

MISS MERTON'S CONFESSION.

BY JAMES KNAPP REEVE. (Copyright, 1893, by the Author.)

O I believe the opal is a gem of ill-omen? Do I believe in life, in love, in music? Have I any little pet belief that is dear to my soul? Let me tell you a story for an answer.

"Then let us go out and stroll on the piazza. It is pleasant there than here in the ballroom, and vastly better for conversation. Besides, I think you are tired of dancing."

"No, I never tire of that; the waltz is the path to paradise, for me. But I will go outside with you, for it is very warm here."

The long piazza faced the beach, and the music of the lapping waves mingled with the strains that came floating out from where the dancers still gayly circled. The air from the sea blew soft and warm, and the moon and the stars shone down with a soft radiance.

Yea Miss Merton shivered a little as the salt wind touched her, and drew her filmy mantle closer about her white shoulders.

"We will go inside, if you are cold," said her companion, noticing the movement. "Perhaps you are not used to the night air."

"No. It always makes me cold to think of an opal. They call the light in them 'fire,' but it chills me instead of warming. And they are changing and musical, and at first Lieut. Phelps was absent-minded, but for some reason he dropped the hand that had been resting on his arm, and leaned against one of the pillars of the piazza.

"I knew," continued Miss Merton, "that if he were jealous, the flame would be easily kindled for me to play with; but I did not think of what might follow. He saw the ring, and went at once to Agnes."

"You have given the ring to Harry Germain," he said. She was frightened at his brusqueness, and faltered in her speech. "Oh, don't trouble to deny it; he said: 'I have just seen it on his hand. I thought there was some one between us. I know it now.' Then, without another word, he turned away from her. Her first impulse was to follow him—to call out, to cry to him that it was a mistake. But then her pride revolted, and when Harry Germain came up and asked her to dance, she went off with him, laughing as brightly as she ever had. And he saw them together, and saw that Germain still wore his ring."

"And you," queried the lieutenant. "I hope you won't that for which you played?" His tone was icily courteous, but he looked out to sea instead of toward his companion.

"He went away that night," she replied. "I never saw him again until to-day."

Again they stood silent, and looked at the sea and the sky, but not at each other. Presently the man spoke.

"Where is she now?" "In the ballroom, by this time. She said she should come with me later."

"Did she know that you were going to tell me this?" "No."

He turned and left her without a word—walked rapidly down the long piazza, and she saw him disappear within one of the low windows. Then she sighed wearily.

"I only told him half the truth," she said. "I wonder if it would have been better to have told him all? She can never care for him as I do."

The lieutenant stopped to give one swift glance about them, walked straight across the polished floor. In front of Agnes Wilton he stopped again, and looked at her quietly a moment before he spoke. In that moment he had time to see that an opal glowed like a coal of living fire upon her hand.

She looked up and met his glance steadily, but she was very pale.

"There is a legend," he said, bending toward her, "that if the love that gave it grows cold, the opal's fire will grow dim. Do you believe it?"

"Yes," she answered, so low that he could just hear the words; "but mine never has grown dim. Its fire has

"The stone was very beautiful. In its depths it held all the glowing colors of the rainbow. It was changeable as the chameleon. It fascinated me when I looked at it, but frightened me because it was so inconstant. As I told you, my friend was young. She had not yet learned how very serious a matter life is. The ring kept other men away from her, curtailed her pleasures, her freedom."

Her companion began some protest, but Miss Merton stopped him.

"Yes, I know what you are going to say—that she really loved him. But you cannot change the nature of a girl in a day. She found that the ring narrowed her life, and so one day she put it away."

"If she was not willing to wear it, she should have given it back to the man who gave it to her," said the lieutenant.

"He would have misunderstood it," said Miss Merton. "He would have said that she did not care for him—that she had never loved him, that she had never loved him—and at the same time things men tell the women they love whenever their point of view happens to be different. So the poor girl did what she thought was best, and laid the ring away and met him one night without it upon her hand. I don't know what he said to her, but he was so brutal about it that the girl's proud spirit rebelled, as it should have done. Then she brought the ring to me."

KNOW THEY HAD ENOUGH.

Two Men Who Did Not Demand Satisfaction.

A tall, thin young man and a short, stocky one walked painfully up Main street yesterday afternoon. They were well-dressed. From the rear they looked like two young fellows who had tight shoes or sore feet or something of the kind. From the front they looked like two men who had been thrashed within six inches of their lives by some one who knew how to use his fists.

That is what they were. The tall, thin man had one black eye. There was a long bruise on the side of his face and his nose was twisted somewhat. One of his lips was cut. The short, stocky man had two black eyes. His forehead had the skin rubbed off and his lips were cut.

"Hello!" said a friend, "what in thunder's the matter with you fellows?" "Oh," said the tall young man, "we've been licked."

"That's right," said the stocky young man. "How'd it happen?" inquired the friend.

"We got fresh and got licked. That's all there is to it."

"Aren't you enough, ain't it?" asked the stocky young man.

"One man or two?" inquired the friend.

"Oh," answered the tall young man. "It was one man. He didn't have much trouble."

"But what are you going to do about it?" "Why," said the stocky young man, "we're going to bed."

"But what are you going to do about the fight?" "Going to bed I told you."

"Aren't you going to report it to the police?" "Police?" queried the tall young man. "Report what to the police?"

"Why, the fact that you have been outrageously treated by some one."

"What have the police got to do with it?" "They could arrest the man who assaulted you, couldn't they?"

"Now, see here," broke in the stocky young man, "I told you that we got licked. We did. I told you that one man did it. He didn't get two black eyes, and the fellow might have gotten one of Jimmy's. Oh, you bet we're satisfied."

And the stocky young man wiped some blood off his forehead, and the two started up the street again.—Buffalo Express.

One Thing a Prooferder Can Do.

Native Patagonians, like other savage people, have very keen eyes for certain things—things which their eyes of fire have made it indispensable that they should notice. In other words, they are specialists, and as a matter of course they excel in their own particular line. But it does not follow that they have better eyes than are possessed by men of civilized countries.

For many of them to find a reversed "s" in the middle of a printed page, says Mr. Hudson, and the tears would run down his brown cheeks, and he would give up the search with aching eyeballs. But the prooferder can find the reversed letter in a few moments and never strain his eyes in the least.—Youth's Companion.

Carlyle's Temper.

It is easier to say why a particular man should be a pessimist than why a great many should be. In Carlyle it is tolerably clear that early surroundings and facts of temperament had a good deal to do with the setting of his life's speculations. Calvinism trains strong men but can hardly be said to predispose to cheerfulness. This particular man of genius had constitutional ailments, and his life was for a long time a struggle with poverty, and he grew up in a very dismal period—the time when the great war had left us overstrained and disenchanted, the later time when reform seemed to be unprofitable, and the days of famine that forced free trade upon the country.—Dr. C. H. Peterson, in Fortnightly Review.

Not the Case.

"I am not expecting any package," said the lady of the house.

"That is the number," persisted the driver of the delivery wagon, looking at his book again. "Name's Higgins, ain't it?"

"Yes."

"No. 574?"

"That's our number."

"I think not. It must be a case of mistaken identity."

"No, mum. It's a case of beer."—Chicago Inter Ocean.

An Insinuation.

Charlie—Invite me up to dinner to-night.

James—What's the matter?

"Our cook has left."

"Yes, but you've had a wife ten years and I've had one only six months."—Detroit Free Press.

"What's the price of an accident ticket?" asked the traveler. "Well," replied the agent thoughtfully; "if you take the last section of the train, we can make you one out for a quarter."

"Why, there is no such thing as a first section we don't want you at all."—Indianapolis Journal.

—Lodge of the House—"I think you would do well to have your recommendation from your last place?" Applicant—"I lived with her two years, but as we were never intimate she did not feel that she could conscientiously recommend me."—Boston Transcript.

—Mr. Higgins—"Is Miss Fosdick still president of your society for the suppression of slang, Miss Skidds?" Miss Skidds—"No; she got too fresh and we turned her down."—Retailer and Jobber.

NO WONDER WOMEN ARE VAIN.

It is Cultivated by Their Mothers from Earliest Childhood.

Women generally are credited with a wonderful amount of vanity in their composition. And yet when one takes into consideration the fact that this characteristic is instilled into their natures from the time of their earliest childhood the wonder is that they are not absolutely unbearable. Mothers naturally delight in having their little ones dressed well, and among the first impressions that a child receives is the attention that good clothes demand and the amount of time and labor that are expended upon them.

Even tiny babies realize when they are dressed up, and as time goes on the love of finery grows with their growth, and their daily actions and thoughts are influenced largely by it. Playmates and classmates who dress well are selected in preference to those whose garments are not cut in the latest style or of the finest material.

More tears are shed because of the inability to secure new bits of finery than are ever caused by rebukes or denials of any sort. Clothes are made to please a little girl's life that dominates all other attributes, and when the child grows to be a woman people condemn her for being vain and frivolous when in reality she is but living up to the earliest ideas that have been sown in the budding mind.

If parents do not wish their daughters to be vain and silly they should at the beginning imbue them with ideas that are not teeming with the impressions of self-adornment. Teach them that life has other aims and better work, that the noblest nature dwells in the plainest garment, and that though it is one's duty to look as well as possible it becomes a sin when every thought is given to the beautifying of the person at the sacrifice of other motives that tend to the accomplishment of a more gracious purpose.—Philadelphia Times.

HAVEN FOR CRIMINALS.

Places in Various Countries Where Justice Can Be Evaded.

In Scotland there still exists a sanctuary for debtors in the abbey and palace of Holyrood, with its precincts. The sanctuary is placed under the control of a bailie, appointed by the duke of Hamilton.

When the debtor retires to the sanctuary he is given twenty-four hours' protection, but in order to extend the privilege longer he must be enrolled on the books of the abbey. The sanctuary affords no protection to a criminal or fraudulent debtor, or to a crown debtor.

Another sanctuary exists in Hawaii, called the Refuge. If a criminal can reach the refuge before he can be captured, he is safe as long as he remains there. His family can and usually do supply him with food until he is able to make his escape, but he is never allowed to return to his own tribe.

In China the Buddhist religion allows men to become priests at an advanced period of life for the purpose of escaping from impending justice. In some instances Buddhist temples are regarded as inviolable sanctuaries for transgressors of the law.

Formerly there were many sanctuaries in England, just as the cities of refuge were appointed by the laws of Moses for one who had killed another intentionally, to prevent the relations of the slain taking the law into their own hands, as the Arabs still do in such cases.—Boston Globe.

Ancestry of Literary Geniuses.

Swinburne is a descendant of Celtic and Scandinavian stock. Tennyson seems to have been equally of Danish extraction and Plantagenet ancestry, with a slight mixture of French blood. William Morris is a descendant of Welsh and Anglo-Danish stock. Robert Browning's great-grandfather, who was of Welsh-Saxon origin, married a Creole, while the poet's mother was of German and Scotch parentage. Rossetti was twenty-five per cent English, and northern blood mingled with his Italian ancestry. The commingling of races in the literary geniuses of France is more remarkable still. The grandmother of the senior Dumas was a black woman of St. Domingo, and his father, Francois Dumas, had a black mother. The father of Victor Hugo came of the Germans of Lorraine. Greek, French and Italian blood exists in Zola; his father was an Italian mathematician. Ibsen is of German and Scandinavian ancestry, intermingled with Scotch.—Philadelphia Telegraph.

Very Sociable.

Mrs. Murphy was known as a very sociable woman. She made it a point never to pass an acquaintance without speaking.

One day she met Mrs. Casey on the street. "Good mornin', Mrs. Casey," she said. "How do yer feel this mornin'?" "Not that Oi care at all, Mrs. Casey, but Oi just wanted to open the conversation."—Boston Budget.

They Quarreled.

"Day has done bruk the engagement."

"You doan say so?"

"What's the matter?"

"She done tased a persimmon dat wasn't ripe an' he misconstrued de pucker an' kissed her."—Washington Star.

Matrimonial Item.

Gus DeSmith—I hear Fewscaids is going to marry. I suppose he is very much in love.

Hostetter—McGinnis—No, but he is very much in debt. He is going to marry a rich widow up in Harlem.—Texas Siftings.

Too Early.

"Been fishing?"

"Yes."

"Catch anything?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"I don't know yet. I'll have to ask the doctor."—Judge.

SHE DECIDED TO LIVE.

And Six Months After She Didn't Regret Her Decision in the Least.

"It is always darkest before the dawn," is a saying aptly illustrated by an anecdote given by Hume Nisbet, in "A Colonial Tramp." While in Melbourne Mr. Nisbet one evening stepped under a veranda to avoid a shower. A young woman was mere before him, and from her harassed face and her restless pining up and down he judged her to be in trouble. So it proved. Suddenly the woman approached him and said:

"Would you mind doing me a favor, sir?"

"No. That is, if I can. What is it?"

"I want some medicine from the chemist over there, but he will not give it to me; perhaps he would let you have it."

"Perhaps. What kind of medicine do you want?"

"The shilling's worth of laudanum."

"I'll try," I said, and taking the money from her was about starting off when a thought occurred to me, and I asked:

"What do you want it for, miss?"

"To induce. I have it frightfully tonight."

"No, you haven't," I said, quietly. "It is headache that ails you, and you want to kill yourself."

"You are right," she said. "I do want to kill myself. Now, suppose you will be for giving me up?"

"No. I would rather help you die if you are quite sure that you are done with life. But are you sure?"

Then she told me she was a tailoress, but most of the trade was in the hands of the Jews, and they would not employ her, and she could not get work elsewhere. She had tried every shop in Melbourne.

"Then I'll get you laudanum," said I; "only I want a favor from you first."

"What is it?"

"I want you to live until to-morrow night, and try all round once more. If you fail of success meet me here to-morrow at this hour, and I'll do my best to get you the laudanum."

She agreed to that and I returned the shilling. Next night I waited in vain for the young woman to appear.

Six months afterward I was waiting at the post office for a letter when a pretty, laughing-faced young woman came up the steps with a young man beside her. As soon as she saw me she darted forward and shook me warmly by the hand. It was the young woman who had wanted the laudanum.

"I got a job the next day," she said, "so I did not need to come to you. Better still, I got a husband. I say, dear, she cried to her companion, who had joined us, "this is the young man who made me go the rounds again."

Then turning again to me she said: "This is my husband. I got a place after a while and he was the forman there. We have been married two months. I'm very happy," and she laughed in a pleasant manner.—Chicago Journal.

JUST THE THING.

The Georgia Cracker Ordered Two of "The Samson Books."

He walked into the bookstore and stopped before the Bible department. He leaned over the counter and said to the ministerial looking salesman:

"Is them Buffalo Bill books over there?"

"Nope. Religious works."

"Don't nnn of them read about chasin' Injuns an' shootin' wild varmints?"

"Not exactly."

"Gethin' about a feller at could knock 'em out like John L. ner a feller at's slick or Winchester, er hed the nerve to tackle er bar?"

"Oh, yes. One better than that."

"Who's he?"

"Samson."

"Samson? He de?"

"Oh, he had a fight with a lion."

"Laid 'em out, did e?"

"Yes, he killed the lion."

"Yes, bored 'im with er Winchester?"

"Nope."

"Biffed 'im in the head with er ax, I s'pose?"

"Nope."

"Yes, kyarred 'im with his bowie?"

"No, he just caught the beast by the throat and choked it to death."

"You don't say?"

"Yes, he was the strongest man that ever lived."

"Wusser'n John L.?"

"Yes."

"An' wusser'n Jimmie Corbitt?"

"Samson could knock them both out at once."

"Whoopee; ain't he the stuff? I'll take two o' them Samson books."—Atlanta Constitution.

SCHOOL AND CHURCH.

—Columbia college has six hundred graduate students, the largest number in attendance at any college in the United States.

—In Count Tolstoi's school at Yesnaya Polyana all the children were permitted, on principle, to do exactly as they pleased, but only two arms were broken.

—Chief-Justice Melville W. Fuller of the supreme court is to deliver the oration at the celebration of the centenary of Bowdoin college, Maine, in June next.

—Lord Aberdeen's requested addition to Rideau hall proves to be a chapel for family worship, and it is also reported that he proposes to build it at his own expense.

—A small scandal arises in British church circles from the fact that there were five hundred applicants for a place as chaplain on a yacht, and only five for a curacy of hard work in the slaver.

—Mr. Gladstone has appointed Prof. Ingram Bywater to succeed the late Prof. Jowett as master of Balliol college, Oxford university. Prof. Bywater was the highest European reputation as a Greek scholar.

—At the beginning of the century the Bible was accessible to but one-fifth of the population of the world. Now it may be read by nine-tenths of the people of the globe, so rapidly has its translation been carried on.

—In the United States the Methodist church stands first in point of numbers, having 31,000 organizations and 4,598,000 communicants; the Baptists are second, and have 43,000 organizations and 3,745,000 communicants; the Presbyterians are third, with 13,500 organizations and 11,287,000 communicants; the Roman Catholic organizations are 10,270, with 6,288,000 individuals in them; the Lutherans have 8,595 organizations and a communicant membership of 1,231,000.

—The annual report of the Yale corporation, recently submitted, shows an addition of \$205,910 to the university fund during the past year, the largest donation in any department being \$28,000 in the theological school. One new professorship has been founded in the last year—the Washburne in the theological school, for which Mrs. Corolline Washburne gave \$25,000. No addition was made to the new Vanderbilt dormitory, as the donor will present the building when completed, instead of advancing funds. A fund of \$1,000 has been presented by J. G. Bennett, of New York, for a prize for excellence in English.

—Arabia is a country that, notwithstanding its sacred associations, has been sadly neglected by the modern missionary churches. Organized missionary work was begun by Ion Keith Falconer, of the Free Church of Scotland, in 1825. The American mission societies organized five years ago. Its headquarters are at Bushrah, and it has three ordained missionaries, with three native helpers. Altogether, among the million of Arabians, there are only seven missionaries, and four native helpers. Massachusetts people, rightly called the Anglo-Saxons of the orient, and in themselves, quite aside from the history of their country, are well worth winning.

—The official registers at Yale university show a presence of 2,190 students—a gain of 234 over last year. The academic department gains 113, sheltered scientific 109, law school 17, theological and medical schools 3, each, while the art school and department of philosophy and the arts show a small loss. Connecticut sends 688 students, New York 506, Pennsylvania 478, Massachusetts 120, Illinois 103, Ohio 99, and New Jersey 67. Thirty women have registered in the post graduate department. Last year at this date there were twenty-three. Of the thirty who have registered this year ten are from Smith, three from Cornell, six from Bates, and one each from six other institutions.

HUMOROUS.

—The truth a bad man hates is the truth that hits him in the face.—Ram's Horn.

—He—"If women do not love men why do nearly all women marry?" She—"For revenge."—Brooklyn Life.

—"Didn't Miss Harkins look blooming last night?" said Chappie. "Yes. A little too blooming for a bud—don't you think?" insinuated Ethel.—Harper's Bazar.

—Coding—"Why did you speak to that howl-twang dear boy?" Softly—"Why shouldn't I, old chappie? He isn't in twade and he doesn't work law a living."—Boston Globe.

—After All the Rest.—He—"Whom do you think of first of all your friends?" She—"Cousin Harry." He—"And I?" She—"Oh, you are a happy after-thought."

—Hicks—"What do you understand is meant by writing for posterity?" Wicks—"Sending to magazines articles which seldom appear during the life of the writer."—Boston Transcript.

—Mrs. Bicker (petulantly)—"Oh, it's all very well to talk, but you'd be glad if I were dead." Mr. Bicker (blatantly)—"Whatever you do, dear, is sure to be the right thing."—Boston Transcript.

—"Poor Jackson suffers like time from insomnia." "Humph! he needs it; he has his remedy at his tongue's end." "How's that?" "If he'd talk to himself the way he does to me, he'd go to sleep in a minute."—Boston Transcript.

—A courtier riding with his sovereign amidst the acclamations and splendor of a triumphal procession, asked him: "What is wanting here?" And very emphatic was the reply: "Permanence."

—No One Like Her.—She (some time after the honeymoon)—"You used to say that there was no one in the world like me." He—"Yes, by George! and I am more convinced of that fact than ever."—Boston Transcript.

—"How long have you been engaged, George?" she asked. "Why, since last August," he answered. "I couldn't tell whether it was August or June," she replied. "You see, I keep getting you and Freddie Smirkens mixed."—Washington Star.

PERSONAL AND LITERARY.

—M. de Lesseps, though partly recovered from his recent illness, is still very weak, and will shortly be removed to Paris for better medical attention. His salary as president of the Suez canal having been garnished by the liquidators of the Panama Canal Co., the family is said to be in straitened circumstances.

—The house wherein Poe wrote "The Raven" is still to be seen in New York, a few hundred feet from the corner of Eighty-fourth street and the St. Nicholas boulevard, formerly the Bloomington road. It is a plain, old-fashioned, double-framed dwelling, two stories high, with light windows on each side and one at either gable. It has a pointed roof, flanked by two tall brick chimneys.

—Mrs. Wilson, the wife of the author of the Wilson bill, is almost unknown in Washington society. She lives almost entirely at her West Virginia home, going to Washington only once or twice a year for short visits, and then declining all invitations. She is a daughter of Prof. Huntington, of Columbian university, in Washington, and is a scholar of high standing. She has prepared four sons for college, and all passed their examinations brilliantly.

—Baron von Schloezer, formerly German ambassador to the vatican, in his leisure hours wrote his memoirs, which were to have been published recently. The volume, however, secured proof-sheets of the book and peremptorily forbade its publication. Baron von Schloezer is an intimate friend and warm admirer of Prince Bismarck, and it is believed that his complimentary references to the ex-chancellor displeased the emperor.—San Francisco Argonaut.

—The forthcoming edition of Sir Richard Burton's complete and literal translation of the Carmina of Catullus is to be printed on handsome paper from old-faced type cast expressly for the purpose, and to be destroyed immediately after printing. The volume is for frontispiece an etching of Blake's portrait of Catullus. The issue will in no case exceed the number of 1,500 copies, and will be limited to private subscription. There are to be a few large paper copies, and four copies of Japanese paper, all of which will be sold. The volume will contain many curious and out-of-the-way annotations.