

Poetry and Miscellany.

A MATTER OF TASTE.

Says the peacock to the rabbit, 'Who's your tailor?' tell me, pray; For, good sir, he's cut your coat-tail In a most old-fashioned way.

A MODERN ROMEO.

HE ball at the Villa Borghese was over, and Philip Leighton, one of the guests, who felt the evening well spent, was going leisurely homeward on foot.

The young man crossed the Piazza del Domo and turned into the sleepy Via Ricassoli, which seemed quiet as the aisle of an empty church.

The house indicated was a grim old palace, many stories high, built of heavy blocks of stone, like a prison.

Philip thrust himself upon the heavy wrought-iron fastenings of the door, but they refused to give way even under his vigorous shaking.

"The door, closes with a latch inside; a sharp blow will sometimes open it without the key, which Giacinta has so luckily lost.

"Does the open window in the second story lead to signora's rooms?" he asked, eagerly.

"Yes; those are our rooms. The rest of the house is unoccupied, or we could hope to wake up somebody to let us in."

"If it is not too audacious a proposition," continued Philip, "I will climb up to your balcony, Romeo, with you that ladder, descend the stairs, and open your refractory door from the inside."

"The same thought had occurred to me, but I did not like to express it. It is a dangerous height; you might fall, and it is an unreasonable service to ask of a stranger."

matches he saw that his wrist was bleeding from the cut, and he pulled out his handkerchief and hastily bound up the wound before proceeding farther.

Philip would have gladly taken a more lingering look at the old portraits peering down at him from the walls, some of them with dark, searching eyes so like those of the last night's proceeding of delicacy prompted him to make his way through her rooms as quickly as possible.

"I can never sufficiently express my thanks, signor," said the young girl holding out her hand. "You have spared us more annoyance than you can realize. May I know the name of our benefactor?"

"I certainly wish to know to whom we are indebted for so great a service. My friend, Madame de Carolat, is coming to tea to-morrow at four. Will you come then? But I must introduce myself. I am the Countess Roselli. Now, as it is so shockingly late, I must bid you good night. Thank you a thousand times, and do not disappoint us to-morrow."

"Not for anything under heaven," Philip murmured, half audibly, as the heavy door closed away from him; the gaze of the girl's star-like eyes.

Like culprits the two belated women stole up the stairs to their rooms. Giacinta lit the old Roman lamp, and by its soft, steady flame of olive-oil the familiar old portraits looked down as if welcoming them home.

"Why, Giacinta! what does this mean? My desk wide open, and all the papers scattered about. Oh, madonna mia! the money from the Libro Aperto vineyard was there—fifteen hundred francs!"

"And he with a face like the blessed San Michele," she moaned.

"No, no; you are mistaken, amica, mia! cried the Countess, reading the suspicion in the old woman's eyes. "I would as soon accuse you of robbing me, you faithful old granny. Our rooms must have been entered earlier in the evening. The window was open, and the ladder conveniently near. Many rough men were abroad to night, owing to the festa at Cajano. No, you need not lose faith in our San Michele, as you call him. Something impels me to trust to the honesty of that young stranger who helped us, as I would trust by brother Ego in heaven."

"What is this wild story of Giacinta's?" he began, angrily. "You have had the colossal folly to let a street-vagant loose in your rooms. Of course he improved his opportunity and took your money."

"Uncle, I'm fully convinced the money was stolen before this gentleman came to our assistance. The window was open; the ladder carelessly left near by the workmen. Paolo saw me put the money in the desk; possibly he succumbed to the temptation."

"Certainly not ask charity from you, Uncle Gino. Giacinta and I have already learned what sharp poverty means, and we can bear this misfortune as we have borne others. A proud fire burned in the young contessa's eyes as she spoke." said Roselli, as he turned on his heel to leave the room.

His foot had struck against a small object lying on the floor in the shadow of a table. It was Philip's card-case. Roselli opened it and read on the first card, "Mr. Philip Leighton Via Palestro, No. 23." This is probably the name of your gallant rescuer," Roselli added sarcastically. "Rather a suspicious circumstance to find his card-case lying so near the plundered desk."

"I will keep it for him till he comes," said Natalia, holding out her hand with quiet dignity.

"By all means, my dear, keep it till he comes. I hope our visiting party will not be put to too severe a strain."

Roselli took one long, searching look at the card, and resigned the pretty leather toy to his niece's keeping.

For Philip, also, there was a rude awakening that morning. A furious Italian gentleman demanded to see him; and, according to the last night's proceedings, and accused him of stealing fifteen hundred francs from the Countess Roselli. A policeman and cab were at the door, and before he fairly realized what was occurring, the bewildered Philip found himself in a cell at the Bargello. A sad contrast to his dreams of imbibing draughts of tea and enchantment with his fair innamorata. He had no friends in Florence of whom he cared to borrow money, and he was not in funds to bail himself out to keep his appointment for four o'clock.

Count Roselli kept his own counsel as to the summary measures he had taken, and withdrew for a few days to his villa at Feltro.

As the day wore away with no signs of Philip, Natalia said to her handmaid: "Giacinta, I'm haunted with the fear that Uncle Gino has done something desperate about this miserable money. I wish you would go to the Via Palestro and ask for Mr. Leighton."

Giacinta went, and returned in floods of tears. Mr. Leighton had been arrested that morning. The portina said he was such a nice, open-handed gentleman; there must be some monstrous mistake about it all.

Natalia seized pen and paper, and sent Giacinta to the Bargello with a tear-stained note declaring her belief in his, Philip's entire innocence, and her shame at her uncle's conduct.

Philip, in duressive vein, poured out as much of his soul as the back of an old pill-bottle would hold, in reply.

Thus these two lovers—for the cruelty of the tyrant uncle had roused in both young hearts this consuming passion—were made to suffer, each for the distress of the other, in hopeless uncertainty.

The third day of Philip's bondage, a young woman, with a handkerchief bound over one eye, presented herself at the Palazzo Roselli and asked for the young contessa.

THE JOKERS' BUDGET

UP AND DOWN. "I called, sir," said old Jinks to the tailor, "in reference to the letter you sent about the way my son has treated you. I guess you will find him all right in the future, because he has promised me to settle down."

THE WEDDING PRELUDE. Little Boy—Say, ma says you are going to take sister off.

BEFORE AND AFTER. Dudovici Marony—Why don't you turn a new face on a way?

THE LITTLE GARDENER. I know a gardener, bright and spry. But for a certain reason His crops, the best with culture high, Are far behind the season.

THE NEW ARITHMETIC. Goodfellow—Say, old chappie, lend me half a dollar, will you? Rockaway Beach—Here's a dollar. I haven't any change.

PERMISSIVE. "Papa," asked Johnny Cumso, "what is a permissive?"

THE WEDDING PRELUDE. Mrs. Happy—How did you manage to acquire such a fortune from that little pauper, "How to Make Dynamite?"

WHY HE LOOKED TROUBLED. Tucker—Why do I look so troubled? Well, last night I dreamed I died and was buried. Parker, and I saw the tombstone at the head of my grave.

ONE FOR HARRY. Harry (a beardless cory of seventeen)—I quite agree with you, Edith, that Mrs. Bromley's gray hair enhances the effect of her fresh and youthful complexion, but if it excites nobody, I suppose her locks were red before she bleached them.

HE TOLD A FORM OF TRUTH. Beggar—Please, please help a poor cripple. Passer (giving him money)—Poor fellow! Where are you crippled? Beggar (pocketing the money)—In my finances, sir.—The Wash.

DIAMONDS AT THE PARIS EXPOSITION. Writing of the displays of the Paris Exposition, a correspondent says: "One sees the diamonds in every state, from the time they are taken from the mine until they are finally set in the most beautiful bracelets and rivieres. A most splendid and interesting exhibition. The exhibition of the diamond cutting is more complete, a number of the most skillful workmen have been brought from the different branches of the trade. First we see those who pick out, test, and finally select the stones that are to be cut; then those who decide how these stones shall be cut, and finally the workmen who cut and polish them on the whirling grindstones which, from the new motor, make 2,400 turns per minute. In order to make this exhibition a complete one, Messrs. Boas have one of the old grindstones which were formerly used. These are worked by hand, and the workmen take turns at the wheel. The expense is six times that of the grindstone worked by steam, and the work so tiresome that the men who turn the wheel have to be changed every fifteen minutes."

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JESTS AND YARNS BY FUNNY MEN OF THE PRESS. The New Arithmetic—The Wedding Prelude—Cut off.

BEFORE AND AFTER. Mrs. Sharp—I used to offer the book, then pull out a foot section of two-inch gasp, loaded with paper and a piece of rope in one end for a fuse, and tell them that was how a bomb looked when finished. Everybody thought it was genuine and subscribed to get rid of me.

WHY HE LOOKED TROUBLED. Parker—Saw your tombstone, eh? And what of it? "Why, I'm trying to live up to the epitaph I saw on it."—New York Sun.

GOOD FOR HIM SHE WASN'T. "Johnny is an awful boy," said Mrs. Brown. "He hasn't sat still a moment this whole blessed day."

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SWIFT ON THE WING.

An Express Train Slow Compared With the Wild Duck and Goose. "The gadwall—but there, it isn't likely at all that you know what a gadwall is," said an observant wild fowl hunter. "The gadwall is a duck. It is a wild duck that does not fly East very often, but is a familiar fowl in the West. I was just about to remark that the gadwall is a bird that can travel nearly a hundred miles while the fastest railroad train is going fifty, and yet it is slow on the wing compared with a canvasback duck, the broadbill, or even the wild goose. I have held my watch on about every kind of wild fowl there is, and know to a dot just how much space any of them can get over in an hour. The canvasback can distance the whole wild fowl family, if it lays itself out to do it. When the male is in a string it is taking things easy; he jogs along through the air at the rate of eighty miles an hour. If he has business somewhere, though, and has to get there, he can put two miles behind him every minute, and do it easy. If you don't believe that, just five square feet of canvas on a string of trip some time when you have the chance. Duck shot, propelled by the proper quantity of powder, travels pretty quick itself, but if your charge brings down any member of that string of ducks at all it will be the fifth or sixth, the broadbill, or even the wild goose. I have held my watch on about every kind of wild fowl there is, and know to a dot just how much space any of them can get over in an hour. The canvasback can distance the whole wild fowl family, if it lays itself out to do it. When the male is in a string it is taking things easy; he jogs along through the air at the rate of eighty miles an hour. If he has business somewhere, though, and has to get there, he can put two miles behind him every minute, and do it easy. 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