MISS AND MY LADY

A Dick Ryder Tale.

[illegible]

There are few people who can truly say they have cracked Dick Ryder, and fewer still can say that in the end he did not wriggle out of his predicament rehabilitated. Yet of those, one, I will confess, was a woman, and a woman I had eyes for, enough I am not fool enough to cast my eyes away even for a woman.

I have always admired spirit in the sex, but there is a point at which it degenerates into vice, and of such shrews as these I think any man joy. They are good to be sure if you be so inclined, but for myself I have never taken up stick, lash or fist against any woman, and never would so long as I am free of the topsman.

The adventure happened when I was in Maidstone in the summer of 1803, coming up from Dover very merry. I had ridden round from Deal and laying at the Crown in Dover the night before, and I warrant I had made the people of the inn open their eyes with what tales I told of court and old Rowley and affairs of State.

I cannot say why, but all the way from Deal to London I seemed possessed of a devil that would wag me whether I willed it or not. I am not used to be so precipitate, but 'twas as if a cask of French brandy had got into my brains and set 'em a quarrelling. At least, I was gay headed and reckless of nothing.

Now that I care for any risk or peril under the sun if it be necessary, but this was to go rollicking with the gait, so to say, of a drunken man, whistling on danger and leering at fate—a mighty foolish thing to do for any man.

I pulled out of Dover pretty late, and with a parting wave of my hand at as sweet a kinsiewinsy as I have seen, I started on the London road in good temper and good fettle. But ere I had gone a mile or so I came up with a little, fat, dark fellow that had been at the inn and had listened agog to my tales.

It was "Lord, sir, say you so?" and "Bless me, I would not ha' believed it!" and then again, "Save us, what shall we hear next?" Well, this little black man, as it seemed, was steward, or factotum, or what ye may call it, to my Lady Dane, who also, as it seemed, had lain at Dover over night, having crossed in a packet from France, and was on her way to Winchester by Ryegate and Guildford.

The fellow was not given to talking, but more to listening, with his "bless me's," but he was a simple rustic, and you may fancy that I let him on so that he opened his mouth as wide as my ears. For this Lady Dane was a rich widow (so he said), and, moreover, a woman that was greatly besought in marriage by many suitors of all degrees, and both for her looks and her money.

'Tis not I that would blame any man that saw his chance to seize beauty and loaves alike together. 'Tis the worst of it that they generally go singly—at least, to judge by what I have seen of fine ladies.

Well, says the little black man, my Lady Dane was on a journey to her home on the Trebin in the company of her niece, that was daughter to the late Sir Philip's brother and he was going afore to prepare for them at Maidstone, as they were not yet started. It seemed that my lady had property in Maidstone, and was for giving a water fountain to the town in her kindness.

"My lady," says he puffing himself out, "rises late, like any lady of the court."

"Why," said I, "she must be a rare fine woman, that she must, from your accounts, I would like to clap eyes on her, so that I might compare her with the beauties," for he was the most obsequious in praise of his mistress that ever you heard, and vexed my soul. "And the niece," says I, "would he pretty handsome too?"

"The niece!" says he, with a gesture of contempt, waving his hands in a foreign way in imitation of what he had seen in France, and thus nearly falling off his nag. "Oh, the niece is well enough," says he, and shook his head with a knowing look. "She would do pretty well, but not in a capital, not in Paris or London, where there is need always of the most elegant style. You, sir, with your knowledge of cities know that." "You have the air."

It tickled me to see the little fool a-sitting uneasily on his big horse, with his toes cocked out on each side, looking for all the world like a radish that would split, as he bobbed and bounced up and down on the saddle and mimicking foreign airs and tongues and manners as if it were natural to him. But I kept a grave face until I had gotten out of him what I wanted, by which time 'twas late in the afternoon (for we had ridden together all the way), and we were arrived within ten miles of Maidstone.

So I bade him good-by and good luck, and turning the mare up a lane, left him to pursue his way to Maidstone alone. But a mile or so along the lane I pitched on a wayside tavern, where I took leave to rest and refresh the mare and myself while waiting, for, from what I had gathered from the steward, the lady would make no start before 12, in which case she would be in Maidstone at least before 6.

So there I sat and waited, with never a companion, and not even a serving girl to clack tongues with. A little before 6 I rode down and came into Maidstone highway near by Leeds Castle, where the moat was shining in the descending sun and the pastures spread very ample and green to the heights beyond. I waited there for an hour in a convenient copse, and in the end got very tired.

"D—me!" says I, with a yawn, "this Mother Beauty has overslept herself for certain and will save her jewels after all," for I was in no mood to wait until the next day for the chance, being due in London.

It was near upon twilight and I was for cursing myself as a fool to attend upon the whims of a woman when there was the sound in the distance of rumbling wheels and I pulled Calypso out and waited by the grassy borders of the road.

'Twas not long before the chaise came up, rolling in a dignified way down the hill and speaking of wealth and consideration in every spoke and appointment. There was the coachman with his fellow beside him, and two spirited horses, and, if you please, by the lackey was a bell mouthed blunderbuss like a brass viol.

I could ha' yelled for laughter at the sight of it and their brave preparations. Rip me! what a formidable array it was, with two gallant fellows in livery all ready to blow the soul out of such as Galloping Dick and his kidney!

Why the first time I ever clapped peepers on 'em I could see there was no fight in 'em. So I put the mare right across the way and waited. The twilight was come now, and the coachman called out to me to stand aside.

"Are you drunk?" says he, as he drawa up of necessity.

"No," says I. "I am only a poor fellow that's parsty and tired of waiting on you, and would like to be drunk," says I.

"I'll a wayman!" shouted t'other lackey, and pulled up his blunderbuss. But I put the point of my sword in his ivory and he dropped it with a howl.

"What's that?" now cried a voice from the interior of the chaise, and, pushing the mare to the window I looked in. There was the lady sure enough of whom the little fat man had spoke; and he had been right about her looks, for in her anger she was right handsome.

But her companion, that was the more, according to the steward, was by no means what he had suggested, being a tall girl of delicate beauty, with a gentle kindness in her eye. My lady was in a storm of anger.

"Who are you?" she said furiously.

"Why," said I, "I know not if 'tis of consequence to your ladyship to discover who it is or who it isn't that compels you, as long as you be compelled; but if it be of any convenience to you, why, set me down in your account as Galloping Dick of the Roads, and debit me with what you will," says I.

"You would rob me?" said she, looking at me sharply, and, as I could see, controlling herself with an effort.

"Your ladyship has a mind that flies direct to the point," says I, politely. "I call Miss in witness to its quickness. Never so much as a word have I spoken afore you out with your guess. 'You would rob me,' says you. Why, d—me! I will not deny a lady."

She looked at me in doubt for a moment, as if she would count me up, as then it was that I got my first idea of her quality, for her gaze pierced me through, and there was capacity in her very boaring.

"You would rob a poor woman," said she next, in a softer voice. "I thought it 'twas fat bloated purses that you gentlemen of the road would steal."

"No," says I, "I take nothing under 20 guineas, and if there be some jewels to crown the pile I will not refuse them." For this, I knew from the little fat fool's talk, was what her ladyship carried.

She bit her lips, but kept her temper.

"I see you are pleased to jest with me," said she. "You gentlemen are as light of heart as a finger. Come, you shall have my 20 guineas, if you are so hard, and I will even refrain my curse, if you will kindly withdraw your head and allow me to proceed!" and at that she thrust toward me a little bag.

She was as cool as ever I have seen man or woman, which was the more remarkable, seeing how evil was her real temper. But I took the bag and still kept my place.

"Mark you, madam," said I, for I was not ill pleased to have a duel worthy of my tongue and skill, "Galloping Dick never makes a wanton boast, nor asks what he gets not, nor is afraid of his own mind.

"There is 500 guineas with you, the which I will beg of you for a keepsake, and in kind memory also will ask those pretty toys." And I pointed at her necklace.

"Had I not been kept a-yawning my head off the two hours by the wayside, maybe I would have taken the one and left t'other, but, sink me! I have a mind for both now," says I.

Again she shot me a glance, and I thought for a moment that she would have shouted an order to her servants, and have driven on and trusted to chance. But perhaps she came to the conclusion that the hazard was too great, as indeed it was, for I would have clapped holes through chaise and coachman ere they had rolled three paces, and her ladyship might have come off in that case worse than I was for leaving her.

At any rate, she did nothing so foolish, but merely uttered an exclamation in which her fury and her chagrin were indicated, and says she in anger and despair:

"Will nothing make you give up? Cannot I persuade you in any way to use me decently? Lord forgive you, I thought that the highwayman had some sense of gallantry."

"By the Lord!" said I, promptly, "and if there is any huff that says 'no' to that I would run him through the midriff. We are no money weasels and least of all Dick Ryder. And maybe that name is known to you, madam," said I.

"Why, I have heard it sure," says she eagerly. "And those that have spoken of you have given you a good name, for a brave and chivalrous fellow."

"I have a good repute, and that widely," said I, for 'twas true enough, and maybe she had heard of my adventure with Old Rowley and the Duchess of Cleveland, in which I played a pretty figure.

"I am always glad to meet a famous man," said she.

"No more than I a handsome lady," said I. "And to show how deeply I am in earnest I will forego half the account and all the jewels for a salutation from miss there."

To say the truth I had enjoyed my bout with the lady, and was disposed to be lenient with her for all her airs and sharpness.

But the sight of the niece's eyes of a sudden warned me and excited me, for she was looking at me gently with an odd expression of interest and of wonder and her bosom rose and fell swiftly. You may guess that that set it on a swifter ebb and tide.

"What d'ye mean?" asked her ladyship.

"I am a gentleman adventurer," said I, "and d—me! I will not deny my calling; 'tis efficient at the least. But if Miss there permit me the salutation, rip me! you shall go free."

At that Miss shrank into a corner, all the expression fled from her face, which was white and stark. My lady turned on her.

"Hear you that, Celia?" says she. "Kiss and let us get on, since this gallant gentleman must have already delayed himself overlong."

"You are right," said I. "'Tis a scurry long time since I ha' been waiting here."

"If you haste not, Celia," says she, very ironic in tone, "the gentleman will be getting impatient—as well he may, seeing your pale beauty."

Now this (for 'twas nothing but a sneer) set me against her, the girl being mightily more handsome than herself and of a fine frailty, but I said nothing, only looked at Miss, who seemed she would have withered out of the chaise.

"Celia!" cried her ladyship, sharply.

"You—you must be jesting, madam. You cannot mean it," says Miss in a low voice. "I have stood much from you, but this insult——"

But my lady broke in: "You will do what I say," she said, harshly; "I command you."

"I will not," says t'other. "Indeed, madam, I may not. Ask me not so to violate myself."

Upon that her ladyship turned about. "Hark ye," she said, and whispered in her ear, and upon that, observing her to wince, she said aloud: "What, d'ye hesitate, when 'tis spare 500 guineas and some odd jewels, including your own?"

"I—I value not mine, madam," says Miss, trembling.

"Well, there is mine," said she, "and if they be of not much marketable value, there is a higher value I put upon them, since they were given me by your dear uncle. You shall save them."

But, Lord! I am a pretty judge of jewels, and she was lying; for there was more worth in her jewels far than in her guineas. But I said nothing, only listened to hear what Miss would answer.

She hesitated, and her ladyship made a peremptory gesture.

"Why, 'tis cheap enough," said she, sardonically.

Miss still hesitated, and then, as it seemed, on a rap from her ladyship, very white of face and drawn, leaned across to the window. I saw the large eyes gleam in the faint light, and they were like pools at even in which the stars do set; but her lips were trembling.

"I have never bought jewels so cheap," says my lady, with her snore, thinking, no doubt, that the bargain was struck now, and the act consummated.

"No," says I; "I have no mind against her will. Fetch forth the pieces and the toys, my lady."

Miss fell back, still white, and I saw something leap in her eye. She put her handkerchief before her face and sobbed.

"Fi—me!" says I, roughly. "That with the guilt finches or more I make bold to help myself from yet. There is too much prattle here, and I have delayed long enough."

The lady had gone red with anger and moved her arm as though she would have struck mine one in her fury; but evidently containing herself and considering, as I must suppose, that would put no embargo on the guineas and the diamonds, she says says she:

"If my niece will not save my jewels at the price I, at any rate, will save here." And she leaned softly toward me.

Now, in a flash I saw what she intended and how she would go any length to preserve her property. She gave me but a poor thought of her for a tawdry avaricious w—n, with no pretensions of honor and (as was clear) a very brutal mind and temper toward the girl.

So I did that which maybe I should not ha' done, though 'tis hard to say, and no one ever accused Dick Ryder justly of handling a woman harshly. But she would have put me in a hole else, with her quickness and her cunning, and there was only the one way out, which I took.

"No," says I, "there is no talk of Miss's jewels. What she may have she may keep. I war not on pretty girls. But as for yours, madam, there's nothing will save 'em, no, split me, there isn't."

She fell quite white, as I could see even in the gloom, and for a perceptible moment hesitated. "Twas then, I suppose, that she made up her mind, casting this way and that desperately for a way out.

"Well," said she, in a muffled voice, "I cry for mercy. Here's what ye are wanting!" And she flung her bag at me, and with her fingers, that trembled, undid the necklace she wore and handed it to me.

"Come, that's the mood in which to take reverses," says I cheerfully. "I warrant there's more where these came from, and more behind them, for I should think shame to rob the last jewel from a neck that so becomes 'em."

This I said by way of consolation for her vanity, if that were touched at my previous refusal. But she said nothing to that, only put her head nearer and addressed me with a chastened voice.

"Look ye, captain, I think you be a hard man, but not so hard as you may seem. I ask not for myself, as you've taken all I have, but for my niece here, who has had the privilege of your benevolence to retain what she has. You have said your name is Ryder, and I will believe you. 'Tis nothing to me now if it be Ryder or Creech."

"Creech!" says I, for I knew Dan Creech well, and had, indeed, been in some surprises with him.

"Yes, Creech!" said she, looking me steadily in the face. "I was warned of a ruffian named Creech that would haunt this road to Maidstone."

"Well, Creech," said I, "will reap nothing from bare acres."

"No," said she, "save from my niece."

And there she spoke truly enough, as I saw; for if Creech was on that road (and maybe he was), I knew him better than to suppose he would be content with their asseverations. He would rummage and overhaul, would Creech, and there was never gold or farding would escape Danny's notice, not if 'twas as pitch black as midnight.

"As you have been so generous," said my lady, "I thought that maybe you would go further and save my niece from robbery and me from further needless alarms. It seems to me, though I may be prejudiced, that you owe me that at least."

I thought on that for a moment, and well, I had not spared Miss to let her fall a victim later; so says I:

"You mean that I shall give you my protection?"

"I see that you are quick of your wits," said she, speaking evenly now, and not with any irony apparent.

"Done!" says I. "I will conduct ye two within a mile of Maidstone, and you shall go secure. I'll swear to that."

"Will ye not be afraid to venture so closely?" asked she.

"I will conduct ye up to the doors of Maidstone," said I. "I'll see you safe within the precincts."

"Spoken like a brave knight of the road," said her ladyship, and lay back in her seat. "And now perhaps you will be good enough to bid my coachman to drive on."

There was something in her tones which should have given me pause even then, if I had been less pleased with myself. But I had been hard with her, not in the matter of the jewels only, and I was disposed to meet her on a point, for all that I was sure she bullied the girl.

So I rode on in front and the coach rolled after me, for all the world as though I were advanced guard in protection of beauty, which, after all, is pretty much what I was. There was no denying looks to her ladyship, but she was of a hard, handsome face that has never taken me.

You would swear that she would never change till the tomb swallowed her, but would grow old and fade white battling for her beauty all the way, and holding its handsome ghost until the end. If there was any one that would be attracted by her person (and there must ha' been many), to say nothing of her purse, why, 'twas not I. Not but what I can speak generously of her (as witness what I have wrote of her beauty), for I came out of the affair all right, yet by an accident, as you will see.

We had got near by Maidstone, within three miles, and the twilight had thickened into dark. There was never a soul upon the lonely road, for you may conceive that I kept a sharp eye not only for Danny, if he should be about, as was possible, but also lest my lady should play any trick on me by the way.

But I was not much afraid of that, as I knew there was nothing between us and Maidstone save a few scattered cottages and an insignificant village or two, which I would have warranted to scare with a blank charge. So when we were, as I say, within three miles of the town her ladyship put out her head and called:

"See you," said she, "there is the town drawing near, and you expose yourself in the front. It will serve if you ride behind and be for your better safety, captain."

"Why," said I, "what the deuce do I mind of riding before or behind! There's nothing will take me and I will fetch ye into Maidstone, as I have said."

"Well, captain," said she with a laugh, "I will confess it was not wholly your safety that moved me, which is not strange in the circumstances, but I should feel more secure myself were my escort in the rear, from which side it is more likely any assault would be made."

"I came as you is the front," said I.

"Ah! Capt. Ryder (Capt. Ryder, said she, beaming), and was not afraid of my blunderbusses and my rascals. But conceived a less brave and straightforward adventure, that sees not only the blunderbusses and lackeys, but a gallant swordsman to boot in front. 'Tis surely from the rear that such a one would attack."

"Oh, well," said I indifferently, "afore or behind matters nothing. You will have no assault while Dick Ryder's sign manual is on you, and that's his boasting talk."

And so I fell behind as she wished, and we proceeded. It was true enough, what she said, that the body of the coach would protect me from any eyes in front, and that I could make off more easily from the rear, but, Lord love you! I had no thought of that, and if I had been thinking of it, it might have occurred to me, being in the van. I could see more plainly into what we were running than if in the rear.

And sure enough that came near my undoing, for we had not gone two miles further and were still some way out of the town bounds, when the coach suddenly pulled up before a tavern in a little village thereby, of which I cannot recall the name. We had passed several of these, and, as I have said, I cared not two straws for them, and so I mildly exercised my mind at this unexpected stoppage, and coming to myself, moved the mare slowly round t'other side of the coach to see what was forward.

"If she is thirsty," said I to myself, "she shall drink, and if it came to that I was thirsty myself. And I was ready to hold up the innkeeper with a pistol butt while we all drank a draught to our better acquaintance and Miss's eyes, maybe."

But as I came round I was suddenly aware of a small crowd of people, some wearing uniform, armed with halberds and lanthorns and in the middle a short, important gentleman with a paper in his hand. I had no sooner made this discovery than her ladyship shrieked out very loud.

"Seize that man. He is a highwayman!"

At that, all alert, I pulled Calypso round and put my heels into her flanks, but there was a bank of people before me in that quarter and the chaise to one side and the tavern t'other, and ere I could draw half a dozen hands were on the mare, and two that was in the throng had their pistols on the level.

There was I, taken netted like any duck in a decoy for certain, and with no prospect of even a struggle, for the number against me was great. I saw that in the twinkling of an eye and so sat still, making no effort to escape.

"What is this?" said I loudly. "Hands off, sirrah! Do you dare arrest an innocent man? Who is the authority here, and what's his foolish name?" said I.

At that the short man came forward and I saw that he wore a long gown edged with some sort of fleece. "Who are you?" I asked, assuming the most haughty, arrogant air, "and under what pretense is a gentleman that is on the King's business arrested and delayed?"

"Sir," he said, hesitating. "I am Mayor of the town, and 'tis at her ladyship's request——"

"I know nothing of her ladyship," said I, interrupting angrily. "If her ladyship blunders, and you through her, you must take the consequence, Mr. Mayor."

He seemed put about at that, but my lady herself intervened (or I would have managed things myself pretty easily).

"I charge that man with stealing from me jewels and money to the amount of 500 guineas, which you will find upon him," said she, for she was now out of the coach and standing in the road among them all.

"Yes, your ladyship," says the Mayor anxiously, "it shall be attended to."

"Well, some one shall smart for this," said I, "ere many days are out."

"And my witness," pursued her ladyship calmly, "sits in the coach and is my late husband's niece."

"Oh, a witness," says Mr. Mayor, brightening up.

"To say nothing of my two fellows," she ended.

With that I saw it was all up, for she was not one to lose her head, and with that plain issue before the Mayor he could not blunder very far. So I said nothing more, but sat in the clutches of the officers cudgelling my wits for a way out.

"Celia," says she, "is this the man that attacked us upon the road and stole my jewels?"

"I—I cannot discern very well, 'tis dark," stammered Miss; and rip me! I blessed the chit for that reluctance, though 'twas useless as it happened, for says her ladyship—

"Nonsense, baggage!" she says, "you can see quite plain. You are a coward, that's what it is. Here, James and Joshua, what say you—is this the villain?"

Whereupon the lackeys both swore with one voice that it was I, and that I had attacked them brutally; and says one that I had put a bullet near his leg, whereas it was his own silly blunderbuss that he dropped.

"That is sufficient, my lady," says the Mayor, looking very pompous, and to that added what gave me the clue as to the unexpected trap.

"Twas nothing more nor less than that little toad, the fat steward, who, for all his gentle and talk, had forgot to say that the Mayor of Maidstone was to come for her to meet her ladyship in state, in token of gratitude for favors to the lawntolk. 'Twas along of that fountain that it seems, and I cursed the little fat fool in my heart of that, being so garrulous, he had put a limit to his tongue.

But at the same time I could not but admire her ladyship's admirable skill and cunning. Sink me! she was a wonder with her quickness so to contrive to drag me into the trap.

But these considerations stayed me nothing, and I will confess that I saw no road of escape, though I am far from saying that I was beaten or that some notion would not have come to me later. Why, I have broke out of Newgate jug in the face of all.

Yet this is what happened in the thick of this talk and confusion, and even while the throng pressed upon me and my captors suddenly a voice cried out from the coach:

"There is the other, seize him—there he goes, on the right there!"

This was Miss's voice, as I recognized, though I was amazed and for the time did not pick up my wits. But in a second all was uproar.

"Who d'ye mean? What is it, you baggage?" cried out her ladyship.

"Seize him!—there he goes!" cries Miss again, leaping from the coach in a state of excitement; and to her ladyship: "Why the other, my lady! the man that assisted—Creech, was it not?"

In an instant I saw how it was and what she intended, and I believe her ladyship in her quickness saw it just after me; for in the confusion the throng swayed, and some ran this way and others that, and there my two jailers gaping in the darkness like moping owls.

'Twas but the work of a moment to wrench free an arm from one and deliver the other a rap with a pistol on his skull; and at the same time I wheeled Calypso about a third that stood there in the way. The three thus scattered, with a whistle to the mare I dropped low in the saddle and breaking out of the circle thundered down the road at a gallop, while all behind me arose cries and shouts, and above all her ladyship's shrill voice screaming with fury.

I rode till I reached the first turning on the left and then went up a back lane for some distance, after which I paused and listened. Sounds still came to me, sailing on the night, and I stood awhile, chuckling to think how deeply her ladyship was cursing and how smartly I had evaded her. And upon that comes the thought of Miss.

"Why," thinks I, "she's a heart o' gold, is Miss; and that wildcat will be flying in her face with claws," and the devil being in me, as I said, all through that business, I turned about and came back into the road.

I jogged along comfortably until I was within a hundred yards of the inn, and here was the same confusion that I had left.

"What's this?" said I to a fellow that passed me.

"Oh," says he, "'tis a highwayman that has robbed a lady and is got off."

"Stab me!" says I, "what fools these traps be!" and I moved on until I came by the coach, where I stood in the darkness.

I heard her ladyship's voice coming out of the inn, and still angry, and there were several in the roadway, but the traps had vanished, and I make no doubt were looking for me busily.

As I stood there thinking, some one comes from t'other side of the chaise, and I saw it was Miss. At the same time she saw me and started.

"What do you here?" she asked tremulously.

"Why," says I, "I am a-looking anxiously for a tobyman that has wickedly robbed a lady."

"Go!" she cried, "you will be caught! They will be back directly."

"No," said I, "I am not the man to leave other people with my burdens."

"What do you mean?" said she after a pause.

"There is her ladyship," said I, "and there is yourself."

"Oh, I am well used to deal with her ladyship," she said, a little bitterly. "You need be in no alarm."

"Well, 'tis I shall deal with her ladyship this time," said I.

"You are mad!" said she. "Go—go—I hear them coming!"

"No," says I.

"Oh, go!" she pleaded anxiously. "If you stay you will do me no good and yourself all harm. I think you are bewitched to stay."

With that I looked at her, and though I could not see her very clearly in the small light I vow she was mightily pretty. I suppose 'twas the devil in me moved me, or maybe it was only her beauty, but at any rate, said I:

"If I may have now what I denied myself on the road there I will go."

She drew herself straight, and I could see her under lip quiver.

"Sir," she said, "I know you to be a highwayman; at least, let me think you are a gentleman."

"Damn me!" says I, shortly, for I was taken back at this. "No one shall say that I am no gentleman, for I am that afore everything else." And so, with a big congee in my stirrups, I turned and left her.

LOST MONEY ORDERS.

Millions Accumulated in the National Treasury From This Source.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 31. A Washington woman discovered some days ago that her German nurse was destroying the money orders she purchased to remit to the Fatherland. She had torn up within the last five years more than $500 of money orders, thinking they were receipts for the money deposited in the office at Washington and that the money had been duly sent to her old mother in Germany.

This incident recalls the fact that there has accumulated in the national Treasury millions of dollars, possibly ten millions, since the establishment of the present system in 1881. The Government assumes the role of trustee for the safe transfer of money from one individual to another, and the protection is nearly perfect, yet Uncle Sam cannot always remedy the carelessness or ignorance of persons buying money orders.

An official, speaking of the system, said: "This vast accumulation of money is steadily being augmented from year to year, and unless the people become better acquainted with the character of a money order transaction the accumulated sum promises to become almost fabulous. This money has accumulated through no fault of the United States. The system is perfect and instructions are clear and simple.

"For one thing it is known that persons purchasing money orders ignorantly destroy them, believing that the order constitutes nothing more than a receipt. Many persons also are in the habit of purchasing money orders before travelling from one place to another, with a view to converting them into cash as needed, and these are lost through carelessness, by fire, &c.

"It also frequently happens that orders are sent to wrong addresses, and after repeated attempts on the part of the Post Office Department to find the payee or remitter, are sent to the department, together with advices, as unpaid.

"Notwithstanding this, the Government has wisely made provision for the payment of money orders lost or destroyed, by the issuance, upon satisfactory proof of loss or destruction, of a duplicate money order payable to the payee or remitter making application therefor, as the case may be. Provision is also made for the payment of orders which are not presented for payment before the time limit provided by law has expired.

"In one instance a claim for the payment of a lost postal note was allowed twenty-five years after it became invalid. It will be seen that as trustee for its citizens in the transfer of private funds the United States exercises diligence in an attempt to find the rightful owner. And yet millions are still outstanding, for which claimants will never appear. This vast sum is held in suspense by the Government."

SECRETS OF MANLY BEAUTY.

Men in the Aggregate Declared Handsomer Than Women.

Why are men better looking than women? demands a courageous writer in the *Gentlewoman*. It is a problem which must perplex and pique modern women, for, taking them in the aggregate, men nowadays leave women behind in personal beauty.

Various reasons contribute to this. Man has many points of advantage.

Has he a weak and retreating chin, indicative of imbecility and entire lack of character? There is nothing easier than to cover it with a neat Vandyke beard, and at once he assumes quite a virile and attractive aspect.

Is his mouth weak or cruel? A well trained mustache is an invaluable asset in this case.

Does he wish to create an impression of piety and moral rectitude? He may be the biggest villain alive, but if he cultivates a long flowing beard of patriarchal aspect he is at once invited to become a churchwarden, the rector refers to him affectionately as "our beloved brother," local papers allude to him as "our esteemed townsman," the widow and the orphan fly to him for sympathy and consolation, little children prattle artlessly to him and put their little hands in his, while the British public point to him with pride as a representative citizen, a man *sans peur et sans reproche*.

Yet it is within the range of possibility that if he were divested of his beard he would be hustled out of the country in less time than it takes to say Jack Robinson.

Then, again, what possibilities for a poetic appearance lie in a man's hair. Take away the flowing locks of a number of distinguished musicians and what would happen? Assuredly what is alliteratively described as a convict clip would result in much fewer feminine ecstasies, a sudden slump in requests for autographs and photographs and a considerable diminution in the number of broken hearts.

And the irony of it is that men's looks do not matter very much, and in this fact also lies a reason of their superior position. The first gray hair does not plunge them into a dark night of despair, while the initial wrinkle is passed by unnoticed. They do not worry over their looks, and so their looks give them no cause to worry.

Moose Walks Down Busy Street.

By Pack correspondence Duluth News-Tribune.

The other morning a big moose visited the town and after taking a few observations he leisurely walked down to the river right in the busiest part of town and swam across while a number of our citizens stood on the bank and watched him, but the monarch of the forest, though not in any hurry to leave, seemed to think his place was in the woods, so he finally walked off. The animal appeared so contented that not a soul in town expressed any desire to harm him.

SPANISH BALLOONING VERSUS FORTS.

Capt. Kindelan of the Spanish Military Engineers, Making an Ascent from Valencia in the Military Balloon Maria Teresa. Was Blown Out Over the Mediterranean and Was in Danger of Drowning When the British Ship Best Saved Him.

A LEGEND OF MISSING CENTS

FULTON BLAMED FOR SCARCITY OF EARLY COINS.

Theory That Many Thousands of the Big Cents of Old Were Used to Make the Boiler for the Clermont—Historical Facts That Go to Support the Theory.

That some of the rarest and most valuable of the United States cents, particularly those dated 1799 and 1804, owe their scarcity to the fact that Fulton built the steamboat Clermont in the theory had to some coin collectors. They believe that thousands of the old time large copper cents went toward making the copper boiler for the pioneer steamboat.

This theory would explain the mystery that has long puzzled coin collectors as to the reason for the almost total disappearance of the cents of the dates mentioned.

The first cents struck at the United States Mint at Philadelphia were of large size. The copper blanks or planchets were imported from England, being sent over in bags.

Copper at this period was a scarce article in this country. With the exception of the small quantity produced at the only copper mines then known in the United States, those at Ansonia, Conn., nearly all the metal used here came from England.

Builders of steam engines in those days were of the opinion that boilers constructed of iron were unsafe and impracticable, and as a consequence boilers were made of copper, all the boilers that came from England being, it is said, constructed of that metal. Fulton was likewise of the belief that copper was the only fit metal to be used in boilers.

It is therefore possible that finding a scarcity of metal with which to construct the boiler of the Clermont he finally resorted to the most convenient source of supply, which happened to be the large United States copper cents. Of course the cost of such a boiler would represent a large sum, but it is on the records that the steam frigate Fulton, launched in 1815, the year of the inventor's death, had a boiler entirely constructed of copper, which alone cost the large sum of $23,000.

That the supply of cents of this period was large enough to meet such a demand is also likely enough. From 1793 to and including 1795 1,066,032 cents were coined; in 1796, 974,700 were struck; 1797, 897,510; 1798, 979,200; 1799, 904,565; 1800, 2,822,175; 1801, 1,362,837; 1802, 3,435,100; 1803, 2,471,353; 1804, 756,838; 1805, 941,116.

This makes a total of 16,611,917 cents struck at the mint up to and including the year in which the boiler was made.

The cents struck during the years 1793, 1794 and 1795 weighed 208 grains each, which would give the number of pieces struck, 1,066,032, a total weight of about 31,770 pounds. In 1796 the weight of the copper cent was reduced to 168 grains, which would give the number coined from 1796 up to and including 1805, 15,545,914, a total weight of about 373,158 pounds, making the total weight of the 16,611,917 cents struck from 1793 to 1805 about 404,000 avoirdupois pounds of 7,000 grains each, which would certainly represent metal many times more than sufficient to make a boiler of the size used by the Clermont.

Nearly all the cents of this period are now scarce, but the ones dated 1799 and 1804 are extremely so. It is an odd fact that the rarity of the former was not appreciated until about 1860, when coin collecting in this country was in its infancy.

A Philadelphian by the name of J. J. Mickley, seeking a cent of 1799, the year of his birth, only came into possession of one after a great deal of trouble, and even then the specimen which finally came to his hand was in poor condition. Persevering in his endeavor to obtain a better specimen, his efforts resulted in so little success that Mr. Mickley was ultimately forced to the conclusion that cents of this date were extremely scarce.

Through looking for the cent of this date he became interested in coins of all kinds and soon developed into a collector of the first rank and was noted as possessing the finest and most comprehensive collection of coins then in the United States. Not satisfied with the opportunities provided in this country for the acquisition of new varieties Mr. Mickley made trips to various parts of the world and added many rare and interesting coins to his collection.

Some years later a thief broke into his residence in Philadelphia and stole many rare specimens and the veteran collector thereupon became discouraged and sold the remainder of his coins at auction.

An uncirculated 1799 cent if now offered at auction would bring at least $300 and perhaps more. Those in somewhat circulated condition are held in high estimation by collectors, and even a much worn specimen upon which the date is discernible is worth a couple of dollars.

The 1804 cent is almost as rare as that date 1799 and will bring almost as much of a premium. While the remainder of the dates are not so rare, still uncirculated and sharp specimens bring as much as $100. Everything considered, it is not improbable that the boiler of the Clermont or one of the boilers made by Fulton did contain a large proportion of the early supply of copper cents. It is certain that of many millions originally struck few are to-day in existence.

INCORPORATING FARMS.

A Nebraskan Has an Idea of Reaching the Small Investor.

LINCOLN, Neb., Aug. 28.—A new idea in the line of stock promotion has been evolved by an abstractor in York. It is to incorporate Nebraska farms. The first incorporation of this character on record in Nebraska was filed this week, when the Cedarbank farm of York county submitted articles to the Secretary of State. The capital stock is placed at $30,000, divided into shares of $100 each. All of the issue is owned by the parties to whom the farm came as an estate—M. A. Welch and R. A. Miller of Philadelphia and Mary W. Miller of Nance county. These three fill the offices of president, secretary and treasurer, and constitute the board of directors.

The abstractor who completed this deal has improved upon it. He has secured options on several farms in that section, where lands bring from $80 to $90 an acre, and he proposes to float a stock proposition with the shares placed at some small sum, $10 or $25. He believes that this will meet the demand that exists on the part of the people to invest in farm land. For six years there has been a steady rise in the price of farms due to the good crops and the desire shown by city men of affairs and others to own agricultural areas. Prices have reached the point now where the ordinary man cannot hope to buy any sized farm as farms go in the West. Arguing from these facts the man with the idea thinks such a stock company would be easily floated if assurances could be given that the management of the business would be in capable hands. The necessary money to buy the farms will come from the proceeds of the stock sales, and the capital needed to operate it may be raised by a bond issue, in which form a good many farm mortgages have recently been issued by the loan companies that have many small investors as customers.