at all. He rose to full height, stepped toward the officer, and spake out boldly: "Say, boss, I'a from Hoboken, I is; Hoboken, New-Jersey. I ain't acquainted round here, but I wants to tell you I've got the best machine here for wringing a mop dry that you ever set eyes on. It's a 'honey-cooler.'"

The policeman was taken aback, and he hesitated for a moment, whereupon the colored man boldly took him by the arm, and continued: "You see that water in that pail, and you see that mop? All right. Well, you see that little macaine there in the water? Yes? Well, that's the medium that does the business. Jess let me show you how she works."

The darkey cautiously let go of the policeman's arm, stooped gently down, moved the mop around in the water, placed it carefully between the jaws of the machine at the bottom of the pail, and then drew the mop upward and out of the machine and held it a foot above the pail. The water had been squeezed out of it thoroughly.

"There, you see how she works!" exclaimed the exhibitor, proudly, suddenly holding the mop nearly under the policeman's nose, and going on earnestly: "You can almost light a match on that mop, it's so dry. Say, can I sell you one of those patent treble mop-drying machines? I'll take it around to your house and leave it. It'll cost you only—no?"

The policeman looked as if he were coming out of a trance, the colored man saw a wild gleam in the officer's eye, and, as if taking unmistakable warning, he dropped the mop into the water, grabbed the pail, doffed his straw hat slightly to the policeman and made a bee-line for Forty-second-st., turning the corner rapidly.

GENEVA'S GREAT FOUNTAIN.

From The Philadelphia Press.

The fountain that the municipality of Geneva has recently established at the entrance of the port of that city is certainly the largest fountain that exists upon the surface of the globe, since it is no less than 200 feet in height. It may be seen from a great distance in clear weather, detaching itself like a great white sail flapping through the effects of the wind.

The city of Geneva possesses a most complete distribution of water under pressure, the motive power for which is obtained from an artificial fall established upon the Rhone at the point of the lake. The water for domestic purposes and for the running of certain motors is raised to a height of 215 feet above the level of the lake. For the distribution of motive force it is raised to a height of 490 feet. The reservoir is an open-air one, and is situated upon the top of Bessingers, at a distance of three miles from the turbine building. A very ingenious regulator, invented by Mr. Turrettini, assures the uniformity of pressure in the piping.

The length of the first pipe line is about forty miles, and that of the second about sixty. It is with this latter that the fountain conduit is connected. The latter is set in play only on Sundays. It is sometimes set in operation also on week days, in the evening. Instead of a single jet of great height, several are then utilized that do not rise so high. Powerful electric-light projectors, placed in a structure near by, brightly illuminate them with their rays of varied colors, which transform them into a luminous fountain of the most beautiful aspect.

THOU LOVEST ME.

From The New Budget.

Thou lovest me—by many a hidden sign
Thou teachest me to think that heart is mine.
But though I see
The precious secret, still with fond delay
I dare not ask thee that one word to say,
Thou lovest me.

Thou lovest me, and yet—it might befall,
Were I to stake on one chance word my all,
And urge my plea,
Some evil trap might make thee answer "Nay"
Despite thyself—although 'tis clear as day
Thou lovest me.

AN INSPIRED BLUNDER.

THE RAILROAD MAN'S STORY.

Tramps? You see only one type in these Middle-State suburban villages. It is along the big transcontinental railways that the varied phenomena of human history presented by those "gentlemen of the road" may best be studied.

I graduated in this branch of knowledge at Wigwam, a small station three miles from Santa Rosa, Col., where I replaced the "section boss" during his vacation—grin away, boys! I was filling "general utility parts" that summer, because of financial disaster—which you can spell "poker" if you like!

All outbound trains stopped at Wigwam for water, and the depot master at Santa Rosa used to send empty boxcars to wait on our sidetracks until some homeward-bound "freighter" could return them where they belonged. These cars offered ideal hiding places for tramps, and rows between trainhands and such unprofitable voyagers were of frequent occurrence and of diverse aspects, both piteous and humorous. I've seen a Methodist parson turned out, who had spent the money for his fare on charity, and I've looked on at the expelling of a "swell" temporarily beggared by riotous living, whose name is known among your "Four Hundred." Often my sympathies were opposed to the interests of my company, and once I attempted an evasion of its rules—with the result that, except for somebody's "inspired blunder," I should be haunted by the responsibility of a tragedy.

My term of service was over. The man whose substitute I had been would come back to his post within a couple of hours. The afternoon was hot, the little office very still, and a nap assisted me to get rid of some irksome time, when across the borderland between sleeping and waking I heard a voice:

"Will you give me a drink?"

The voice was refined, and so familiar that I roused completely and confronted my visitor.

He leaned against the doorframe—a dingy, drooping figure, whose hair and half-grown beard were dusty past guessing their original color, while his dark eyes made odd contrast with this otherwise universal grayness. Yet they were familiar, after the same elusive fashion as his voice.

"Who are you?" I asked briskly. "I've seen you somewhere?"

The tramp drew his grimy brows together in a bewildered frown.

"Watts?" he muttered, hesitatingly. "I remember you now." He dropped on the end of a bench beside him. "I'm Terry Rolfe, and deadbeat," he gasped.

My memory bore him prompt testimony, and turning to a cupboard I produced a bottle and a glass. He swallowed the whiskey with the mingled eagerness and difficulty of faintness and of a throat parched almost to paralysis.

I watched him curiously comparing my last sight of pleasant, prosperous Terry Rolfe with this broken-down tramp. He and his chum, Jim Crosby, belonged to a party of engineers in whose company I had camped for several weeks during the preceding spring. Those two were just from the East—the "tenderfeet" of the lot—rather given to picturesque sombreros and brilliant silk sashes, yet jolly comrades.

"Have you been long on the road?" I asked, when he gave me back the glass.

"A—a few days."

"Where from?"

He stared at his shabby boots without reply.

Mentally I reviewed the list of catastrophes in recent daily papers, and could recollect no mention of the name of Rolfe.

"Hard luck, I'm afraid—eh?"

He nodded.

"Where is your chum?—'doubles,' we used to call you?"

He looked dumbly up at me, while into his eyes came that which none of us behold often—thank God!—but which at first meeting we know to be despair.

Then his head drooped, and he fainted.

I got him down on the floor, and worked over him until he revived a little.

"Why should I bear this?" he murmured, half-consciously. "I would let no other man live who had killed Jim!" He caught his breath with a sobbing cry that hurt to hear. "My darling, I must go to her! I must tell her how I"—— His voice sank inaudibly.

And I remembered hearing that he was to marry Jim Crosby's pretty sister next autumn!

Well, boys, we read the Bible occasionally in Colorado, and we find lessons which fit our lives there. Such lessons teach us to prefer the Samaritan to the Pharisee, even when our neighbor proves to be stained by the blood of a friend, and mad with the resolve to tramp across a continent to see once more the sweetheart from whom his crime will part him forever!

Rolfe rallied some strength after he had eaten the fragments of my dinner, and bathed his blistered feet. But he refused my offer of a ticket on the night express to the East.

"I cannot risk meeting any one—from Trinidad!" he said, hoarsely.

I bethought me of certain boxcars, waiting on our sidetracks, to be carried during the next twenty-four hours many hundred miles further from Trinidad. Within one of these empty vans I proposed to install him, and so label it that neither tramp nor official would disturb his solitude until it reached the limit of its journey, where he could probably slip out undetected. This plan he accepted eagerly, and, just before the time for my own departure, I accomplished that defrauding of the company who paid me to protect their interests.

"You don't want thanks!" he exclaimed, when I left him in the dusky car, with a jug of water and some crackers. "As for shaking hands!" he ended, shuddering, "you have guessed what mine have done!"

I was going whence he had come, as I had been summoned to Trinidad by the division superintendent at that point. I should soon be familiar with the details of poor Rolfe's tragedy, I reflected, as I settled myself in the "smoker." The conductor took a seat beside me when we were fairly off, and remarked that we had escaped the wonted fight to dispossess secreted tramps.

"There is one chap, however, supposed to be tramping this way, whom I should like to meet," he continued—"Terence Rolfe."

"Terence Rolfe?"

"Young engineer—you know him, Watts; you went down the road with his party a few months ago."

"Great chum of a fellow named Crosby?"

"Just so, and engaged to Crosby's sister. Well, sir, he skipped out of Trinidad last week, under the belief that he had killed his friend"——

"The belief? Is Crosby not dead?" I interrupted, something children call a "lump" choking my throat!

"Neither dead nor likely to die, unless he brings on brain fever fretting over Rolfe's disappearance."

"When do we reach a telegraph station?"

"Another hour yet. Where is Rolfe, you fraud?"

"Tell me your story, and I will tell you mine."

This was his story:

The company projected that summer a branch line connecting Trinidad with a town fifty miles distant, and the engineers who were employed to lay it out camped in the neighborhood. They ran up to Trinidad for every chance of fun, and thus made the acquaintance of a handsome Mexican girl, Juanita Valdez, with whom Crosby became bewitched. Rolfe sought persistently to save his friend from her clutches, and his efforts transformed the fancy she at first manifested for him into the hate such a woman cherishes toward the man for whom she would have slaved had he liked her. One night after a dance Rolfe, while urging Crosby's return to camp, affronted Juanita, who, seeking a possible renown as the cause of a tragedy, stimulated her lover's resentment until he drew a revolver. There was a struggle, the revolver was discharged in Rolfe's grasp, and his chum fell apparently dead. When the police arrived Crosby showed no sign of life. Juanita glibly accused Rolfe, and he, who seemed to have gone quite mad, fled from his not very energetic captors. Crosby was taken to the hospital, where he remained many hours insensible. Then, like the chap in the miracle, he "became of a right mind." He refused Juanita's attentions, and, sending for the authorities, declared that Rolfe had been actuated throughout the affair by a devotion to him and to his family which he feared had led to a catastrophe.

"Put the police to shame and produce your man," concluded the conductor.

Forthwith I confessed the plot, whose disastrous result was carrying poor Rolfe as fast as steam could take him away from the one remedy for his despair. I did not share Crosby's dread that he would attempt self-destruction, because I knew him to be sustained by his wild scheme of escaping arrest until he had made his defence to his sweetheart. But those long hours of vain agony were bitter to anticipate, even from the calm distance which lies between us and another soul's misery.

The conductor and I combined our wits and our familiarity with the company's regulations to intercept his journey. The halts of freight trains, however, depended upon many circumstances, and were irregular beyond our power of reckoning. The only possibility of finding him was to telegraph to probable stopping places of that freighter, and to its ultimate destination. This we did at the next station, but it was hours after our arrival in Trinidad, and long past midnight, before I received any reply. The dispatch informed me that car 369 was not with the freighter, and that train hands reported it to have been blunderingly left at Wigwam.

Such uncertainty was unlikely to relieve Crosby's suspense, even if so late a visit would have been permitted at the hospital. I sent a telegram to Wigwam and betook myself to bed.

Before breakfast on the following day I walked again to the station. A freight train was crawling in, with half its ugly length slowly winding around a curve. Instinctively I glanced over the line of boxcars, one of whose compeers so occupied my thoughts.

Surely there was curious similarity in that combination of numbers on the last. Or did the distance deceive my sight? Or was I growing nervous?

As I stared, shading my eyes with my hand against the glare of sunlight, the doors were pushed open and a man sprang from the cars. He stumbled a step or two, fell, and scrambled to his feet.

Never, even in college races, had I run as fast as I ran then; nor for so high a stake. Another instant and Rolfe would recognize Trinidad. He would believe that a fiendish trick of treachery had brought him back whence he had fled. Here, where those steadily revolving wheels suggested swift escape from his agony, would he curse God and die?

While I live I shall remember the tall, swaying figure, the blazing eyes which confronted me as I rushed toward him.

"Not yet, you devil!" he cried.

He crouched to dash under the train. But my arms clasped him.

Despair is mighty, though fettered by hunger and exhaustion. He would have got away from me, except that a couple of trainhands sprang to my help.

When finally he lay limp and panting in the hold of my assistants I found breath to speak.

"Rolfe!" I gasped. "Listen! God upsets men's plans, not a devil. Against your will and mine you have been brought back here because Crosby is alive! He will recover as soon as he knows that you are safe!"

Yes, he married Crosby's pretty sister three months later, and I was best man at their wedding.

ELLEN MACKUBIN.

ENNOBLED JEWS IN LONDON.

From Vanity Fair.

The peerage conferred on Mr. Sydney Stern leads a Jewish journal to remark on the change from the time when two Jews of the Sephardim (the Spanish-Portuguese stock) were the only titled ones in England, while their Ashkenazi brethren were not permitted even to worship in the main body of the synagogue. To-day there is in Europe a whole crowd of ennobled Jews whose forefathers hailed from Frankfort—the Rothschilds, Goldsmiths, Oppenheims and Wormses. The Sterns derive their name from a house in the Frankfort Ghetto, which bore the sign of the "Golden Star" (Stern). It was an eating-house. The tenant of it, in 1770, introduced into the Ghetto the sale of coffee, tea and sugar, much to the annoyance of the Christian grocers of the city. Jews at that time were allowed to deal in groceries, but not in "Aromata." The Christians contended that coffee, and the like, were Aromata; and in the end the Frankfort Senate upheld this contention.

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