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A SUMMER DAY.

SUNSHINE over the meadow lands,
Kissing the crimson clover,
And sunshine haunting the lily cups,
That the yellow bees hung over,
And sunshine over the hazy hills
And over the dimpling river—
And I wished that the sun and summer day
Might shine and last forever.

We walked down by the meadow path,
The broad highway forsaking,
For the quiet of that lovely spot
Seemed better for our love-making.
And I was silent and she was shy,
And we walked down through the clover;
And we thought it the sweetest summer day
That ever the sun shone over.

We heard the birds in the waving grass,
As they twittered to each other
About the nests they had hidden away—
And the coo of each glad bird mother.
And we thought, as we walked that summer day
Through the clover blooms together,
That at last the world was in perfect tune,
In the glad, bright summer weather.

I cannot tell what I said to her,
As we walked knee-deep in clover;
But I knew that the robins merrily sang
Their sweetest of sweet songs over.
And down in my heart love's own bird sang
A song that was gladder, sweeter,
And its echo joined with the world's sweet hymn,
And made the day completer.

And when we came up the meadow path,
Our hearts sang over and over:
"O, sweet, glad day for blossom and bird,
And for every blithe young lover!"
And yet I know not the word she said,
Or whether she spoke at all;
But of all sweet days, that summer day
I count as the best of all.

HOW DIAMONDS SAVED US.

AT the time I am writing about we were a strong firm. I say were, because six years ago we wound up the concern, and a banking-house of not quite fifty years' existence (a remarkably long business life for the United States) was closed in the most honorable way. The partners in the house were two. The elder and head of the firm had a sound mercantile education, was eminently conservative, and was a thorough master of his business. The other partner had brilliant talents, but was prone to be overimaginative, and rather held to the idea that romance, or the inventive faculty, when called into play in business, was a necessity. The junior had a separate room, arranged rather like a cabinet of curiosities than a banker's office. You could see neat bronzes there, bits of majolica, pieces of armor, and a few good pictures. Twenty-five years ago such things in a business office were thought rather out of place. A distant relative of the senior partner of the house, I had the entire confidence of both members of the firm, as I had been from the age of twelve in the house, and was twenty when the occurrence I am about to tell happened. I was very warmly attached to both the gentlemen, but was rather fond of our junior, who made me his companion.

One summer evening, long after office-hours, a private letter-book requiring indexing, I shut myself up in the junior's office and commenced work. It was rather late at night when the younger member of the firm entered. "Seeing a light in the office," he said, "as I was coming from the ferry, and forgetting that you were at work here, I came in;" and he stretched himself on a lounge and lit a cigar, then took a book and commenced reading. In a half-hour my work was finished, and, thinking he was asleep, I put away the books, closing the door of the safe with a crash, in order to awaken him.

"Through?" he said; and then asked, "Keep up your French, do you?"

"Yes, though whether I ever will be able to correspond in that language so far as to render myself useful for the French and Belgian business, I don't know."

"Ever read Beaumarchais?" he inquired.

"Yes, but only his plays. I am not familiar with his life."

"What a magnificent dual existence!"

"How so?" I inquired.

"He was a merchant and author. Carried on the heaviest mercantile operations, and wrote the cleverest comedies. Made out a line of invoices and a phrase of comedy all in the same breath, and perhaps with the same pen. There was Roscoe, too, merchant and historian; and Rogers, poet and banker; Lamb, clerk and essayist—"

"Maybe so," I replied, interrupting him; "but I do not think ordinary men can do two things at once—there may be exceptions." He laughed, and said, "That is good common sense. But there are men with dual existences. Now, I have been reading this life of Beaumarchais, and I have been deeply interested in the exertions he made in behalf of our people when he sent arms during the period of our Revolutionary struggle." "Which good action ruined him," I said; and I closed the safe, and was about going to the door, when he bade me stay. Drawing a chair close to the table, after a short pause he said to me: "Now, listen: For the last six months I have had an idea in my head—a secondary one, it is true, to another which has absorbed my mind for years. God knows whether I have this quality of mind or not, but I must test it. Now, this is what I am driving at. Fifteen years ago I went to South America. You know my wife is a Brazilian." Here he sighed and paused. There was a rumor that he did not live happily with his wife. "While in South America I made the deepest researches into the history of the aboriginal races. I went far behind the times of the old Aymares. Manco Capac and Oello Huaco are to me as things of to-day. Modern research has settled that the Pharaohs of the Bible was as near to us almost, chronologically, as Napoleon was. Every day the work started in Egypt by Denon and Lepsius shows us that we are only at the threshold. South America is the place to discover man's earliest traces, and to find his primitive works. This may not interest you much, but the second part of my idea will, I trust. It is the corollary of the first. It was my business to study the political condition of the country—a rather intricate and tangled work. "Two South American States are on the eve of a contest;" (he mentioned the name of the two Republics which, from measures of precaution, I withhold), "and the government of the smaller power, which is not in the right, but the stronger and the richer, have called on me to purchase arms and ammunition for them. I can make hundreds of thousands of dollars out of the business. What is wanted is that I should send a consignment of military equipments. The money of the State is now on its way here, or I shall have authority to draw on London for it. If I can accomplish what they want, I find the means out of the profits to go to South America and open my glorious work. It is Beaumarchais in the nineteenth century, but with higher and nobler aims. I shall make researches in the Peruvian plains, and will exhume a world of artistic splendor far antecedent to the Egyptian period. The Pyramids will be dwarfed when compared with the magnificent monuments I must bring to light."

"I know nothing," I replied, somewhat confused, "about these things. I should think that the absence of violent physical phenomena in Egypt have kept their monuments intact, while in South America the earthquakes have long ago ground all vestiges of man's handiwork to dust."

"Quite true, so far as your knowledge goes. But there are broad lands in Peru that have never been shaken. Earthquakes follow rhythmic rules. Some day Vesuvius and Ætna will be extinct, as they have been once before. The fires of the Cordilleras are but of yesterday. One hundred thousand years ago South America had no earthquakes. Humboldt seems to think so. I have studied all the cosmical theories."

Of course I could not dispute about what Humboldt had said, and I made a casual and perhaps silly remark about the wealth of gold or silver that might be discovered. "Tush!" he cried, "that is the least thing I care about. A single discovery of some early deity, a head, grander, more majestic in form than Memnon, would be worth more to me than the golden sun of the Incas, which was a planosphere of pure metal some 10,000 feet in circumference, and which, when the sun crossed the line, 1,000,000 of men placed on its edge and on a peak of the Andes, so that it almost eclipsed God's luminary. But the Incas were to the ages that went before, and which I would seek after as to time, what San Francisco was to Troy."

I could not stop him. He developed his plans. With a frankness which astonished me he gave me details of his private fortune, which were ample. The money he had in the firm was to be untouched. I was to attend to the South American business. Endowed at twenty years of age with no end of energy, and having a circumspectness even beyond my years, I combated the South American scheme. At last it was daybreak before the matter was settled; a reluctant consent was given on my part. At the business I went with tooth and nail. My principal occupied himself with the general plan of the business, but all the details of purchases and shipments devolved on me. My summer vacation was passed in attending to it. Two or three shipments were made, and my heart was in my mouth until reimbursements came. We cleared some $60,000 in six months, in gold, on the first shipment. "We shall stop now," I said. "Here is money enough made for a first venture, and you have means now for explorations in Peru." "Nonsense, my dear boy," was the reply, "it will take a quarter of a million before I can even begin. This time our people want artillery trains. At it again. Chances are more than ever in our favor. We are to be paid heavily this time, and in addition I have had a concession made me of some hundreds of square miles in Peru, exactly where my researches are to commence." I pleaded and pleaded in vain, but was bound to the wheel. A lighter position—one occupying me but a few hours—was given me in the office, and all the rest of my time was devoted to the arms business. I had managed, so far, to be very circumspect in my purchases, but could not always be on my guard.

All large banking houses have a peculiar set of men, who frequent them—old men often, who sometimes come for news, or who make occasional purchases. Often these persons may have been acquaintances of long standing, who had been on intimate terms of friendship with the fathers of the present firms, and who are allowed the privileges of the offices. Among these friends was an old man who dealt particularly in notes. He was a Frenchman who spoke English fluently and elegantly, with scarce an accent. Pick him up in the street and you would not think he was worth five dollars. One suit of clothes sufficed him all the year round. For ten years I had known him to wear the same bandana handkerchief around his neck. A new bandana marked a decade in his life. He was highly educated, and, though filthy in person, had, strange to say, *distingue* manners. His passion was money-making. With a flare, as the French have it, a keen sense of impending trouble, he was ever ready to improve the situation to his profit. I could not call him a vulture, nor one who would suck your blood or pick your bones (commercially) with a relish. Balzac's Gobseck was not exactly like him, for this old Frenchman was charitable to a certain degree, giving away every year a fixed sum to benevolent institutions. But, a note once purchased by him, it had to be paid to the minute. His word was his bond. If he purchased a note for thousands of dollars—and he took few risks, only buying gilt-edged paper—he never gave his check for it. His signature few had ever seen. He would draw the bill himself from his bank, and pay in money for the note. His curiosity, his acquaintance with everything in the city was wonderful. No man failed, or was on the eve of it, but this strange character knew it. With intuitive perception akin to the marvelous, he would with a single sniff of his long thin nose smell out a genuine, bona-fide note, issued in a legitimate way, from a kite. Occasionally he straggled into our private office. He had a taste for art, and one day while I was alone, thumbing a Spanish dictionary for a word I wanted, he entered and picked up a fragment of a South American idol, which was used as a paper weight. "A crude perception of art!" he said; "a transition, in fact, emanating from something higher; a retrogression. Art and religion were at first in their grandest and simplest form, and man complicated them. Money easy to-day, but there will be a storm soon. Pray, let me trouble you to go in the office and bring me the portfolio. I will make an investment. Must be short of paper—not over sixty days—and only choice, not over $15,000. How is it that you are away so much? We miss you. The junior looks fatigued. What are you working away for with that Spanish dictionary? All Spanish business is dangerous. There is a basis of sterling honesty—chivalric, in fact—among Spaniards, but their revolutions are the disturbing quantities. Pray, lend me your pencil; I have some interest to calculate." I gave him my pencil, taking it out of my pocket, and went to the main office for the portfolio containing the notes. He carefully secreted those that suited him, compared the discount with my calculations; terms were agreed upon; as was his custom, he left to draw the money for them in person. In ten minutes he had returned with a roll of bank-bills, and the notes were re-examined and engulfed in a greasy pocket-book. "Hem!" he said, just as he left; "here is your pencil. I never took another man's pencil in my life, but some thief has stolen mine. A pencil that cost me 3 cents only 18 months ago, and not more than a finger's breadth of it used up. But by the way, I noticed something peculiar about your pencil. Why do you have a percussion cap, and a cap made for an army gun, too, stuck in the end of it? Might go off. And while I think of it, are you operating for a corner in cannons? I was a cannonier at Waterloo. In South America I have bought up many an old piece, and turned an honest penny by selling the metal. South America! *Que le diable* are you doing in that country? A friend at Callao tells me things, and I have a strange way of putting this thing and that thing together—mosaics in fact—and making a picture bit by bit. By the way, you find in South America mosaics quite as fine as the Greek or Roman. *Hein?*" and he winked a blear eye and shuffled out. Our French friend had put an evil eye on things. From that time our ventures in South America all came to grief. Our ship was wrecked off Cape Horn. Too wise to put all our eggs in one basket, we had distributed the shipments. One rascally captain took his cargo to the enemy's port, another ship was captured. The government we were working for quibbled when they or we were unlucky. We were losing money by hundreds of thousands of dollars. I was so fully absorbed in the engrossing minutiæ of the business that I never asked where the money came from. In the midst of our anxieties a home crisis came, the same the old gentleman had prophesied. Our house, I was afraid, was in a strait. The old bookkeeper's mouth, from sucking his pen, a trick he had when he was nervous, was ink black.

One afternoon, when working hopelessly over the South American business, my patron entered. Throwing himself upon the sofa for a moment, he sprang up again and locked the door. "If, my poor boy, those accursed people don't pay to-morrow, or if the bills on England for that disputed account don't come, I am ruined, and with it the firm. The house wants to-morrow $45,000. I borrowed it thirty days ago from the firm, with the consent of course of my good old partner. Money is going out like a torrent, and not a drop coming in. My South American remittances, some $80,000, should have been here twenty days ago. What shall I do?" and great drops of sweat rolled off his forehead.

"Is all your private fortune gone?" I asked. "Can you not effect a mortgage on your house?"

"That was mortgaged some months ago. All gone in this wretched business. If I had the best security in the world it would be useless. There is not $5 to be had on the street."

"Your old French friend?" I said, gasping for breath.

"Would not lend me a cent to save all Christendom."

"Your wife," I said; "you will pardon me for mentioning her. Can she not help you?"

"God forgive me. We are partially estranged. She is in Washington with an aunt of hers, the wife of some one of those South American embassy people. It is pitiful to ask her for help! What do you mean?"

"You must allow me to manage this business. It is now 10 o'clock; our old friend is punctuality itself. Give me that ring on your finger—your engagement ring. We have until to-morrow at 3 o'clock." He looked at me aghast, then wrung his hands and left me.

Just then the old Frenchman entered. His was not a satisfied look.

"I told you so," he said.

"So you did, almost to an hour," I replied, though, in fact, he had advanced the period almost a year before the actual crash did come. "Almost to a minute."

"Never failed to do it."

"All secure?"

"Not two cents wrong any way. In fact, mon ami, there are only two kinds of property good and sound. One the sun shines on, that is land; and the other is portalif, what you can carry about."

"The Orientals, then, are not such dunces after all, when they invest their surplus in precious stones?"

"The soundest personal financial policy. A Turk, or a Persian, or an Arab, has a few pieces of gold over. He buys a ruby, a diamond, a pearl, makes a hole in his arm, slips in the gem; the flesh grows over it. Et tout, est dit."

"A kind of precious seton."

"Exactly. On my word, at the present moment I would not lend a cent on anything."

"Not even on diamonds?" I asked, below my breath.

"On diamonds! And why not? Ahem! My eyes are not what they used to be, but those two diamond studs of yours weigh three-quarters of a carat. Pour plaisanter, if you wanted $25 or $30 on those stones, you could have it. If, at the same rate, they weighed 100 or 200 carats, you could have the money in the same proportion."

My heart leaped into my mouth. "Are you in earnest?" I asked.

"I never joke about money. It is too serious."

"I want $60,000 to-morrow, at half-past 1 o'clock, on diamonds worth $75,000."

"Where are they?"

"You shall have them to-morrow. I want the money for sixty days. Quick—the rate?"

"The diamonds are not yours. Of course I must know whose they are. They are the madame's. I am not surprised. But they have quarreled. Would she pledge them of her own free will?"

"Certainly."

"I must have her written obligation. She must borrow the money; rate 15 per cent.—not a penny less. Money is worth 1 per day on the street. If not redeemed in sixty days—no matter if the diamonds were worth $100,000—they are to be mine. A bill of sale must be passed. At your expense you must have the stones taken out of their setting, and have a jeweler's scale ready. You may bring, if you please, any expert to certify to the weight."

"Never! You are too old a friend of the house for that!" I cried, enthusiastically. This seemed to please him. "You are very young, and will be cheated out of your eyes some day. It is strange, my father handled Marie Antionette's diamonds. I am one of the few in this world who are at the bottom of the story of the Queen's necklace; but how did this trouble come? I know; South American business. House is not badly hurt, hein!"

"On my solemn word of honor, not at all. We want only a trifle of some $75,000 to make us just as easy as a glove; in fact, don't you think fifteen per cent. is high for such security?"

"You are humbugging me. Deceiving a man who is more tenacious of his money than a Harpagon. Debate the matter an instant more, and it is off. I have received attention from that young man's father; that is why I feel like helping him, providing the stones fully cover the risk."

"I accept;" and I grasp his hand, and I left him examining a picture in the office. I gave a parting word of consolation to my patron, and in an hour afterward was in the express for Washington. After a terrible delay I got into Washington at 11 o'clock that night. Hurrying to the hotel, I found Madame was at a ball at the French Embassy. I sent up my card to her, pleading urgent business. In a moment she came down to me apparently displeased, holding my card all rumpled in her hand. "Nothing the matter with my very much absorbed husband?" she said, rather disdainfully, throwing aside her head and showing her beautiful neck, with a dashing *riviere* of diamonds, which flowed into her bosom. "Yes and no, Madame," I said. "Let us get into the corner of this ante-room." I showed her the engagement ring. She started at the sight of it. "My God!" she said, in a low voice, in most piteous accents.

"Has he forsaken me? I love him so. It was my fault. Pray take me home; I shall die. He does not understand our warmer Southern natures. I have tried so hard to interest myself in his work—not his business, but his other ideas, his ruins, but I could not; but I will try. Is he ill? What is it?" Carried away by her beauty and emotion, I lost my wits for the nonce. How could I touch upon her diamonds? "The trouble," I at last said, "is not so grave. You have a simple ring on your finger there, hidden by that glorious sapphire"—she had torn her gloves from off her hands—"exchange it with me for his ring as a token of reconciliation."

"Agreed," she said, giving it to me, as I kissed her hand; "is there nothing more?"

"Yes, something more. That beautiful neck of yours might be for a time just as fair without those diamonds. We want to borrow them for sixty days——. I beg your pardon." And here I floundered terribly. She looked amazed for a moment, then laughed, and turned the prettiest of shoulders in the world to me. "I always hurt my fingers clasping and unclasping the fastenings. Is that all he wants? I am so happy! You will take me home? Mind it don't slip down my back. There is a French farce about that. There; you are an adept. Now, let us go."

"Impossible; the train leaves in half an hour."

"But I will go," she said; and she hastily wrote a line, which was given to a servant, who took it to the lady's aunt, who was present at the ball.

It was a curious sight to see a young gentleman and a lady all covered in a traveling cloak, with a gauze dress trimmed with lace occasionally peeping under cover, traveling that night in the express; but a wealth of artificial flowers thrown out of the car windows from time to time must have furnished unique discoveries for the agricultural people who lived along the line of that road. In the cars—for I had pen and ink—a regular bill of sale of the diamonds was made out. At the New York depot we arrived in time, sharp 12 o'clock, where the lady's husband received us, and a happy meeting it was. Punctual to a moment was the friend of the house. He was an adept at dismounting diamonds, which he managed to do with a coarse jack-knife, "which I have carried," he said, "twenty-six years. How am I to judge of their weight?" he cried. Then he chuckled, counted the stones, breathed on them, rubbed them on the threadbare flap of his coat, then arranged them in a circle on the top of his old black hat. Then he hemmed and hawed over them, said one had a flaw, one was badly cut, declared that, out of the sixty, forty-three were Brazilian stones and the rest Indian; then he swept them into his dirty hand, wrapped each one separately in pieces of thin paper taken from a copying book, and kept me in a fever for half an hour. "I have seen," he said, "false stones in crown jewels, and one cannot be too particular. They may be worth," here he paused, and was full ten minutes in his calculations, $60,000 outside. I had appraised them higher on Madame's neck—the surroundings, of course, added to their charms. *Ma foi*, that is a French compliment. It is a bargain. Got a bill of sale? Ah! all right, already signed? Now, young man, retire to that closet, and shut the door." I did so, and through the key-hole I saw the blessed old fellow take off his cravat, unfold it, draw out a thick stiffening of notes, pull off a shoe and stocking—the left one it was—and from thence came a wadding of money. I was recalled, and the amount of money was put in my hand. I took it, thinking of a certain Roman Emperor and whence one of his revenues came, when the dear old man, looking me straight in the face, divining my thughts, said: "*Non olit?*" He was about going, and had picked up his constant friend, his baggy gingham umbrella, the laughing stock of the office, when I rushed up to him and hugged him. He did not seemed surprised, but took it pleasantly. "That is a good custom and belongs to my country. I am not conscious of having done anything particular out of the way. The transaction is a legitimate one. If the money is not paid in sixty days, I shall send the same to Halphen in Paris, who will give me certainly 25,000 francs profit on my purchase."

The money was just in time and we were saved. That very next day I went to London, and urged on the agent of the South American Government the payment of our claim. I succeeded but partially, but obtained enough money to release the pledge, and was back again in New York in less than forty days. The old French gentleman came up smiling, and the diamonds were returned. He did even a gallant thing, for he had the gems remounted in an elegant style, and Ball & Black, for they were the jewelers in those days, said that our old friend had exhibited a lavishness as to ornamentation and a niggardness as to prices which was amazing. The junior had his fortune impaired for many a year to come, but made it up in time, but the dual functions were left in abeyance. "My dear husband," said the lady to me this spring—she has grown matronly since then—"goes to Florida, ostensibly for his health, every winter, but, would you believe it, he passes his time exploring Indian mounds for skeletons. He has such a strange idea that all Indians were at one time cannibals. His valise came home full of human bones, which he says, from their being all broken, shows that the savages eat human beings. I can't take an interest in that. I could in ruins. I never wear diamonds now, but when your daughter is married I promised her a pair of ear-rings—two stones from a certain necklace.

Unhappy Marriages.

"As a rule, marriages are unhappy." So says the New York *Sun*.

It is safe to say that fully twenty-five per cent. of married people would read and laugh at this assertion. Others would sigh and look melancholy, as if they knew from bitter experience that the statement was too true; while others still would brighten up and look cheerful, and feel comfortable over the revelation that a large proportion of husbands and wives were as miserable as themselves. If the writer had said that marriage, as a rule, is a disappointment, he would have come nearer the truth. This is, perhaps, a fact, and for very plain reasons. The anticipations of a pair of sentimental lovers—and where are the lovers who are not sentimental?—are impossible of realization outside of paradise. The realities of married life cannot by any possibility reach the transport of joy looked forward to, and, therefore, though a couple may be well and evenly matched, and as happy as mortals can be in this world of uncertainty, yet the lofty heights of their vision cannot be scaled by flesh and blood, and disappointment more or less woful usually succeeds. It is after a husband and wife have learned that they are mortal, and not angelic, that each has foibles that must be borne with patiently by the other, that the true happiness of married life begins.

Domestic troubles usually commence early, and nine-tenths of the divorces are obtained by those whose married life has been short. Long association, community of interests, thoughts naturally drawn into the same channel by the same surroundings, a common love for the same children when children have blessed the union—these, and a hundred other things, naturally draw a married couple together, and make the union stronger as the years advance, until they are practically one in feeling, thought, sympathy and action. Even when broils are frequent, and love, in the better sense, cannot be said to exist, there is after all a feeling closely akin to it which bursts forth at the most unexpected times, and proves that few men and women can pass much of their lives together in pursuit of the same object without growing into an affection strong if not tender. It is this which almost invariably causes the benevolent man who interferes between a quarreling husband and wife to get curses if not blows from both parties for his pains.

In one dramatization of "Rip Van Winkle" the feeble old man totters back to his home, and with tearful eyes and trembling voice asks for his wife. He is told she is dead. He opens his faded eyes in wonder at the news, and then, as he remembers the harsh words she has given and the cruel blows she has dealt him with that terrible broomstick, a smile of satisfaction overspreads his face as he half triumphantly exclaims: "*Vell! her clapper ish stopped at last!*" But then come visions of their younger days, when he led the likeliest girl in the village away from her other admirers and married her on the green at Falling Waters; of the ups and downs of their after life, and of Gretchen's tenderness as well as cruelty, and at remembrance of these come kindler thoughts, till the simple-hearted Dutchman bows his head and speaks his humanity by saying tremulously: "But she vas my vife for all that." That was the secret. She was his wife in spite of all, and it is an honor to the race that these tender thoughts of days that are dead thus come back to us.

Whoever speaks of marriages being unhappy, as a rule, must have had a limited, as well as unfortunate view of society. It has become quite common of late years to refer to the misery and tyranny of marriage as a very common thing; but nothing could be more false or unjust. As a rule, unhappy marriages come to light and are blazoned forth to the world with loud trumpetings. The noise thus made attracts wide attention, and creates among the thoughtless the idea that domestic happiness is rare; but such persons forget that while the details of one unhappy family's experience are given to the public, thousands are living happy lives, blessed and strengthened by that tenderest of all relations. It would not be surprising to us if the great Brooklyn scandal, which has so long absorbed attention, were to prove in the end a substantial blessing to the country, by showing up the infamous doctrines of free-love in all their sickening particulars. Already revelations are being made which exhibit the true objects of this movement, and there is a good prospect that the community will be so outraged by subsequent developments as to put to shame and silence the advocates of this nefarious system. If the result is to increase the respect for marriage and strengthen the regard for marital honor and fidelity, the exposure will not have been in vain.—*Inter-Ocean.*

Protecting Horses from Flies.

A French pharmaceutical chemist has discovered a way to protect horses from the attacks of flies, according to a London medical paper. His invention consists in rubbing the horses, especially on the parts most subject to attack, with a little concentrated oil of laurel. There is not the slightest danger in its use, and the cost is said to be very small. Another repellant suggested by the same person is a solution of sixty grammes (one pound and five ounces avoirdupois) of assafœtida in two glasses of water and one of vinegar. If horses be well washed with this, not a fly will settle upon them, as the strong odor of the assafœtida drives the flies away. This drug has no deleterious qualities as an external application, and may be used unhesitatingly by horsemen.

POPPING THE QUESTION.

How Our Ancestors Did It—Some Curious Examples—Different Ways of Love-Making.

A poet of Cockaigne is surely at fault in asserting

If you tumble in love and are burning to pop,
You should never lose time in despair;
But at once on your knees you should gracefully drop,
And express what you have to declare.

Kneeling to ladies, we fancy, went out with swords and silk stockings. The gallant fashion had its inconveniences. Not for supple-jointed youth, may be, but suitors of Falstaffian build ran the risk of putting themselves in the ridiculous plight of Coleman's Eudoxus, who, his love plaint proving of no avail,

Looked sheepish, nettled, wished himself away;
And thrice he tried to quit his kneeling place;
But tact and complacency seemed to say
Here's a petitioner that must forever pray!

until his humiliation was completed by a sturdy flunkey being instructed to set the weighty wooer on his feet. Poor Jerry White came to more lasting grief through flinging himself at the feet of the Protector's daughter, for, caught in the act by Noll himself, the ambitious parson pretended he was suing for the hand of the lady's maid, and, taken at his word, had to marry her instead of her mistress. Such a catastrophe did not await Daniel Webster, when kneeling before his lady love, he suddenly dropped the tangled skein of silk she was winding off his hands, saying, "Grace, we have been untying knots, let us see if we can't tie one which will not untie in a lifetime!" With a piece of tape he fashioned half a true-lover's knot, Miss Fletcher perfected it, and a kiss sealed the bargain.

A love-lorn miller popped the question to a pretty little milliner by enclosing half a match in a valentine. Fearing this might not be deemed explicit enough, he followed it up with an odd letter of proposal, in which, after confessing he had hitherto been "a general lover to a certain extent," he said, "To yoke with you I believe I should be both delighted and happy, for I love and esteem you with all my heart, and could soon forget all others for the sake of you." The man of flour, however, was not entirely happy, as he and the lady were of different religions, still he did not think that difficulty insurmountable. "Although," said he, "neither of us would be arbitrary, one might want the other to go along with them in what they considered the broad road that leads to damnation, whereas our interests would be different ways, which is the greatest evil under the sun to us, but I hope not a fixer!" The miller certainly received a "fixer" of some sort, seeing his courtship ended in his having to defend an action for breach of promise. Your general lovers are not lacking in self-conceit. A delectable specimen of the tribe, the Honorable John Trevor, fancied himself in love with Miss Steele, and after telling her as much, went on, "You will object that I tell almost every lady the same story. I grant I do, those I like; some have been so good as to believe me, and soften the care and concern that the most unchristian and unbelieving part of the sex hath created. But to none have I confessed the attraction of my soul so far that I would, what shall I say? marry them? No; never was I so daring, so bold in thought, till the year 1729-30, and the twenty-fourth year of my age, when I was so fortunate, or unfortunate, as you decree, to behold the resistless charms of the most engaging. But of this enough." The impudent wooer then drops sentiment for business. "If settlements are to take place, what I can offer, will, I hope, be not unequal to your fortune, though inferior to your deserts. If you are disposed to think seriously on this point, there must be a provision for the younger children, which Providence will not fail under honest industry, to bless us with. What remains for me is to assure you that without vanity, I love myself exceedingly well, and can heartly love you if you will do so too." No wonder a lover with such an "if" obtained dismissal for his pains.

Swift, who had no more tenderness than one of his own Yahoos, indited the most brutal proposal we know of. Tired of his shilly-shallying, Miss Waryng seems to have insisted upon his speaking out, and Swift spoke out with a vengeance. After professing he is too just to stand in the way of her accepting a more advantageous offer, he says he must ask her a few questions—questions he had long since resolved to ask of the woman with whom he meant to spend his life: "Are you in a condition to manage domestic affairs with an income of less than three hundred pounds a year? Have you such an inclination to my person and honor as to comply with my desires and way of living, and endeavor to make us both as happy as you can? Will you be ready to engage in those methods I shall direct for the improvement of your mind, so as to make us entertaining company for each other, without being miserable when we are neither visiting or visited? Can you bend your love, esteem and indifference to others the same way as I do mine? Have you so much good nature as to endeavor by soft words to smooth any rugged humor occasioned by the cross accidents of life? Shall the place in which your husband is thrown be more welcome than courts and cities without him?" Surely never was a lady so catechised by a suitor for her hand. When Jane Waryng felt able to answer every question in the affirmative, then, and not till then, her lover says, "I shall be blessed to have you in my arms, without regarding whether your person be beautiful or your fortune large. Cleanliness in the first, and competency in the second, is all I look for!" This unique epistle ends—"I singled you out at first from the rest of women, and I expect not to be used like a common lover." Swift was evidently enough a very uncommon lover.

There is a world of difference between the love-making of morbid, self-loving Swift, and that of cheery-hearted Richard Steele; the raven's croak and the lark's song are not more unlike. Steele made love like a lover and gentleman. He never dreamed of plying his mistress with doubting questions upon questions. Believing his Prue to be as beautiful, witty, prudent, and good humored as a woman could be, Steele was contented to know she loved him, and took the rest upon trust. "Instead of saying I shall die for you, I profess I should be glad to lead my life with you!" That is the way he pops the question; then, when assured that the dearest being upon earth is his own, he asks her to name the day. Can anything be more charming in its way than this? "I have not a minute's quiet out of your sight; and when I am with you, you use me with so much distance, that I am still in a state of absence, heightened with a view of the charms which I am denied to approach. In a word, you must give me either a fan, a mask, or a glove you have worn, or I cannot live; otherwise you must expect I will kiss your hand, or, when I next sit by you, steal your handkerchief. You yourself are too great a bounty to be received at once; therefore I must be prepared by degrees, lest the mighty gift distract me with joy. Dear Mrs. Scurlock, I am tired of calling you by that name; therefore say the day in which you will take that of, madam, your most obedient, most devoted, humble servant."

A Frenchman, smitten with the charms of fair Lydia Sterne, instead of trying to secure her good will, wrote to her father, desiring to be informed what he was prepared to give her upon marriage, and how much he intended to bequeath her. He thought to be able to say to Miss Lydia as Petruchio said to Kate the curst,

Your father hath consented
That you shall be my wife; your dowry 'greed on,
And will you, nill you, I will marry you.

But Sterne was not so eager to get rid of his girl as was Signor Baptista, and replied—"Sir, I shall give my daughter ten thousand pounds the day of marriage. My calculation is as follows: She is not eighteen, you are sixty-two—there goes five thousand pounds. Then sir, you, at least, think her not ugly; she has many accomplishments, speaks Italian and French, plays upon the guitar; and as I fear you play upon no instrument whatever, I think you will be happy to take her at my terms, for here finishes the account of the ten thousand pounds.

Whitfield asked the hand of a young American lady, of her parents, without troubling to ascertain her inclinations, and was good enough to let them know they need not fear of offending him by declining the honor, since he blessed God he was free from the passion called love.

Next to ignoring the lady altogether, the worst way of making a declaration is to do it by deputy. Cupid is no friend to faint-hearted lovers. If the damsel be worth the wooing, it is odds upon the proxy suitor proving false, and suing on his own account. When those inseparable brothers, William and Jacob Grimm, were persuaded of the necessity of one of them taking a wife, they had a friendly contention as to which should be the victim, and after some days' argument, Jacob decided that he, as the elder, was bound to sacrifice himself. They had previously fixed upon the lady, a beautiful girl of twenty-two, but when it came to the push, Jacob's courage failed him, and William undertook to persuade the maiden to love his brother. After a week's acquaintance poor William was horrified at discovering he had lost his own heart, and now, fully alive to the excellences of the fair one, was miserable at the thought of losing her, while he felt that to rob his brother of such a prize would be an unpardonable treachery. Fortunately for everybody, Grimm's aunt, a shrewd old lady, saw how things were, and told Jacob what had come of William's efforts in his behalf. Jacob was delighted to think he had escaped matrimonial bondage, and celebrated his good fortune by roaming about the country a free man, until the honeymoon was over—the cross courtship ending more pleasantly for all concerned than such things commonly do.

Convinced by kind Mrs. Churchman that he needed a wife to look after him, the judicious Hooker escaped the bother of courting and popping the question by leaving his adviser to find him a mate, and arrange all preliminaries. Happening to have a daughter upon her hands, the disinterested matron soon executed her commission, and the great churchman was speedily married, as per contract. Shakespeare's heroines are remarkably ready to take the initiative, properly supposed to be the ladies' right only in Leap Year. Helen demands the hand of Bertram as the price of her wonder-working prescription. Desdemona gives Othello the broadest of hints that she is to be had for the asking. Miranda tells her patient logman she is his wife if he will marry her. Olivia says to her lover's masquerading messenger—

Would you undertake another suit,
I had rather hear you to solicit that,
Than music from the spheres!

Then finding Sebastian himself of more malleable stuff than his fair double, fetches a priest to make sure of him while he is in the humor; and Juliet, caught thinking aloud, declares her willingness to lay her fortunes at Romeo's feet, if he will but say when and where the holy man shall make them one. If the poet drew from the life, we must assume the ladies of his time were equal to bringing laggard admirers to the point by popping the question themselves. One Englishwoman of high degree, at any rate, had not very long before set her sisters the example. Mary Tudor, thinking, not unreasonably, one loveless marriage sufficient for a life, determined not to be sacrificed to state policy again; and Charles Brandon had not been many hours in France ere Mary tearfully told him that, unless he wedded her there and then, he should never have another chance. Brandon was not the man to say nay to such an appeal from the fairest princess in Christendom, let what might come of it, and, at the risk of his head, accepted the proffered hand. The pair married in haste; but it is not recorded that they repented at leisure.

Had the daughter of Gaston d'Orleans been as wise as the English princess, she would have taken Louis XIV. at his word, when he consented to her marrying the Gascon, De Lauzun. Mademoiselle was proud; if love had impelled her to offer her hand, with her heart in it, to an inferior, she could not brook the idea of being married in a manner unbecoming a princess of the blood royal. The King had time to listen to the remonstrances of his counselors, and when she besought him on her bended knees not to withdraw his consent, could only reproach her with not having profited by it while she could.

Louise de Savoie, sometime Queen-regent of France, was equally unfortunate when she usurped masculine privilege and proposed to the famous Constable de Bourbon. Louise and Bourbon were at variance respecting the disposition of his dead wife's property. Talking over the business one day together, the Queen-regent observed that there were more ways than one of accommodating a lawsuit. Queen Anne, for example, had saved Brittany from a civil war, in a manner worthy of imitation. "True," answered Bourbon; "but I know not what princess would enable me to settle your highness's suit in such an agreeable manner." "You forget, Duke, I am a widow," said Louise, allowing her hand to rest upon that of the Constable. Bourbon's face darkened as he rose to his feet, saying, "Your highness mistakes me. The respect I owe his majesty, the disparity of our years, my own feelings, all render such a union impossible. If the King goes to law, I will fight him, madam, that is all!" Had not Louise de Savoie challenged that mortifying rebuff, Bourbon had not lived to lead his country's foes to victory, and the sack of Rome would not be a matter of history.

Miss Kenrick, the beautiful heiress, celebrated in the ballad of the Berkshire Lady's Garland, adopted a singular method of winning the handsome young attorney, Benjamin Child, with whom she had fallen in love at sight. She sent him an anonymous letter, demanding satisfaction for injuries received. After vainly puzzling himself to guess whom his challenger might be, and how he had offended, Child betook himself, duly provided with a second, to the place of meeting, near a pleasant crystal fountain. There he saw no fierce gallant, only a masked lady, who asked him his business there. He told it; whereupon his fair questioner, flashing a rapier she carried for her security, said,

It is I that did invite you;
You shall wed me, or I'll fight you,
Underneath those spreading trees,
Therefore choose from which you please!

Rather taken aback by such a summons to surrender, Benjamin asked to see his challenger's face ere he decided. This was denied; she would not unmask until the knot was tied, but generously accorded him an hour's grace to turn the matter in his mind. His friend advised him, as he could lose nothing, to take the lady; and the three went off in her gilded coach to church, where the lady gay and her attorney were made one without delay—

Though sweet pretty cupids hovered
Round her eyes, her face was covered
With a mask—he took her thus,
Just for better or for worse.

He did not repent the leap in the dark, when he found his summer morning's adventure had brought "beauty, honor, riches store;" but taking his place among the gentry of the country, lived happy ever afterwards. The hero of this romance was, in 1714, high sheriff of Berkshire.

Not in such warlike fashion did Margaret Charlton attack Richard Baxter. She sought to attain her end by negotiation; and never was a bachelor of forty-five more astonished than that worthy minister when Margaret's ambassadress opened her mind to him. He was destined to an additional shock. While he was vehemently declaring the idea preposterous, Margaret was listening at the study door, and, losing all self control, burst into the room, threw herself at her idol's feet, crying, "Dear Mr. Baxter, I protest with a sincere heart, I do not make a tender of myself to you upon any wordly or carnal account, but to have a more perfect converse with so holy and prudent a yoke-fellow to assist me on the way to Heaven, and to keep me steadfast in my perseverance, which I design to God's glory and my own good!" Margaret Charlton was very pretty; Baxter was mortal, and succumbed. So might Robert Leighton, Bishop of Dumblane, have done too, had he been wooed by a maiden as young and fair as Baxter's assailant; but the would-be Mrs. Leighton was a spinster of mature age, who called to tell the Bishop she had received a revelation from Heaven that he was to become her husband. The prelate, though somewhat startled, was equal to the emergency. He assured his visitor that such an intimation was not to be desp