CIC'LY'S STORY.

[Catherine Cole in Picayune.]

One midwinter day not long ago I was detained at the unprosperous, unfrequented little inn called The Traveller's Rest, which is the sole fragment of metropolitan importance belonging to the trade-forsaken, interior little village of Bayouville. I had arrived from some still more interior depth of the country and was prepared to possess my soul with patience until such time as the lumbering old mail-coach should be ready to set out for the railway station twenty miles away.

The landlord of the Rest, who had been engaged in the triple occupation of chewing tobacco, whittling a pine shingle, and cooling his heels on the broken balustrade of the front porch, got down from his lazy perch and himself ushered the way into the parlor. As we crossed the black entry, he said in a whisper: "There's a queer character in there. She come from out the swamp and says she's going down to Orleans. I can't get nothing out of her except that she wants to get shet of the hull country." With this he opened the door and ushered me into the waiting-room.

The parlor was a clean, wholesome apartment. The wide-planked floor had been freshly rubbed with powdered red brick, the gritty particles of which crunched uncomfortably under foot. The fireplace was piled with pine logs, and the room smelled sweet as a newly-tapped turpentine-orchard. The windows, rattling in the wind, were curtainless, except for the frostbitten Madeira vines clinging to a network of cords across the outer sashes.

The outlook was off straight into the forest, where the pines grew so thick that they almost seemed to be a gray, wooden curtain hung down from the luminous skies.

At one of these windows, bolt upright, on a splint-bottomed chair, sat a young woman. Her coarse garb and a certain intangible environment of manner, denoted the backwoods woman. Her face was turned forestward, and a deep, set, introspective gloom brooded in her sombre eyes.

She was tall and full of figure, the last a trait of physical comliness not common to the women of her locality. Her face was a noble one—large, firm, full-featured, intelligent, with wide gray eyes, black, straight eyebrows, and a powdery dusting of brown freckles on the bridge of her nose and under her eyes. Her chin was full and almost square. A lot of rumpled brown hair, growing with plenty of curly tendrils like a vine, was gathered in a knot at the back of her head. She wore a plain blue cottonade gown, gathered at the waist on a broad band, and in place of a collar a blue bandanna handkerchief was tied at her throat. From out its loose drooping folds her throat, almost too full, rose like a short column of brown marble. The girl had a matronly look about her, that indescribable look that made one guess it was not long since her large arms had cradled a young one of her own. A Shaker bonnet lay on the floor at her feet, and a rumpled band of black crepe was pinned on her breast.

This was Cic'ly—Cic'ly, whose home was twenty miles inward on the banks of Black-Snake Bayou, who had never before in her life been to Bayouville, who had never seen a stage-coach nor heard the hoot of a locomotive, and who did not know that the wizen, decrepit, one-pedalled, and entirely-antediluvian piano in the corner was a piano, but who, when the supreme tragedy of her life had faced and vanquished her, had risen from her battle-field and fled, to lose herself forever in that uncomprehended somewhere that lay beyond the bewildering methods of Bayouville.

Cic'ly sat motionless by the window, and took no heed of the occupant of the room. Once she raised a large brown hand and drew it across her face, as if bidding thought be still. She looked a being for whom all the emotions of life, like a broken clock, had closed forever. That of her which must go on living was just insensate clay. Her heart was somewhere dead. Despite her fine face, her statuesque throat, she looked the essence of commonplace forlornity, and when she spoke her voice was a sudden, sullen, nasal monotone. "Yes," said she once, in answer to a question, "I hev been a settin' here and a settin' here till I've most tuckin root, but I reckin to git shet of this place some time or ruther."

It was not easy to imagine that this hopeless woman, in the coarse country garb, had touched the highest limits of joy and woe, and that now in getting "shet" of this strange bit of a town, she was turning from the ashes of a deserted hearth to seek sanctuary and asylum in the world. This is the story of Cic'ly's life:

Twenty miles back of the village of Bayouville Black-Snake bayou winds sluggishly in and out through a perennial wilderness that is only occasionally checkered by a few fields of feeble cotton. The soil over all this country, where there is not too much water to admit of soil, is but a thin, miry layer of yellow clay that resists the advances of emigrant agriculturists with a hostility no less potent than that exhibited by the few sallow-faced individuals who are indigenous to it.

It is probable that the highly creditable census returns have been mere friendly guesswork on the part of some rural statistician, who, stumbling blind on the sagacious idea of always putting the best foot foremost, favored the county by a complement of population utterly incompatible with the dense pine groves, the stretches of black swamp, the semi-occasional cotton-patches, and demi-semi-occasional log cabins set here and there in small clearings.

In at Bayouville, whose few residents, congregated by social instincts rather than municipal authority within certain prescribed limits, fondly imagine themselves possessed of a distinctly citified air, imposed by an angular pantheistical meeting-house, the post-office, grocery-store, and saddler's shop, all in one, and the before-mentioned "Travellers' Rest," the denizens of the country about are referred to as "po' white trash."

Once or twice a year a few of those modern American Columbuses—the peddlers—penetrate these inner wilds buying up eggs, chickens, pelts, and leaving a trail of tins, calico, blue mass, and patent medicines. Occasionally one or two of the more thrifty farmers owning carts hitch up their under-sized, half-wild little cows and oxen indiscriminately, and haul the crops in their locality off to town or to the nearest cross-roads store. The majority of the people, however, particularly the women, are born, raised, marry, have children, die, and are buried without ever having realized the fabled grandeurs of "town."

An itinerant preacher, whose really professional calling is that of a saddler, with bench in the Bayouville post-office, makes a quarterly round of the district holding meetings in store, school-house, log-cabin, and when none of these are available, in the mighty temple and sanctuary of the woods, with no roof nearer than the smiling skies bending above.

On the occasion of a preach folks would gather from miles around. They would be coming for two days before meeting-time, in carts, riding two and sometimes even three on one dejected little mustang brute, and many more patiently trudging through the woods, loaded with food, quilts, and babies.

These devout pilgrims did not fail to turn the occasion of each journey to their movable Mecca into one of joyous feasting and frolics. Those who had come from far were made welcome to the cabins nearest the meetin'-place. The air resounded with the vociferous, hearty "Howdys" from friends and relations long separated, and with the yelping of dogs and crying of children. The coffee-pot stood brewing before the coals from morning till night, and the mistresses of these hospitable, if humble, homes apologizingly allowed as how they was just out of "sweetenin'," but with generous hand they made it up to the hungry ones in pellucid chunks of fried fat, known as "hawg's meat," in potatoes yellow as gold and sweet as sugar-cane, and in tasty ash-cakes.

At the above-mentioned twenty-mile point on Black-Snake bayou the red and yellow earth is upreared into a rugged hill, at the foot of which lays the deep, steely pools of the stealthy, repellant river. On the top of this hill, overlooking the piney woods for miles, until they melted to gray mist in the distance, or were merged into the gloom of that fearful unknown region of Snaky Swamp, stood a cabin locally known, although the nearest neighbor was five miles off, as "Ruggleses." The cabin was a regular backwoods home, built of loblolly-logs and plastered with mud. There were two large rooms, separated by a hall or entry open at both ends, and producing an architectural effect not unlike a pair of saddle-bags. A rickety porch crossed the front of the house. There were no windows in the house at all, and no openings save the two doors, which, as they both gave on to the entry, kept the smoky-smelling rooms in a perpetual dusk of twilight. A ragged cotton-field trailed off behind the house, and a few pigs and chickens were viciously rooting and clawing in an unpromising potato-patch. The well was in the front yard under a sweet-gum tree. Everywhere else except towards the bayou the gray pine forests were extended.

The Ruggleses were considered the best-to-do people in Black-Snake neighborhood. The preacher always put up at their house. Cic'ly Ruggles wore shoes and stockings on week days, an exhibition of feminine finery considered the essence of aristocracy, and Lysander Ruggles had said more than once that if his women folks wanted to they could jest root, hog, and die in milk, bein' as he had nigh fifty head of cattle roamin' loose in the swamp.

It was the day before the fall preach, and signs of great bustle were apparent at Ruggleses. Smoke poured from both chimneys, and sparks spangled the frosty air. The bare rooms were swept almost to desolation, and the narrow mantel shelves were set out with bunches of flaming golden-rod, to the disgust of Cic'ly's mother, who had not an uncommon rural horror of such belitterment and wood truck. In addition to the event of meeting, the morrow was to be signalized by the wedding of Cic'ly Ruggles and Lum Cherry. By that mysterious telegraphy that no man can describe the whole country had been made aware in a couple of days that Cic'ly and Lum were going to step off, and the unbidden but no less welcome guests were swarming in *via* all the cow-paths of the forest. Both rooms were full of company and the space in front of each huge fire-place was piled with fat, sleeping babies and lean ditto hounds. Sallow-faced, fair-haired women, with that dragged-down look that comes of hard work and too many children, sat around on benches and stools and smoked and gossiped, and with a friendly desire to help Emeliny Ruggles, minded the skillets full of hog-meat sizzling dangerously near to the babies and dogs. Naturally, the bride and groom were the favorite subjects of conversation. It is almost impossible to describe to one who has not heard it, the mellifluous, soft, easy-going accents of these women; their voices were invariably low, mellow, and words lingered reluctantly on their lips. The darkest corners of the cabin were red with light. The big table, at which newcomers were constantly appearing for a bait of victuals, was pushed against the wall, and even its pile of stone china plates and yellow bowls and half-emptied crock of stewed pumpkin did not lessen the appearance of cheer and homely comfort. Once in a while a dog pulled down a greasy platter and some voice would be raised with a "you git out from there, Lige!" that Lige paid not the least attention to, and the remonstrant returned to her interrupted confab with renewed interest.

"They tell me Cic'ly's got a new muslin dress to be married in," remarked Melindy Allen. "She's powerful well favored, but I reckin new duds 'll make her look pretty 'nough to meet."

"Cic'ly can't look no way but pretty. She's got dreadful nice ways of talkin' an' bein' polite. She's skittisher'n a young colt though." The last speaker was an elderly lady who had formerly kept a perambulating eating-house for the slowly-migrating railroads hands off beyond Bayouville. Her powers of acumen were tacitly conceded to have been accentuated by her larger experiences of life. Once when a young girl she had made the trip to 'Orleans on a charcoal schooner. This and the fact that her seven children were named out of story-papers made her, so to speak, the intellectual autocrat of the swamp. Mrs. Hicklin ruminated with one eye fixedly staring in blind abstraction at the nearest skillet. She gave her right eye-tooth a vigorous rubbing with her dogwood snuff-brush and continued, "I can't get the hang of Cic'ly Ruggles, no how."

"What's the matter with Cic'ly?"

"Well, she 'pears to take this marrin' as solemn as ef 'twas a buryin'. She's dredful in earnest. How come she to be marrin' with Lum Cherry beats me all holler."

"Ef ever thar wuz a sickly-looking feller, it's Lum," assented Mrs. Allen, with cordial interest. "Them Cherrys is all a white-livered, ratty lot. Cic'ly's got to look out fer him. He'll tote fair enough and far enough while the court-in'-fever's on him; but jes wait till that simmers down. 'Twill be Hail, Columby, happy land, then, ef Cic'ly crosses him. Wisht you'd a-seen him tryin' to git the parson's pony inter the yard jes 'fore you come. The colt wouldn't budge. He sot 'is feet and hunched hisself up an' pulled back with his hind en'; and Lum he sot 'is feet an' hunched hisself up and pulled forred with both en's. And they had it, you bet. The way he kicked that colt in the ribs and pounded hit in the nose an' swore black an' blue at it would a ben a caution to Cic'ly. I'd a gin a red heifer ef she seen 'im."

This prejudiced and partisan conversation was interrupted by the appearance of Lum himself. A sheepish, sallow, loose-jointed, sullen-looking man, no more fit to mate with Cic'ly, the flower of Snaky Swamp, than a hoot-owl with a lark. One of Cic'ly's brothers had just been barbering him out behind the house—an operation that emphasized those physical shortcomings that made Melindy Allen call him "white-livered, sickly-lookin'." He went about the room shaking limp hands with the ladies, and answering their soft How d'ye, Lum? with an inarticulate mutter.

Mr. Cherry's prospective mother-in-law followed him into the room, and directing him to draw up, proceeded to serve out a plateful of supper to him. The appearance of these two important personages heartened up the wicked old gossips; pleasant anticipations of the unusual event were expressed in homely jokes and solemn prognostications for the benefit of the next to the chief actor.

And Cic'ly—Cic'ly was off in the woods somewhere "walkin' down her wonderment," she told herself. How often in her girlhood, when her strange impotent enthusiasms possessed her, had she taken to the woods to walk it down! Is girlhood less mysterious and tender because it can neither read nor write? Are its thoughts less holy because they are voiceless and choked for utterance? Is love less meet and fruitful because of rude clothes and an humble shrine? Cic'ly, speeding through the frosty woods, not minding how the galberry bushes scratched at her new frock, walked like a young David with the wide, tender dusks of her solemn eyes upturned to the skies.

"I know what it all means now" she said to herself. "Every time I used to git res'less fits on me it was because I was a waitin' for Lum. When I used to slip out to the stile to look this way and that way to see if anybody was comin', when there wasn't anybody to come at all, it was jus' Lum. And when I got low-spirited and felt as if the world was comin' to an end, it was Lum agin; and when I was always a waitin' for som'fen to happen, 'twas nothing but Lum." What fine young lady, the flower of culture and grace, could better have summed up the varying, perplexing emotions of being in love, than did Cic'ly walking down her wonderment of joy in the lonesome depths of the piny forests? The dark skies seemed to part overhead, and in her halo of happiness she could see her castle—her one-roomed loblolly log-cabin—that to-morrow would be hers and Lum's. She could hear how the birds sang in the sweet-gum trees, how the pines crooned. Often she had asked herself if the ceaseless soughing in the forest, the deep-toned baying of the winds, was not the noise of the outside world, like at Orleans, dribbling in through the swamp: but now that everything was happiness to her—a lover, a wedding, a husband, a home—she would never again care what the crooning sound might mean. Oh, the torch of love was lighted! and Cic'ly meant to bear herself to that cabin home of hers, to tend its faithful fire and keep it trimmed and burning.

The next day after the eloquent preaching—after the mitigated excitement of the mourners' bench where, notwithstanding the pretending finale of a wedding, two were up to be prayed for, after the christening of Melinda Allen's last baby, preaching being too scarce to admit of any curtailment of the usual interesting routine of religious observances—Cic'ly Ruggles and Lum Cherry were made man and wife, and that same evening, after a great feasting, Lysander Ruggles jumped his daughter up on to the pony 'hind Lum, and clasping his waist Cic'ly disappeared through the woods and was carried off to her new home on the other side of Snaky Swamp.

Of the commonplace, sordid, hard-worked life that Cic'ly lived in her new home, is it worth while to write? Of how she was up with the mocking-birds and blue-jays, and set her cheap home in order, cooking Lum's breakfast and standing in wifely submission till he had eaten his fill and departed, and then more lonesome than a prisoner in his cell, sapping at her own bit of bacon and bowl of black bitter coffee, or patiently taking her place beside him in the scrawny patch to hoe, with the hot sun beating down on her pretty head, to work till the heart fainted within her, and she longed, but dared not, to fly off to the dewy, sweet, silent woods to walk down the wonderment of disappointment that crowded her heart and made her full, beautiful throat ache with misery. Cic'ly had never heard of Tennyson, and the nearest approaches she had made to poetry were the doleful hymns the men sang at meeting; but if she had, I think she would have sometimes whispered to herself:

> "Thou art mated to a clown,
> And the coarseness of his nature shall have
> weight to drag thee down."

Like many men of his kind Lum was absolutely incapable of humane feelings. He could no more understand or sympathize with suffering or tender sentiments of joy in others than you or I can realize an aerial railway to the moon. Every beast on the place trembled at sight of him, so viciously vindictive was his moody wrath, and when his wife heard him coming crunching heavily over the pine chips that littered the yard, she hastened the dogs to their coverts. His wife had become his chattel, his slave, less regarded than his timid hounds. Nothing in this world seemed so impossible as that Lum Cherry had ever kissed her—ever given her a single caress. She must have dreamed it, and the thought of those sweet, early days of her wifehood sent the red blood up to her brows and made her feel ashamed and shy, and as if in thought she had offended womanly modesty. Oftentimes she drew from a hiding-place in the chimney the little shell trinket-box that contained her marriage lines.

I have told you she could neither read nor write. But she would sit and look at that scrap of paper, feeling that no matter how abased Lum might become, or how cruel to her, even to the point of turning her from his door, that while she held that bit of writing she was his wife and an honest woman. To lose it or destroy it would divorce her from him, and divorce in Cic'ly's mind was disgrace.

The utter pathos of such a tragedy going on day after day in a little log hut lost in the wilds of a forest is something inexpressibly sad. The few housewives in Bayouville could not have believed it possible. The passengers in the sleeping-car booming over the rails at the other side of the swamp could not dream, looking off into the fragrant piny woods, that a woman's heart was almost breaking off there somewhere. A vicious, ignorant, loutish brute of a man, sodden with work and sullen with temper—a voiceless, patient woman, ignorant as he—yet so nobly-natured that she held herself dumb rather than disgrace him and her by quarrels. These were the two uninteresting actors. And all the while she was serving him and tending him, and keeping bright the simple hearth, but the torch of love was gone out, the blackened brand was cast away. She did not even wish to see it leap into flame again.

There was but little joy in Cic'ly's heart when she held her baby in her arms for the first time, and looking down on that tiny face pressed to her bared breast, she dedicated her life in solemn vow to the child. "As God stan's 'tween me and the devil, jes so I stan's 'tween me and the baby and Lum," was her oath. That Lum might care for the child and assert his claim of interest in it was a possibility that did not occur to her, and whenever the man came near them a slow wonderment, that another woman would have rejoiced to see, breaking in small rifts of expression over the sullen clouds of his face, Cic'ly would hover, like a brooding hen, over her young one, hiding its tiny face, denying his right to any share in her love for it, or care for it. She even took to hiding it away as she did the dogs when she heard the heavy cowhide-boots coming toward the cabin.

Sometimes Lum went off to the woods to burn a charcoal heap, a job that kept him away for full three weeks at a time, and then Cic'ly would taste all the sweet and innocent joys of motherhood, cradling the tiny, frail, silent little bit of a creature on her breast, and going, as of old, to the sweet woods to walk the wonderment down.

She learned to sing to her baby; she taught the timid hounds to give their heads into the small hands' uncertain caressings; her life was spent in adoration before the child. Often in the nighttimes, when Lum was away, would she take a flaming pine torch—for other light she had none—and stoop with it to look closer in her baby's face, or bend her startled ear to listen for the sweet, sobbing breath that fluttered from the baby mouth. Often she gathered the tiny feet in her hardened palms—so hard she could scarcely feel the satiny little morsels—and tried with rude, worse than wordless, eloquence to talk out her joy and wonderment. "Oh," she would cry, "they hain't never trod nowhere at all! They hain't never been set in the mud ner in the woods. They hain't never trod on nothing no more'n a dogrose with the dew on it hes."

Henrietty Hicklin, who borrowed a mare and went all the way cross the swamp just to take a look at "poor Cic'ly's young one," declared it made her throat hurt to see the way the girl just brooded and mothered like a hen over her baby. "It came with the daisies, and it's my mind it 'twill go with them. It looks precisely like a daisy wilting on its stem"; and with this gloomy prophesy Henrietty rode back home again.

And Cic'ly, too, she knew that her baby's feet would never tread anywhere on God's green earth now. There had been no one to tell her, no ominous illness, no wise grannies croaking evil; but every instinct of the great mother heart was fluttering like a bell giving forth the solemn summons. She stooped on her knees to the tiny, flower-like little face, that smiled with a wisdom and sadness inscrutable up into her own; and the mother believed that the child told her in its voiceless smile of what was coming upon her. Cic'ly would open the tiny palms, press them to her lips and cry: "Oh Lordy! Oh my God A'mighty! Don't I know it, my baby? Don't I know I've got to give yer up?"

One night in mid-winter the sharpness of the bitter cold had broken and subsided, with the melancholy drips and drizzles of a sullen set-in rain. The dead leaves whirled from the sweet-gum-tree kept up the whispering echo of a devil's-dance on the porch. The gusts of wind howled like chained curs at the corners of the cabin, and drops of rain splashed down the wide chimney. All day long Cic'ly had moved about the cabin in a state of strained expectancy, as if something was going to happen. Every minute she could spare from cooking Lum's meals she had been sitting in the dark corner with her baby in her arms, and her eyes set staring on those tender, innocent baby eyes that smiled up into hers. The tiny little waving tendrils of fair hair seemed somehow to Cic'ly to cling strangely to the little brow; they felt damp to her touch, and a strange darkening shadow was about the small mouth, that even in smiling was always so pitifully sad.

She had made at nightfall a little pallet on the floor near the fire, and placed the child upon it, but, bending over, clasped child and pallet in the embrace of her arm. The two hounds, with tails down between their legs, and with nervous, frightened faces, stood close by Cic'ly, watching almost as she watched the little blue-eyed baby struggling for breath. Not a human soul besides was on the place. Lum was off to a charcoal camp. There was nobody but Cic'ly and the dogs to keep watch with the child. For hours she knelt over her young one, only stirring to cast fresh wood on the fire, and then bending lower for fear the baby eyes had missed the comfort of her face.

The anguish of death and desolation was upon her. "Oh," cried Cic'ly, "it wouldn't be so hard ef she'd had things in her little life; but she hadn't nothin' but me and the dogs, never no nice baby dresses, and no baby cap—nothin' in God's world but me."

The night wore on and the rains ceased and the croaking of frogs in the cane-thickets on Snake Bayou pulsated in the silence. The hounds pressed closer to Cic'ly's side, and one of them whined anxiously, looking up into her face. The blue shadow deepened about the baby's mouth and eyes. Cic'ly seemed to hear whispers in the room, to feel a shadow beside her. She gathered the precious clay up to the ineffectual shelter of her breast. "My little child," she whispered, "my little child!"

It was about daylight when Cic'ly, the two dogs pressing to her side, stepped out from the cabin. A star, luminous, pellucid, almost dripping its golden, joyous, rich light, hung low in the silent skies. "It must be that Bethlehem star we see at Christmas," she said to herself; but her soft voice was changed to the nasal, sullen, saddened monotone, and then she sped off into the woods. Ah, there was no wonderment to walk down now, and the girl huddled her arms protectingly about the stilled, marble little form pressed against her bared breast. How careful she was to keep back the brambles from touching her burden, how tenderly she pulled the gray blanket over the little creature, and kept the white face cuddled in her full bosom.

"This wuz life," she said out loud, her voice falling flat in the dark and echoless forest. "It warn't Lum, nor marryin', nor hevin a home; it was only this. I was more raggeder than a dog-rose vine, and scratchy with thorns; but she was my little flower, she was my little star shining in the night; my little flower; my little dog-rose bloom, snappit off close to the stem; my little child, my little child." And cooing and crooning to herself Cic'ly pushed her way, by old instinct, towards home. Like every other wounded woman the place that seemed home to her was where father and mother were. And when the red sun was setting the eastern woods on fire she walked across the old-familiar porch and stepped, with her baby burden, into the old home room.

How sweet and lovely her baby looked when it came time to put it away forever. The star of Cic'ly's night—her flower—the wee, modest bit of flower "snappit off close to the stem." That her baby had "never had nothin' in her life" was the burden of Cic'ly's anguished, remorseful cry—"no pretty things, no toys, nothin' but a string of red haws; nothin' but me an' them dogs."

Cic'ly had pinned an old crepe bow on the breast of her gown. "I jes' want to have my token," she explained to Emiling Ruggles, and she stood grim, upright, and tearless while Lysander made that little earthy nest under the sweetgum-tree in the yard. "She'd be lonesome off from the house," said the mother, and those other rugged, uncouth hearts, touched with her divine sorrow, assented. She stood silently by till the little billowy mound swelled over the rudely-coffined form of her baby. She watched the whining dogs lie down to guard it, and then, without a word, put off into the forest.

A day of toilsome trudging over swamp and marsh brought her within sight of the blue smoke of Lum's charcoal camp. The huge oval mound looked like some vast funeral pile, with the strange seething noise that came from its red heart and the long columns of smoke lingering in the neighboring oak thickets. The men—Lum and two others—sat on the ground fingering a greasy deck of cards. Lum started and stared, transfixed, when Cic'ly, like an angel of wrath, stood over him.

Her brown, tangled hair fell far down below her waist, the Shaker hood hung on her neck; the poor, pitiful bit of crepe, her token, rose and fell on her breast. Cic'ly was not commonplace then, I can tell you. The three loutish, ignorant men, grovelling at her feet, were thrilled with a strange awe of her.

"I have brought you my marrid lines," said Cic'ly, her stern, far-away looking eyes seeing through Lum and off into the forests—or the skies, maybe. "I give you a divorce right now. You are a free man, an' I am a free woman from now. It's no more use to me bein' marrid." She held up the bits of paper whose simple destruction she thought to mean divorcing and disgracing her, tore it slowly into fragments. They fluttered in the face of Lum Cherry and fell on the greasy deck of playing-cards, and turning, she took the wood to Bayouville.

Travel-stained and muddy, Cic'ly waited in the parlor of the Travellers' Rest. Her tired hands sometimes touched the token on her breast; sometimes brushed across her face; sometimes felt to see if her little store of money, not more than two dollars, was safe in her dress. "Yes," said she, "I've been settin' and a settin' here until I've most tucken root, waiting for that coach. I hope to get shet out of this place some time to-day."

Queen Christina's Task.

[Madrid letter to the London Times.]

Seldom, if ever, in the history of nations has it fallen to the lot of a woman to have to occupy, it may almost be said without a moment's warning, the difficult and delicate if not dangerous position—although judging by the good sense shown so far by the people the danger would appear to be less than could have been anticipated—now filled by Queen Christina, as regent of Spain for an infant daughter, or a possible infant son yet unborn. * * * Maria Christina, endowed with all the qualities which should make her husband happy, endeavored from the first to console Alfonso for the losses that he had sustained in his most cherished affections by the deaths of his first wife and of his favorite sister. Knowing how the King treasured the memory of Maria de las Mercedes, she suggested that this should be the name given to her own first child, the Princess of the Asturias. Since her arrival in Spain Queen Christina has kept herself entirely aloof from party politics and from court intrigues, confining herself to the duties of her household and the anxious care of her children. As things have turned out it would perhaps have been better if the self-effacement of the Queen in the wife had not been carried out so completely and so disinterestedly. But, on the other hand, there is the advantage, for her children and for the State, that the Regent is compromised with no party, has no *camarilla*, and has no private interests to serve that might clash with those of the nation which she has been called upon to govern. * * *

From her all ministries formed constitutionally may safely expect the most perfect impartiality. Maria Christina possesses both energy and firmness of character, and she has shown these qualities, with great self-sacrifice, during the last fortnight. The new Ministers, individually and collectively, give her the highest praise, and even express surprise at the prudence and tact which she has displayed. She has been accused of a certain coldness of manner, but I have the best reasons for knowing and stating that this is the mask, not an uncommon one, for excessive timidity and modesty. Not the slightest breath of slander, in a court somewhat given to this fault, has ever fallen upon the good fame of the first lady in the land, and with the Queen Regent Spain will doubtless have a court which for morality will bear comparison with that of any other country. Christina, by those opposed to her, or rather opposed to the constitutional monarchy, is reproached not only with coldness of manner, but with being an Austrian, and with, therefore, knowing but little of Spaniards. Those who argue upon these premises may find that they are entirely mistaken, and that it is they who do not know the Queen. Christina has entirely identified herself with her late husband and with his country, and as foreign influence, owing to the accident of her birth, has been made the handle for attacks against the monarchy and the successor to Alfonso's throne, represented by the Regent, I have not the slightest hesitation in affirming that a guardian more jealous and opposed to alien interference in the affairs of Spain cannot be found than Donna Christina. Absolutely no foreign influences will be allowed to weigh with one who has already shown, in the most trying circumstances, great force of character, and it is not from the side of the Queen Regent that any such danger will come.

Spectacles Worn By a Donkey.

[Paris American Register.]

A ragpicker in Hagen, Rhine Prussia, owns a donkey, which, it is safe to say, has not its equal in the world. The animal, after many years' service, has grown shortsighted, and in consequence rather unfit for work. The poor man being unable to buy a substitute, had a pair of spectacles made for "long ears," which, to the great amusement of the inhabitants, has resumed its wonted rounds proudly wearing its "specs."

The huge Cyclopean walls of Tiryns, which form the principal defences, are composed of irregular limestone blocks, many of them from six to nine feet long, three feet wide, and three feet high, and Dr. Schliemann declares that they were laid without mortar, their weight keeping them in position, and the interstices being filled with small stones.

FOR THE LADIES.

SOME OF FASHION'S FANCIES.

Tailor-Made Suits—Ball-Dresses—Reception Toilets—Children's Dresses—Parisian Novelties.

[Times.]

Ladies do not tire of tailor-made suits; on the contrary, the fashion is becoming more general as the season advances. The only indication of elegance in these costumes is in the way of lining them. One dress of gray cloth has a kind of cuirass with the front pieces crossed. It is trimmed with a deep astrakhan collar and a border of the same. The cloth skirt is sewed to the lower part of the basque. It is open up the left side over a band of astrakhan and slightly draped in apron-style. The goods fall in full, even plaits down the back and over the hips. Around the lower border of the skirt is a band of astrakhan. The whole skirt is lined with gray satin in the shade of the cloth. There is a small garment now made in large and fashionable Parisian establishments called "manteau Florentin." This article is quite new in shape, material, and color. One is of "velours frise." The straight, gathered fronts are like a blouse, and reach below the waist to cover a third of the skirt. These front pieces are fastened to a flat lining, and trimmed with a rich passementerie of wooden beads. The sleeves are a kind of pelerine, rounded over the shoulders. They form the side-piece of the back. The goods then fall loose over the arm. The back sits well in to the figure, and terminates with two fluted plaits lined with colored satin merveilleux. The same passementerie that covers the inserted piece is taken down the middle of the back in the shape of a hood, and reaches to the middle of the two fluted plaits. Sometimes the passementerie is taken down either side of the back, and between the two bands is a plaited panel of merveilleux to imitate the lining of a hood. This garment is also made of ottoman or black faille, with the trimming and inserted piece in front of jet or black wooden beads. Galloon to match is on the lower part of the waist to support the fulness of the blouse.

Ball dresses are now more than ever in delicate hues and light textures. There are gauzes, "crepe lisse," and silk crape in all shades, but the palest are preferred and white is most favored. Among the materials tulle is most seen. Tulle dotted with chenille is very showy, but the most brilliant effect is obtained by illusion dotted with beads, particularly pearl beads, the size of a pea. One of these ball dresses is wholly of tulle and has three skirts. The two lower skirts are of plain tulle over a taffetas lining. The third skirt is of illusion covered with fine pearl beads. It is gathered and has satin ribbon drawn the hem. The second skirt or tunique is slightly puffed and fastened on the side under a long and wide satin-ribbon bow. One loop and one end of the ribbon are embroidered with field flowers in all colors, and the remainder of the ribbon is plain. The waist may be low in bretelle style, or open in heart-shape. It is covered with draperies of beaded tulle. Around the open part in the neck is a puffling with a narrow piece of satin ribbon drawn through it. On the lower part of the waist is a satin-ribbon sash embroidered with field-flowers. "Brillantine," combined with crepe, tulle, and gauze, is used for evening toilets. This material also serves to support lace draperies. It is manufactured in delicate, soft coloring. A toilet of mauve-colored brillantine in this style is trimmed with point lace. The pointed waist closes down the back and is covered with lace. Point-lace scarfs are draped over the skirt under white roses. In addition to these light tissues there are heavy silk fabrics and materials combining silk and velvet. They usually serve for the waist, the train, or the panels on the redingote. This forms a contrast with the laces, embroideries, and beaded network generally used to trim the round overskirt. The same style of dress can also have flowers, bows, and passementerie applique. Applique work is also much used on toilets for day wear; it may be in the color of the dress or of black jet. There are sold for this purpose belts with drooping ornaments, epaulets, deep collars, and plastrons wholly covered with jet work.

A visiting or reception toilet of black satin merveilleux and lace has a "merveilleux" skirt, with a rather deep lace flounce and a narrow satin ruffle below. The long overdress is full and draped like an apron. Down the front a little toward the left side are large ribbon-velvet bows. One of these is below the waist, the other in the centre of the skirt, and the third and last over the flounce of the skirt, and more to the left than the other two. The back is only slightly draped, and has long black ribbon-velvet loops on the right side. The "merveilleux" waist is covered with lace. It is plaited in front, and has a shell-shaped lace trimming down the centre. The tailor-cut back has three small flaps on the basque. In the neck is a deep lace plaiting. The elbow sleeves have lace ruffles to match the neck trimming.

As there are always many children's entertainments given about this time, or a little later in the season, some descriptions of toilets suited to these occasions may be serviceable, particularly for ladies who are obliged to make their children's dresses. Last summer's white embroidered dresses may be pressed into service for this purpose, with the addition of a jacket or redingote of pink or blue plush, and a handsome sash tied in the back. These jackets and redingotes are high in the neck and open in front over the embroidered skirts, or else they are cut square and have short sleeves. The square can always be filled in to make the dress suitable for less dressy purposes by the addition of a "guimpe" of faille or surah, and the sleeves are made long by adding half-sleeves to match the guimpe. A very pretty effect is obtained by combining a cream-colored jacket with a plaited skirt of grosgrain silk or satin. Bows have a very prominent place on little girls' dresses. The large sashes are more of puffings than of bows, in addition to which there are butterfly-bows on the shoulders and down the fronts of jackets. The most becoming style for very young children is a whole dress of lace over a colored lining, trimmed with ribbon bows. There are also combinations of velvet, plush, faille, and embroidery. Whole suits of silk and velvet are not desirable for little girls, as they are too heavy. Embroidered etamine is for children, as well as for young ladies, one of the most elegant, simple, and inexpensive fabrics employed at present. The suit consists of this material, with the addition of a colored lining and bows. The creamy shade of etamine is one of the chief beauties of the material. Some dresses have corselets, with bretelles of plush over chemisettes. For children's balls, gauze, tulle, crepe lisse, brocaded and dotted gauzes are all in use. The cloaks worn may be dolman-shape of plain "crepe de chine" trimmed with fringe or of India veiling. This veiling in white is beautiful when trimmed with swan's down. The style called "moussala" of striped goods on a cream ground with a hood and burnous ends is very odd, but it is not as youthful as the white cloak described above.

Two novelties have been brought out by Parisian modistes. One is panther-ribbon of plush or velvet, imitating in design and coloring the fur of the animal after which it is named. This ribbon is made in cockades and loops arranged in various ways, and forms the sole trimming of the bonnet or hat. The other novelty, called "paillasson de feutre," is an imitation in felt of coarse straw braids. The narrow pieces of felt have not the gloss of straw, and consequently cannot be mistaken for it, but the designs are the same. Up to the present time capotes only have been made of this felt. They are trimmed with rich fabrics, such as plain or embroidered velvet or plush, in warm colors. The Empire capote has at length been brought out in its original shape. When first made it had a high flat crown and a raised brim, which completely altered its character. Later on came the flat brim sitting close to the head with a ball or baby crown. Now the real "Empire" bonnet has a huge crown in cylinder-shape with a band of beads on the border to accent its form more emphatically. The brim is flat against the head, and is surrounded by beads and lined with a bright color. The lining has no fulness. The strings are much longer than those usually worn, and this gives more character to the style. These bonnets are generally covered with velvet tightly drawn over the frame, and are trimmed with tiny wooden beads.

PSORIASIS
AND ALL ITCHING AND SCALY SKIN AND SCALP DISEASES CURED BY CUTICURA.

Psoriasis, Eczema, Tetter, Ringworm, Lichen, Pruritus, Scald-Head, Milk Crust, Dandruff, Barbers', Bakers', Grocers', and Washerman's Itch and every species of Itching, Burning, Scaly, Pimply Humors of the Skin and Scalp, with Loss of Hair, are positively cured by CUTICURA, the great Skin-Cure, and CUTICURA SOAP, an exquisite Skin-Beautifier, externally, and CUTICURA RESOLVENT, the new Blood-Purifier, internally, when physicians and all other remedies fail.

PSORIASIS, OR SCALY SKIN.

I, John J. Case, D. D. S., having practiced dentistry in this county for thirty-five years, and being well known to thousands hereabouts, with a view to help any who are afflicted as I have been for the past twelve years, testify that the CUTICURA REMEDIES cured me of Psoriasis, or Scaly Skin, in eight days, after the doctors with whom I had consulted gave me no help or encouragement. JOHN J. CASE, D. D. S. *Newton, N. J.*

DISTRESSING ERUPTION.

YOUR CUTICURA REMEDIES performed a wonderful cure last summer on one of our customers, an old gentleman of seventy years of age, who suffered with a fearfully distressing eruption on his head and face, and who had tried all remedies and doctors to no purpose. J. P. SMITH & CO. *Texarkana, Ark.*

MORE WONDERFUL YET.

H. E. Carpenter, Henderson, N. Y., cured of Psoriasis or Leprosy, of twenty years standing, by CUTICURA REMEDIES. The most wonderful cure on record. A dustpanful of scales fell from him daily. Physicians and his friends thought he must die. Cure sworn to before a justice of the peace and Henderson's most prominent citizens.

CUTICURA REMEDIES

are sold by all druggists. Price: CUTICURA, 50c.; RESOLVENT, $1; SOAP, 25c. Prepared by the POTTER DRUG AND CHEMICAL COMPANY, Boston.

Send for "How to Cure Skin Diseases." Beautify the Complexion and Skin by using the CUTICURA SOAP.

CRICK IN THE BACK, Stitch in the Side, Cramps, Shooting and Sharp Pains, Rheumatic, Neuralgic, and Sciatic Pains, and every external Pain and Ache cured by the CUTICURA ANTI-PAIN PLASTER. A new and perfect antidote to pain. 25c. de 23-W,w&Su

ENDORSED BY THE WORLD,

DR.

PPP RRR TTTT ZZZ OO L DDD "'SSS
P P R R T Z O O L D D S S
PPP RR T Z O O L D D SSS
P R R T Z O O L D D S S
P R R T ZZZ OO LLL DDD SSS'

GERMAN

SSR HHH TTTT EEE RRR SSS
S HH T T E R R S
SHH H T T EE RRR SSS
S HH T T E R R S
SSS H T T EEER R SSS'

A DOUBLE DISTILLATION OF MANY OF THE BEST GERMAN HERBS,

making this the Only Reliable and Efficient Tonic ever placed before the public for the cure of Dyspepsia,