SHE TRUSTED HIM.

CHAPTER I.

"It's awfully nice to be lazy sometimes, isn't it, Dick?"

The speaker was a most provokingly pretty girl of 17 years. Seated on the daisy and clover studded emerald grass, she leaned against the brown trunk of an ancient oak, her straw hat tilted over her forehead, her hands clasped behind her head and her bright eyes directed to a young gentleman seven years her senior, who, lying on his chest, his elbow on the grass, his hand supporting his handsome head, was thoughtfully plucking off the delicate seeds of a dandelion.

It was a bright, warm, pleasant summer day. The birds in the branches above seemed to revel in it, while the western breeze came richly perfumed from the rose garden, which could be seen through the trees extending before a fine old house of the Tudor period.

"I should fancy you had plenty of practice in that line to be an excellent judge, Meg," responded her brother. "Shouldn't think you had anything at Devor to do except be idle."

"Really, now," responded the girl, with a contemptuous pout of her red lips, "I'll answer for it that we find quite as much important occupation at Devor as Captain Richard Lashmere does in Dublin, lounging in a barrack-yard, inspecting drill, flirting with the belles of Merion Square, dawdling over mess and grumbling at the monotony of a soldier's existence when not on active service."

"You're right there, madcap Meg," laughed her brother, displaying a set of white, dazzling teeth beneath his dark mustache.

"I should think so, Dick. Else, if barrack life in Dublin were not duller than life at Devor, why ever should you get leave and undergo the miseries of the long journey, just to pass about a week here?"

"To see you and Laura, of course, Meg."

"Most affectionate of brothers!" laughed the girl; then with more gravity, "though 'pon my word, Dick, I can't tell what else should bring you, for you disagreed with papa the first day; without it's want of change of air, for I confess you are much thinner and paler than when you went away."

"Am I? You don't say so," said the young officer, with a short laugh as—perhaps it was unintentionally done—he altered arms, shading his face more from his sister. "Neither men nor women, my dear Meg, can, you know, retain the bloom of youth forever. By the way, what are Laura and Horace doing?"

"Spooning, of course."

"Meg, for heaven's sake, don't be fast."

"Every girl is nowadays, Dick. I but follow the lead of my betters. It's the fashion."

"Fashion—nonsense! If so, I'm glad to say the vulgarity is going out, like the mania for 'rinking' and 'spelling bees.'"

"But which has outlived both. There, Dick," she added, gayly, "you having reached years of reason—that is, I suppose so—tell me your idea of what a woman should be."

"A man proves to have reached years of reason when he weds, and his idea of a perfect woman is she he chooses for his wife. At least, Meg, that's what it ought to be."

"Oh! most wise Solomon! 'What it ought to be, was a good rider, as papa would say," laughed the girl, twining some buttercups. "But when are you going to marry, Dick?"

"When two Sundays come in a week."

"Better have said when five Sundays come in a February, for that will be in 1880, and I should like a sister-in-law!"

"In that case," said the Captain, with a forced smile, "I must try to give the matter more serious attention."

Meg was quiet a space, then, leaning forward, remarked, affectionately:

"Dick, what is wrong, dear? Something, I am sure. Is it because papa worries you about getting married? You see you are the only son, and Devor will be yours; while it does seem strange to Laura and me that you've never been in love."

Captain Lashmere, drawing himself into a sitting position, threw a quick glance round among the trees, then answered in a low tone:

"Meg, you are about the wildest madcap I know; yet I believe I can trust you better than anyone, and—well, the truth is, I'm miserable, so want some one to confide in."

"Miserable! you, dear Dick? Ah! I knew there was something," said Meg, with ready sympathy.

"Something indeed! I am in love, Meg."

"You?" and the girl's face became radiant; then it clouded as she saw her brother's. "Oh, Dick! You don't mean to say, whoever she is, has the bad taste not to like you in return? Perhaps she is already engaged?"

"Worse than that, Meg," answered the Captain, gloomily. "She is married!"

"Married! What! been forced to marry some one else, though loving you?"

"No; nothing so romantic. She was married before I knew her. She was married when I loved her—nay," with a nervous laugh, "is married now I love her."

"Oh, Dick!" gasped his young sister.

"Yes, it's very terrible, isn't it? Half-confidence is worse than no confidence, Meg; so I'll tell you all about it."

His companion, eagerly as sympathetically, drew closer, and he began, at first in an off-hand, shamefaced way, common to men:

"This was how it was. One evening, during a thick fog, I was making my way as well and quickly as I could to barracks, when close beside me I heard the tramp of horses drawing some vehicle, followed by a woman's scream of alarm.

"Before I was aware of what I was doing I had dashed into the road. My hand came in contact with a horse's bridle; my foot struck something in the road. The something, Meg, was a woman. She had been struck down in the fog."

"Poor thing! Was she hurt, Dick?"

"Thank heaven, but slightly. Pat had at the cry drawn his horse quickly back, so the only harm done was the first blow of the shaft that had knocked her down. Raising her, I carried her back to the pavement, where a street-lamp dispelled a little of the fog.

"'Are you much hurt?' I inquired, for she was resting rather heavily on my shoulder and breathing quickly.

"There was a brief silence, during which she must have been trying to recover composure. Then she said in so sweet a voice that it thrilled me, while I had no need to see her face to know I was speaking to a lady:

"'Thanks to you, sir, I am only frightened. Yet, but for your generous and prompt aid, I might, I feel, have been killed, or at least injured.'

"'I am grateful neither has been the case,' I answered, then stopped, for she had turned her face toward me, and never had I seen one so beautiful. Yet how pale it was! while in the large, violet eyes dwelt a strange sadness that seemed to move and attract one against their will.

"My gaze must have been too eloquent of my admiration, for she half lowered the veil she had raised the better to see through the fog, and with a faint smile said, stepping back:

"'No, indeed, I am not hurt. I can walk easily. Therefore, sir, I will not trespass further on your kindness—'

"'Nay,' I broke in, 'excuse me, but you must let me escort you home. I couldn't—indeed I wouldn't—leave you, after your shock, to find your way there on such a night.'

"I was firm, and finally she put her hand lightly on my arm, telling me her address. It was a respectable but poor street, in harmony, I found as we passed some brightly lighted shop windows, with her attire, which was dark, neatly made and plain, but worn as ladies can only wear such dresses—making you heedless of the poverty of the material.

"I need not say I sought every opportunity I could without offense to see her face. It was exquisite! Ah! Meg, it would have charmed even a woman!"

"And how old was she?" queried the sister, deeply interested.

"She could not have been much over 20, if that. Well, I saw her home, bade her good night, waited till the door closed upon her, then took the number of the house.

"As you may guess, I didn't sleep much that night. The next day I managed to meet her—the next, the next, and the next. At last she showed evident signs of uneasiness and sorrow at my persistency and attempted to avoid me. I guessed that she misread my intentions, and resolved to put her right the next time."

"By proposing, Dick? and you knew so little of her?"

"Exactly, Meg. I only knew that her name was Meredith. Well, she had evidently resolved to undeceive me, too, for when I waylaid her next time—for on my part it was waylaying—she wore no glove on her right hand, on which was a wedding-ring.

"As my eyes rested on it I could not have helped exclaiming to have save my life.

"'Merciful Heaven! you are married?'

"My face spoke, I fancy, more than my words, for the countenance lifted to mine grew full of the gentlest compassion as its owner answered, faintly:

"'Yes. I—I thought it kinder, nay right, to tell you. I—I owe you so much.'

"'You owe me nothing,' I replied, a little tremulously—for, Meg, I felt awfully knocked over. 'Yes, it was kinder, best, for—for I love you sincerely, honorably! I—I had hoped this very morning to have asked you to be my wife. But it is impossible.'

"'Oh! Captain Lashmere,' she murmured, in distress, 'have I been in any way to blame? I hope not; it would make me miserable. I would have suffered anything rather.'

"'You?' I rejoined. 'Not in the least, save in being so good, so beautiful. We must, however, never meet again,' I added, taking my courage in both hands, 'for you are married, and, as heaven hears me, I wish you, Mrs. Meredith, every happiness. But I love you, and must to my dying day!'

"Unable to control my emotion, I took her hand; then, as she returned the pressure, and I hurried away, I heard her murmur with a sob:

"'Oh, I am so, so sorry!'"

"And did you ever see her husband, Dick?"

"Never! As much as I could I tried to avoid the house. I began to wish Mrs. Meredith would leave; but when, a week ago, I found that the house was let, and she had gone to England, I was in despair. I hated Dublin, and so—so, Meg, I came over here," he added, springing to his feet. "Mind, dear, not a word of this even to Laura, who might feel bound to share confidence with her future husband."

"I will not, Dick, dear," answered Meg, who, when her handsome, soldierly brother went striding quickly off among the trees, did not follow him, knowing he wished to be alone.

"Poor, poor, dear old Dick," she reflected, tears in her bright eyes; "most other difficulties might be got over, but to love a lady married already can't. Well," she added, in some minutes, "it's hard for Dick to bear, but perhaps it's for the best after all. Papa, who thinks so much of his son making a good match, would never, I'm sure, have consented to that one. How depressing the afternoon seems to have grown—I shall go and find Laura and Horace."

As she quitted the trees she perceived the two seated in the rose-garden, but at the same moment they got up and sauntered across the lawn to the house. Meg listlessly followed in their wake, dreamily watching their happiness, and comparing it with Dick's.

Abruptly she stopped; her foot had struck against some hard substance, sending it flying before her. It was a pocket-book—Horace Walton's—and the concussion had burst it open. Meg stooped to pick it up, but remained transfixed by the sight of a carte-de-visite, that with some letters had fallen out.

"What a beautiful face!" she exclaimed, involuntarily, lifting it. "It's lovely—I wonder who it is? I'll ask."

She stopped, and read beneath the vignette: "From Amy, to dear, dear Horace."

"Who is Amy?" commented Meg. "I never heard Horace mention any one of that name. Perhaps I ought not to have looked; but I could not help it, it was lying before my eyes. Very mysterious, very, for gentlemen to carry such portraits. I wonder if Laura has seen it?"

While speaking she had been restoring the articles to the pocket-book. One was a letter in a lady's writing, and as she put it in, before she was aware she had read there words:

I will wait for you by the stile in the pine wood at half-past 7 on Thursday evening.
Yours, dearest, with my whole affection,
AMY.

Meg dropped down sitting on the grass. A sense of something wrong came upon her. What did it all mean? Who was Amy, whose portrait Horace kept, and who addressed him—Laura's betrothed—in such terms? The pine wood? That, of course, must be the pine wood near Devor. Why, yes; this, too, was Thursday, and Horace, who had never done such a thing before, had refused dining at the court to-day.

"Oh, there's something wrong, there must be," thought Meg, excitedly. "Shall I tell Laura or Dick? No, I'll frighten or distress no one, until I'm more sure I have cause. But I'll not look at the pocket-book any more—now it would indeed be dishonorable. Yet he'll be searching for it, and I can't give it him. No, for that would put Horace on guard, and I must discover the truth, for perhaps Laura's future happiness may depend on it."

Meg finally decided to place the book among the long grass, under the seat upon which Horace and her sister had been sitting. Then she stole away to her room. Entering, she happened to approach the window which looked upon the rose-garden. There she saw Horace Walton walking down the path, glancing eagerly from side to side. Meg caught a glimpse of his face—it was anxious, she fancied pale.

Reaching the seat he soon found the pocket-book, and after throwing a hurried glance round put it in his pocket as he came sauntering back.

"It's a mystery," said puzzled Meg. "If Amy is in the pine wood this evening I'll be there too."

CHAPTER II.

The Lashmeres of Devor Court were an old county family of good position. The present owner, Mr. Archibald Lashmere, was a widower with three children; the elder, of whom, as his heir, he was exceedingly proud, was Captain Richard; next to him came Laura, who was 21; then Meg, the youngest. Laura was the very opposite of her sister; tall, slim and graceful, there was a calm dignity in her carriage, and a gentle repose on the handsome features, while a pensive expression seemed ever to dwell in her soft gray eyes, shadowed by long dark lashes.

Laura Lashmere had had many suitors, celava sans dire, for she was well dowered, besides being amiable and handsome. Of these one had gained her sincere, undivided affection. Horace Walton, a fine, good-looking young fellow, well born and well bred, being the only son of Sir John Walton, who rather more than a year previously had rented the Pines, about a mile distant from Devor and made the acquaintance of the Lashmeres.

The young people's engagement had fully met with Sir John's approval, nay, he was delighted. He saw in Laura one in carriage and appearance suited to be mistress of his son's house.

"I have but one regret," he remarked to Mr. Lashmere one day, almost with a sigh, "that I have no daughter to win the heart of your handsome son; then, when we had found a husband for merry Miss Meg, our family circle would be complete."

Mr. Lashmere was no less pleased. His family was old and honorable, yet to have a daughter Lady Walton excited that pride to which, being exclusively human, all mankind is subject. Thus, when Meg in her room sat gazing out at the rose garden, without seeing it, her mind too occupied by the events of the morning, she felt terribly ill at ease.

She was little more than a girl, nevertheless she knew something of the world, and she trembled lest she was about to make some discovery detrimental to Horace, and consequently hurtful to her sister's happiness.

"Really," she reflected, with petulance, "it is too much for one morning. Poor Dick's confidence, and now this mysterious portrait. This Amy, with her dear, dear, dearest Horace. It makes one's head ache. 'Pon my word, I don't think I'll have anything to do with it. Why should I? Why? Because it may have to do with dear Laura's future married comfort."

Poor Meg had never been in so much perplexity in her life, and she was glad when the dressing-bell rang.

"Suspense is always worse, in nine cases out of ten, than reality," she thought.

The dinner-hour was 6 at Devor. On its conclusion Dick, as usual, followed his sister to the drawing-room for coffee, while the pater and mater indulged in a short nap.

"Laura and I are going to try that batch of songs Mitchell last sent down," remarked the Captain, moving to the piano; "will you come, Meg?"

"Not at present, Dick; I have some things to arrange in my room," she answered; and no sooner did she see the two thoroughly occupied with the new pile of music than she went into the hall, put on her hat and cloak, then, by a sidedoor, entered the grounds.

It was a moonless night, and only a soft summer gray was over everything until she reached the pine wood. There it was dark, indeed, save for gray patches here and there on the horizon, seen through the straight dark trunks.

Darkness, however, was of small matter to Meg. She knew the path well, and as the stile was at the opposite side to Devor, had no fear of encountering Horace. Nevertheless, as she approached the place of rendezvous she went more cautiously. Suppose, after all, no one should be there? The letter might have been an old one—the Thursday, not that Thursday.

Almost as the thought occurred the murmur of voices fell on her ear. Raising her eyes, she perceived, standing by the stile, and outlined against the gray background, two figures—Horace Walton's and a woman's.

In a moment Meg halted, her heart beating rapidly. Then, feeling it imperative she should know more, knowing so much, quitting the path, she crept noiselessly through the bushes toward the spot.

Soon their voices were clearly audible; but either Meg was too late or they had been earlier than the hour appointed, for they seemed about to separate. The woman in whom Meg now, even in that light, found no difficulty in recognizing the original of the portrait, had evidently been crying. There were tears in her voice as she said:

"Dear Horace, life would have small charm for me were it not that I possess your love, and know you at least would be true."

"Never doubt that, darling," he replied fervently, his hand holding hers. "I love you—I am true to you in secret; but if need were, Amy, I would be so openly. It is for both our sakes that I remain now silent."

"I know it. I never, never doubt you, dear. Oh, heaven! if I ever should lose you, Horace, my existence would be worthless indeed. You cannot tell how miserable I get when weeks pass without my seeing you. At last I cannot bear it, so I come as I have now, and ask you to meet me, forgetful of the risk you run should—should Sir John discover."

"Amy, neither my father nor any one should ever keep me from you," he replied, fervently. "The place you have once filled in my heart you can never lose, my dear."

"Oh, Horace, Horace! at least in your love am I supported and blest!" exclaimed the woman, as, bursting into tears, she sank upon his bosom.

Tenderly he held her to him, kissing her fondly, evidently whispering affectionate consolations.

Meg's little hand clenched, her red lips compressed half with horror, half with indignation.

Finally the woman grew calm, when Horace, taking out his pocket-book, pressed what Meg was certain were bank-notes into her hand. Then once more they embraced. He assisted her over the stile, and said, as they parted:

"As you persist, dear, in my not accompanying I will not; but rest assured, I will soon make an excuse for running up to London, when we will have a happy time of it together alone, with no one to interfere with us."

"When with you, Horace, is my only happy time," she answered, as with a bright smile she moved away across the meadow.

Horace Walton watched her out of sight, after which, recrossing the stile, he came swiftly along the path which led in the direction of the Pines. His arms were folded—his face full of painful thought.

"Poor, poor Amy!" Meg heard him utter, as he passed close by. "I cannot be but true to her; I should be a villain were I not to be. The poor girl! the victim of her own sincere, true love!"

Meg had held her breath, and crouched low among the ferns to avoid detection; but directly Horace Walton was out of sight and hearing she arose and ran for the wood as fleet as a fawn. Reaching the Devor grounds, she slackened her pace.

She had got possession of a terrible, a mysterious secret! What was she to do with it?

Keep it to herself she dared not! Horace evidently loved this woman passionately; his tone, his glance, his manner, proved it! Then, why was he marrying Laura?

"I can guess," thought Meg, indignantly; "that woman is poor, so, of course cannot wed the son of Sir John Walton, therefore, he insults Laura with a pretended affection because she is rich, and the match is a good one; but dear Laura shall not be so duped, or it shall be with her eyes open."

Still in doubt how to proceed, and whom to tell first, reaching the drawing-room windows, Meg looked in.

Dick was alone. Seated on the music-stool he was picking out the tune of a song with the right hand. Why not tell him and get his advice? It would remove some of the responsibility off her shoulders, and perhaps he could break it to Laura. She, Meg, felt she should never have the courage.

In an instant she had thrown her hat and cloak on the terrace, and opening the window entered.

"Hallo, Meg?" exclaimed Captain Lashmere, looking over his shoulder at the click of the latch. "I thought you were in your own room. Come and try this song of Blumenthal's for me, 'Thinking of Thee!' It's awfully difficult!"

"Not at present, Dick. Where is Laura?"

"The mater wanted her—that is, she wanted you, miss, but you not being forthcoming, she took Laura, and I am stranded.

"'Love, I am weak with hope and fear
Thinking of thee!'"

"Dick, dear" said the girl, putting her hand on his shoulder, "please leave off singing! I've something to tell you."

"Why, Meg, what's the matter? You are absolutely pale!"

"I don't know what is the matter," she replied. "I hope nothing! But it's about Horace; and I want your advice, Dick, as to how to tell Laura!"

"Harry isn't ill? He hasn't met with an accident?" cried the Captain, springing up in concern.

"No, not that! Dick, I—I think he is in love with somebody besides Laura—somebody who is pretty, but poor!"

"Nonsense! Good heavens, Meg, are you aware of what you are saying?"

"Not quite, Dick, my head is in such a whirl! But pray, oh! pray hear why I think so before Laura comes!"

Captain Lashmere, perceiving his sister was in most grave earnest and no jest, led her to a couch, and, sitting down by her side, listened soon with the deepest attention.

"This is very singular, Meg," he remarked when the girl concluded. "You were quite right to tell me; but, by Jove! I don't know what to do! Of course Horace cannot marry Laura without explaining who this woman is. The question is, who is best to request this explanation. If the pater, he must be told everything. If myself—"

"I think, Dick, as it concerns me most, I am the right one to ask Horace for a meaning."

The brother and sister turned, then rose in some confusion and compassion, for Laura, exceedingly pale, stood behind them.

"Oh! darling Laura," cried Meg, pityingly, running forward, "you have heard, then?"

"Everything," answered Laura, gently putting her sister back. "As Dick says, it is very singular; and Horace, of course, must explain. But," the pretty lip trembled, "I will never believe he could so have insulted me."

"Neither can I believe it, Lau," put in Captain Lashmere. "And, of course, he'll explain, dear! Do you think we ought to tell the pater?"

"Not yet. I'd rather, Dick, see Horace first. He is coming this evening. He said he would try to be round before 9. Hark! that is his step!"

The two looked at the girl perplexed—she was so self-possessed and calm; but her white face prove how severely she was suffering.

"Go, please," she whispered, motioning to the inner drawing-room. "I would prefer being alone."

They obeyed, and hardly had the curtains closed behind them than Horace Walton entered.

He came forward with a bright smile, saying:

"Well, dearest, you see I have managed to get here." Then he added, with deep concern, "Laura, what is the matter? How pale you are! How strange you look!"

"No; I am quite well. Only just now I have heard that which has both surprised and pained me, Horace," she said, with a brave effort controlling her emotion. "That is, it would considerably have done so had I not been sure you would explain it readily."

"I explain?" he ejaculated. "To you, anything, Laura."

"Then you told me, Horace, that I possessed your true, your undivided love?"

"You do, Laura darling!"

"Can it be?" and her gentle eyes looked into his. "Horace, I have been informed otherwise. Do you mean that you care for no woman but me—that no woman's lips but mine have ever been pressed by yours—even this very evening—"

He started; the color sprang to his face. He regarded her with pained fixity.

"Laura," he murmured, "you know—"

"That you carry a beautiful woman's portrait ever with you—that you met her in the pine wood this evening—that you used the most endearing terms to her, Horace!"

"Who told you this, Laura?" he asked.

He was pale now, his brows were contracted as by suffering, his eyes were bent on the ground.

"What matter, if it be true? Is it?" she asked, earnestly.

"It is."

"The woman is dear to you, Horace?" she asked, faintly.

"Very, Laura."

"Who, then, is she?"

He did not answer. It was evident he was undergoing a terrible mental agony.

"Horace," said Laura's sweet voice, as she put her hand on his arm, "surely I ought to know. I trusted you; I said I was sure you would trust me. Was I wrong?"

"Oh! Laura," he ejaculated, almost with a cry, "do not ask that woman's name, for I may not tell you. Yet the love I bear her is a different love from that I feel for you. Do not mistrust me, dearest, but on this subject my lips are sealed—I may not speak."

"Horace, they should not be sealed to your future wife."

"They might not be. I might risk it; but it is not only you, Laura, who knows of—of this woman's existence?"

"No, Dick and Meg are aware of it."

"Good heaven!" he cried. "Now I see the madness of her coming. Poor—child! Oh! Laura, if you only knew!"

"I wish to, Horace. Nay," she added, sadly, "can you blame me if I say I must, if we are to remain affianced?"

"Good heavens! Laura, you do not mean," he gasped.

"That whatever I decided Dick would never permit our union with this mystery unexplained."

"Oh, heaven!" he gasped in agony, as he paced the room. "Laura, if I alone suffered, I could tell you," he added, stopping before her; "but the suffering will be another's, whose happiness I dare not risk! As my wife you shall know all; but as you love me—and your love does not surpass mine, dear—trust me now. Trust me blindly, darling. I know it is much to ask, but I vow that heaven is not more true than I to you!"

Laura thought she read the truth in the eyes bent on her; yet she hesitated, remembering the kisses Meg had seen, the words she had overheard.

"I cannot, I dare not, answer now, Horace," she exclaimed, dropping on a seat and covering her face in distress. "It is very—very wretched; and to-day we were so happy! Leave me—leave me, I entreat. Give me time to think. Do not force me to reply, for my brain is dazed. Go—go! To-morrow I will answer you."

"I obey you, Laura," he said, taking one of her hands and pressing it to his lips. "Reflect, dearest, upon what you yourself know of me, and judge if I am not worthy your trust. Who has brought this trouble upon us, love, I know not; they may have done it out of kindness to you, but how little—little they can imagine the bitter suffering they may have brought upon the innocent."

Turning, he hastened away, overcome by so violent an agitation that he showed no inclination to remain, even to plead his cause with his betrothed.

Who was it that was innocent? Who to suffer? Could it be the woman?

Seriously, Laura, after impressing secrecy as yet upon Dick and Meg, reflected through that weary night. When she rose she had decided. She could trust Horace Walton despite everything.

Eagerly she waited his coming, but a note, marked private, arrived instead, stating he had received a telegram on serious business which compelled his going at once to London. Laura's heart sank.

London! That was where Meg said the woman had gone. Was he indeed false? No, she would not believe it.

CHAPTER III.

Nearly a week had passed and no further news had come from Horace, when Mr. Lashmere entered the morning-room, an open letter in his hand.

"Here is a nice thing!" he exclaimed. "Horace has been offending his father most seriously. Were you aware, my dear Laura, of any difference between them?"

"None, papa," her cheek growing pale.

"Well, Sir John has disinherited him."

"Disinherited him!" cried all, while Laura, with a quivering lip, said:

"Papa, please read the letter."

"Oh, there's no explanation there. See!"

Dear Lashmere: For reasons that, being personal, I cannot even explain to you, I have disinherited my unnatural son. He had fair warning given him. He has not taken it, so henceforth he may go his own way, get his living how he can, and live among the low set he prefers to my house, which latter he never puts foot in again. Owing to your daughter's unhappy engagement to the ungrateful scoundrel, you are the first I inform of this, as Horace, being now a beggar instead of my heir, the betrothal is at your option to break off. Yours in friendship, but great sorrow,
JOHN WALTON.

The Lashmeres heard perfectly aghast! What could it mean? The younger people's ideas immediately flew to the woman in the pine wood.

"Laura," whispered Dick, "we ought to tell the pater."

"Do so, Dick," murmured the girl, calmly. "I am going to my room."

But it was not to weep. Sitting down, she wrote:

Dearest Horace: We have just learned that for some personal cause Sir John has disinherited you—that would have decided me, if I had not decided before. I trust you implicitly, dear. Whatever may have occurred, I feel nothing has really come between our love, or rather yours for me. Our marriage may be deferred, but I shall ever sign myself, yours forever,
LAURA.

Having sent this off, she informed her father and mother.

"That's all very well and womanly, my love," said Mr. Lashmere, dryly; "but you can't wed a beggar; while I must find out who that woman is, and what Horace has done to be disinherited."

Another week went by then, but not before a letter arrived from Horace to Laura. It ran thus:

My Own Brave Sweet Darling: Would that I could express half the joy your noble letter has given me; though, do you think I would allow you to sacrifice yourself by wedding a beggar—never! My father's unnatural conduct, however, has removed the seal from my lips, and to-day I shall be at Devor, bringing a companion with me to explain all that you asked. Till then, sweet love, au revoir.
HORACE WALTON.

He was coming.

"Well, I'm glad of that," remarked Mr. Lashmere, "if the boy's in the right, why, Laura, money shall not be an obstacle to your union."

Great was the anxiety as the morning wore on. Would Horace be there that day? Meg hoped not, as Dick chanced to be absent. But about three o'clock in the afternoon a fly was heard to roll up the avenue, and a few minutes after the footman announced Mr. Horace Walton.

He entered the room where the family were seated, a bright and happy expression on his countenance, while on his arm leaned a lady clad in deep mourning.

"Amy!" ejaculated Meg, involuntarily, and hoped, inaudibly, but Horace heard it.

"Yes, Amy—the original of the portrait," he smiled. "Mr. Lashmere—nay, to all—let me have the pleasure of introducing my sister!"

"Sister!"

"Sister!" repeated Mr. Lashmere, while Laura's heart was beating too joyously for words. "Why, Horace, we never knew you had one."

"It is sad story, sir," answered the young man, "yet an old one—"

"A daughter's disobedience," put in Amy, timidly.

"And a father's harshness," continued Horace, adding:

"Laura, will you let Amy tell you her story while I relate it here?"

Laura at once arose, and, giving her hand to her lover's sister, led her into the rose garden.

When they had gone, Horace said:

"I have sent Amy away, Mr. Lashmere, as I feel you can listen better to her story during her absence.

"About three years ago my sister was considered the handsomest girl in our county. She had numerous and high-born suitors, but her affections were given to a Lieutenant, who had little but his pay. Worse than that, on making inquiries, we learned he did not bear the best character among his fellow-officers. My father hastened to communicate this to Amy, but was too late. She had eloped with the scoundrel, who had fascinated and deceived her.

"My father banished her forever from his affections and his home. A year later we learned the Lieutenant had been broken in his regiment for gambling unfairly, and my sister was starving. My entreaties so far prevailed on my father that he consented to allow Amy a hundred a year for herself, on condition, however, that I never saw or communicated with her. If I ever did, Sir John vowed he would disinherit me, and cease Amy's allowance. You now perceive" (he interpolated, "for of course Laura has told you") "why I dared not even to her reveal the name of the lady I met in the pine wood."

Mr. Lashmere nodded a friendly affirmative.

"I need not say Amy's life was a wretched one, though in his way her husband loved her. His chief support was what he made at the gambling-tables.

"A short time ago, leaving her in London, he paid a visit to Germany, when she took the opportunity of coming to see me here. The morning after she left I received a telegram imploring me to come to her. I went, to find her in much distress. Her husband had met with an accident, and was believed to be dying. I accompanied her to Germany, where we arrived only in time to see him before he expired. Somehow at this period my father discovered that I had broken my word in respect to seeing my sister, and disinherited me. I wrote a letter of explanation, explaining the husband's death; it was returned to me unopened."

"Yes," remarked Mr. Lashmere, "he is in a terrible rage."

"He will never forgive, I fear; but, dear sir, can you forgive me and my sister the sorrow we have brought unintentionally to you and yours?"

"Forgive, my dear Horace!" cried the gentleman, extending his hand; "I honor you for how you acted. You are welcome back to Devor and so is your sister, though, mind, she was to blame."

"True, sir; but bitter has been her repentance. She is here."

As Laura and her new friend entered, Meg stole to Horace's side.

"Oh, Horace," she whispered, "it was all my fault. It was I who saw you in the wood. Will you ever forgive?"

"I forgive, dear Meg, as I am forgiven," he smiled, as fondly he met Laura's loving gaze. "But where is Dick?"

"Out! no, here," cried Meg, delighted, "I hear his step. Dick, Dick," she added, as the door opened and he entered, "it's all put right, everything. All is explained, and I am so happy!"

"What a madcap you are, Meg," laughed the young soldier. "Ah, Horace—you here?"

"Yes, Dick, and Horace's sister," laughed Meg. "Let me introduce you."

"What!" gasped Dick, as he, turning, changed white and red. "Mrs. Meredith!"

"Captain Lashmere," murmured Amy, blushing crimson.

"Why, have you met before?" exclaimed Horace.

"We met once or twice in Ireland," stammered Dick, painfully conscious, as was Mrs. Meredith, that every eye was upon them.

* * * * * * * * *

That evening, while Sir John was sitting very lonely and miserable over his wine, Mr. Lashmere was announced.

"You are welcome, Lashmere," said the Baronet. "It's awfully dull here."

"I dare say. Well, I've come to make you a proposal," laughed the guest. "Do you remember saying you wished, Sir John, you had a daughter who could win the heart of my son?"

"What do you mean?" said the other, with a dark look.

"That, Sir John, I know your history and your daughter's."

"Sir!" cried Sir John, starting up.

"Stop a second, Lieutenant Meredith is dead," said Mr. Lashmere, extending his hand for silence. "A good riddance to his wife, who, I trust, before eighteen months are over will be Mrs. Lashmere."

"What!" ejaculated the Baronet, "and your wife is—"

"No, no, no," laughed the guest. "Don't you remember I have a son? Well, Dick, it appears, met Mrs. Meredith in Dublin and fell deeply in love with her before he knew she was married. The lad has been awfully miserable about it, and I know, now she is free, that not another woman would he ever make his wife."

"Are you jesting, Lashmere?"

"I'm in right down earnest. Will you give your consent to their union?"

The Baronet paused, then held out his hand, saying:

"Yes, there was but one way, Lashmere, that this disgrace could be wiped out, and you have discovered it."

"By—"

"An honorable marriage. Amy may come back. She shall be married from my roof."

"And Horace?—"

"Lashmere, read me this riddle; my very love for him, in clinging to his sister against my commands, made me the more indignant against the boy. If I forgive her I must pardon him."

It is not necessary to detail the delight which Mr. Lashmere took back with him to Devor; nor the reconciliation between the father and erring daughter. Nor how gayly Dick and Meg sang duets together that evening, for Laura and Horace left them alone, preferring the solitude of the rose garden.

"'The course of true love never did run smooth,' darling," said Horace, joyously. "But the clouds of ours were transient."

"Indeed yes," smiled Laura, sincerely grateful that she had not turned from so true an affection at the first shadow, for what shame and contrition would then have been hers, and how different from now would her future husband have regarded her had she not trusted him? E. W. R.

THE LEGION OF HONOR.

Napoleon's Tweak of the Ear—A Case of Noblesse Oblige.

Recompenses for gallantry vary with nationalities. Once on a time there was an undersized man with a sallow face and eyes that drove right through you. He was clad in a gray coat, and wore a cocked hat. He was a latter-day Cæsar, that was all, who made and unmade kings. It was his wont after some hard-fought battle, before the wheel furrows of the artillery had been smoothed away, the ground still scarred with shells, and the dead, friend and foe, not yet returned to earth—it was his wont to call some bronzed grenadier from the ranks and to simply pull his ears, and that touch of an Emperor, that tweaking, was a consecration and gave something akin to immortality.

That soldier must have been the bravest of the brave, otherwise Napoleon would never have been familiar with him. Then the masterful man would detach a small cross from his person, pin it with his own hands on the breast of the smoke-begrimed soldier, and how the fighting legions would howl like wolves that hoarse cry, "We will die for the Emperor!" And it was no vaporing, for to gain that cross a half million of men stood ready to bite the dust. Somehow the traditions of a cross thus acquired live on and on.

A poor lone woman in a wretched quarter of New York was dying. With halting voice she said to the cure who stood by her bedside: "It is by your charity I shall find shroud, coffin, Christian burial. I had a father who was not kind, a son who did not love me. Forgive a perishing soul! But, my good cure, here under my pillow is the cross my grandfather won—the cross the Emperor put on his breast. I have starved, as my mother did before me, and we never pawned this cross. Let it stay under my head. When I am dead, wait not a moment, take it. I have a grandson in France—you will find his name written on the paper—and I charge you transmit the cross to him. If he be married to a good woman give it to his wife for safe keeping, and say I will rise from my grave and curse them should they by a single dishonorable act tarnish that poor cross!"

"My son," afterward said that kindly priest, "what that woman told was true. It shows us—excuse my homily—the vicissitudes of life. We buried her at the cost of the church, not that that makes any difference, thank God! for the rest of her soul; but that woman's grandfather was a General of cavalry—rose from the ranks—and during the fine days of the empire he was of Murat's staff; and yesterday I transmitted to France the cross. It was saered. Though the woman's family had gone to wreck and ruin, she, poor soul, was honest—I may say, a God-fearing woman. The cross of the Legion of Honor saved her. Why should such a material thing have had such a lasting effect? It was a case of noblesse oblige."—Newark Journal.

THE STITCHES IN A SHIRT.

Why These Articles of Apparel Are No Longer Made at Home.

A Mail and Express man was standing in front of the "gents'" furnishing goods department in a big East-side dry goods store the other day when a lady entered, and, pointing to a big pile of shirts which were spread out on the counter with the prices marked on them in figures as long as your arm, inquired of the clerk:

"How much?"

"Thirty-nine cents each, madam," replied that functionary.

"Three for $1, of course?"

"No, madam, we couldn't really afford it."

"Oh!"

She picked up one of the garments and proceeded to test its quality by pulling with might and main at its weakest points. Failing in this laudable purpose she threw it back on the counter, and with a look of disgust on her face bounced out of the store:

"Usual thing, I suppose?" queried the reporter.

"Oh, that's tame," he replied. "I was surprised that she didn't report me to the manager. Now, just look here a minute," he continued, "that woman couldn't afford to spend her time sewing that shirt together, to say nothing of the material and cutting, for three times the amount we ask for it. Do you know how many stitches the seamstress had to put in that shirt to withstand the kind of usage it has just been put to. Well, just 21,000.

"There are four rows of stitchings in the collar, 3200 stitches; cross ends of the collar, 550; button and button-hole, 150; gathering the neck and sewing on the collar, 1205; stitching wrist-bands, 1328; ends of the same, 68; button-holes in wrist-bands, 148; hemming slits, 264; gathering the sleeves, 840; setting on wristbands, 1468; stitching on shoulder-straps, 1880; hemming the bosom, 393; sewing in sleeves and making gussets, 3050; sewing up seams of sleeves, 2554; cording the bosom, 1104; "tapping" the sleeves, 1526; sewing up all other seams and setting the side gussets, 1272. That represents the amount of labor that must be put into a shirt and explains why the home-made article has gone out of fashion."—N. Y. Mail and Express.

HEART PRESSED AGAINST HEART.

The Romance Developed by a Cowboy's Cruel Murder.

There was a flash of yellow in the blackness of the night, the report of a pistol and the clatter of hoofs. In the midst of smoke that rose up slowly after the vain fusillade had followed the flying Mexican the body of a cowboy was seen prone on the prairie.

Shot in the back by a horse-thief! Oh, a terrible, a sickeningly mean death for a brave man! He still breathed, though paling with the pain of approaching death.

Quickly his shirt was torn open, and there on his wounded side was a strange thing.

The bullet, before entering his brave breast, had torn its way through a photograph that had rested there next his heart. It was torn sharply and the edges, jagged and rough, were imbedded in the wound, carried thither by the terrible force of the shot. The face of the picture was turned to his heart.

It was death if the picture remained so, thrust into the wound, choking the blood, the life. If it was removed he might not die.

But he shook his head. He spoke: "If she—were here, I think—she would—kiss me—so."

He smiled faintly and sent a dimmed love glance toward the wound and the picture. His eyes closed and he began to whisper:

"Her eyes were like—a fawn's, and her mouth—had heaven between—its lips. And now—she kisses me—I feel—her breath—or is it—death?"

He gave a quick shudder, his left hand went up to his breast. He was dead. And on his face there was a smile of infinite happiness.

And who was she whose pictured breast was on his breast, whose limned lips were red with his life blood when he died? Did she feel that gasping, death-drawn breath—did she start and gasp somewhere in a northern home and suddenly put her hand to her heart to still its yearning pain?

Or was he merely one of a hundred victims and did he press to his heart the face of a fair butterfly, whose light-winged love he might never know?

Who shall say? And what matter?

Did they not die together?—Chicago Tribune.

Prescribed Hydropathic Treatment.

A young physician commencing practice had among his first patients an uncommonly unclean infant brought to his office in the arms of a mother whose face showed the same abhorrence of soap. Looking down upon the child a moment he solemnly remarked:

"It seems to be suffering from hydropathic hydrophobia."

"Och, docther, dear, is it as bad as that!" cried the mother. "That's a big sickness for such a mite. Whatever shall I do for the crathur?"

"Wash its face, madam; the disease will go off with the dirt."

"Wash its face—wash its face, indade!" exclaimed the matron, losing her temper. "What next, I'd like to know?"

"Wash your own, madam—wash your own."—Newark Journal.

DRAPING IN HEALTHFUL GARB.

Progress of Dress Reform Among the Women of Chicago.

The Forms of Apparel That Conduce to the Wearer's Comfort, Health and Beauty. Some Practical Hints.

There is a good deal of talk, necessary and unnecessary, about the equality of the sexes. What a man may do may not a woman venture also? is a question often heard, and if a woman does her work faithfully and as well as a man may she not receive the same remuneration?

Women are just now beginning to assert their claims to equality in another and very different direction—dress, says the Chicago Times.

In decades nothing has more marked the difference between strength and helplessness than the contrast between the clothing of men and women. Formerly, long since, men studied personal adornment as well as women, but when "endeavor" became the watchword of a busy world men sacrificed ornament to comfort and utility. They could not afford to remain hampered as women were, beneath weighty and cumbersome draperies, and women, left alone, have gone from bad to worse—have pinched their feet into disease-breeding, high-heeled shoes. They have deformed and disabled their bodies, swung jewels in their tender

Helen Modjeska.

flesh, and have become, as Mrs. Croly wittily phrases it, "the victims of trade," the class whom the manufacturers and dealers have banded together to ensnare and destroy.

When a disease is at its worst it begins to mend. Following a season of hoopskirts like inflated balloons or moving pyramids, heavy trains and weighty rufflings, tight waists and uncomfortable sleeves, has come a more rational movement. It is safe to assert that for half a century the fashions have never been as comfortable and therefore as excellent as they are at present. True, during the last two seasons the narrowness of the skirt has threatened that atrocity, the pull-back, of which Coventry Patmore wrote that the damsel had "her two shy knees clad in a single trouser." Otherwise the plain, light-weight skirt and neat basque mark an era of progress and common sense. It is dress reform of the mildest and most non-committal type, but it is a reform for all that.

And one which leaves much to be desired. The corset, like the poor, we seem to have always with us, but the skirt, the dragging, tiring, enfeebling skirt, has been largely dispensed with. Perhaps Abba Woolson Gould's strong words had much to do with this mitigation of misery, even among the ultra-fashionables, since she said of skirts:

Do what we will with them, they still add enormously to the weight of clothing, prevent cleanliness of attire about the ankles, overheat

Mary Anderson as Parthenia.

by their tops the lower portion of the body, impede locomotion and invite accidents. In short they are uncomfortable, unhealthy, unsafe, and unmanageable. Convinced of this fact by patient and almost fruitless attempts to remove their objectionable qualities the earnest dress-reformer is loth to believe that skirts hanging below the knee are not transitory features in woman's attire, as similar features have been in the dress of men, and surely destined to disappear with the tight hour-glass waists and other monstrosities of the present costume. Any changes the wisest of us can to-day propose are only a mitigation of an evil which can never be done away with till women emerge from this vast swaying, undefined and indefinable mass of drapery into the shape God gave to his human beings.

So skirts for the time have gone out, a pleasant prescription for the hot days, and when the cold days come—why, then warm underclothing, and over that again those light, warm, tight-fitting woolen things obtainable in every dry-goods store under the name of "equestrian tights," which keep one snug from waist to heel, are inexpensive, handy and healthful.

Where extra warmth is needed a knitted woolen petticoat, reaching just below the knee, is sufficiently comprehensive, and, if

Hortense de Beauharnais.

the gown be thin, a single silken skirt, unhitched and weighing but an ounce or two, is the correct thing.

Thus far has fashion herself, the capricious goddess, deigned to favor the brave efforts of the reformers. So far, so good; only it doesn't go far enough. The struggle for freedom and equality cannot stop in so puerile a condition. Women who believe in a radical dress reform—and their numbers are being added unto each day—say "abolish the corset, that atrocious relic of barbarism."

It is possible to be lovely in form without torture which would put a Chinese foot-binding advocate to shame. Mrs. Jenness-Miller, the charming dress-reformer, who now lives in Evanston, once wore ultra-conventional gowns. She says for days she lay on her couch suffering from the backache. She was enamored of social life in Washington, as who is not who is "in it." Her first attempt was a grand success—a shepherdess dress of elegant brocade made at her own house by herself and a maid. She wore it at one of the most elegant entertainments. All social Washington was upset by the beautiful, unique dress. She conceived the idea of using the much-despised Mary Walker divided skirts and underwear. Time has not dulled the interest these innovations created, but only increased it. A house in this city alone supplies at least 5000 ladies with these garments.

The followers, too, are among the elite. No one need be shocked at any of these garments. They are not designed to expose the form, only to give it more freedom of action. Clubs are being formed everywhere, and the first of the land are using the health-giving and beautiful garments.

Mrs. Miller says her own comfort was her first thought, but she was puzzled how to dress so as not to look odd—as attractive clothes was her hobby—and like many women she was not willing to dress hideously this year to be healthy next. She knew all those belts and bands about the waist could no longer be endured. So she began to reconstruct her own. A fellow-feeling caused her to tell others, and then she was hurled into greatness. A really modest woman dreads crowds, and so it was with Mrs. Miller, but the plaint of suffering women found an echo in the memory of her own sufferings, and she went forth and found herself heralded as the "apostle of a new dress dispensation."

A word to those who seem to be discouraged by the immensity of the task in changing apparel throughout to such as have short purses and long desires. It is the old story of Rome not being built in a day. Begin by purchasing combination underwear, since even you cannot afford to erect your house on a sand foundation. If you do not get the equestrian tights at first, arrange your skirt—don't wear more than one if you can possibly help it—on a light cotton waist such as children wear. Discard the corset, and, if you cannot at first go without some support, get one of the waists so largely advertised that are dependent from the shoulders, and which button instead of working by steel ribs. When your muscles are sufficiently firm to go without any underwaist at all it will be still better. Then such dresses as are not made on a princesse foundation you can make hang from the shoulders in the same way as the underskirts. It is an easy matter for any one who can sew.

Another thing to be remembered is that the reform-dress waists are never tight. There is no excuse for having a dress close-fitting unless by the assumption that clothing means another skin and not a drapery. Then as dresses wear out—as they have a way of doing—they can be easily replaced by reform styles, and you may become by an easy gradation clothed and in your right mind.

IN A QUICKSAND.

Terrible Experience of a Man Being Gradually Sucked Into the Earth.

About five miles south of Plattsmouth, Nebr., is one of the most dangerous pieces of road in this whole country, and while in some seasons of the year it is safe for traveling at others it is all a man's life is worth to go over it. The cause of this is a quicksand which lies directly across the road which is used in the fall of the year, but is abandoned in the spring and summer. To prevent strangers from getting into trouble there is generally a signboard at the forks warning them of their danger. In some manner this signboard was removed and the result was that Henry Girard, who lives at Joplin, Mo., came near losing his life.

Girard tells the following story of his adventure: I was coming to Plattsmouth to transact some business regarding some lands in which I have an interest, and as I wished to see the land before I got here I concluded to come on horseback. The horse is a regular pet and is one raised by myself. He comes at my call or whistle like a dog. When I got to the forks of the road I saw that the river road was not used but that the travel went over the hill, but I concluded to go along the bank and thought that I could pick my way without trouble. I got down off my horse and turned him loose to follow me as I walked along. He stopped to graze and I walked slowly watching the river. Having got some distance ahead of the horse I sat down to wait for him. How long I sat there I do not know, but I was suddenly aroused by finding that my legs were firmly grasped by the quicksand. I was slowly but surely being drawn into the earth. I threw myself on my back and tried to draw myself from the sand, but all my efforts were unavailing, and I was slowly being drawn under the sand. I shouted for help until almost exhausted, but could get no response, and was forced to believe that my last hour had come, and that I was to suffer a most horrible death. It was late in the evening and I wondered why my horse did not come. I called him time and again, but he was evidently too far away to hear me.

As I lay there, sinking deeper and deeper every minute, I heard a party of people on the river. It appeared to be a pleasure party of young folks, and as they floated down the stream they were singing. The song came distinctly over the water, but for some reason I could not make them hear, and they passed down the river singing "Home, Sweet Home," while I lay there thinking I had seen my home for the last time. By this time the sand had pulled me down until it was almost up to my shoulders, and I lay with my arms spread out in order to give as much resistance to the terrible suction as possible. I thought I heard my horse and called with all my might, giving a peculiar whistle which I had taught him to answer. He heard me and came running to where I lay, but could not see me on the ground where I was in the hole, as it was rather dark by this time. I called him again and again until he found where I was and then he came to me and I tried to reach up and get some sort of a hold on the saddle or bridle, but I was too low. By some chance he stepped by me and I got a firm hold on his tail and then urged him to go on. It was an awful pull but I could feel that I was being dragged out of the sand. It was such a strain that I was compelled to stop and rest often, but at last I was pulled so far out that I could extricate myself and then managed to hold on to his tail until he dragged me away from the place and there I lay until I heard a wagon on the road and was brought to this city to recover from the terrible mental and physical sufferings. It was a narrow escape, and I do not think I will ever hear "Home, Sweet Home" again without feeling a spasm of thankfulness.—Plattsmouth special to Fort Worth Gazette.

SUICIDE NOT ALWAYS EASY.

The Curious Case of M. Auguste Talloir of Paris.

In the last days of August a man named Auguste Talloir, living in the Rue St. Jacques, Paris, lost his wife, to whom he was devotedly attached. Although he was only 38 years old, a great despair and disgust with life laid hold of him. He decided that he had enough of living and that it was high time for him to put an end to it.

But it seems that this thing of dying is not so easy as one might think. For in the course of his endeavors to put himself out of the world Mr. Talloir established a record for futile attempts at suicide which will not soon be broken. After casting about for the best method both as to certainty and painlessness, Mr. Talloir decided upon strangulation. He got him a stout rope, hied him to his apartment and proceeded to hang himself. For a moment or so everything went well, and the things of this world faded from his view. But just a moment too soon the rope broke, Mr. Talloir fell to the floor with a bang, and was resuscitated by his neighbor of the next apartment. Mr. Talloir was profuse in his apologies and regrets, and his neighbor left him, feeling sure that the suicide would try no more.

But the next day Mr. Talloir was at it again. He had lost confidence in strangulation. He determined to fall back on that old and well-established Parisian method, asphyxiation. He bought some charcoal, shut every door and window of his apartment, set the charcoal a-burning, and lay down upon the bed where his wife had died. He had sunk into a slumber which might have had no wakening, when the same neighbor, who had an unpleasantly alert nose, smelled out the fumes, broke in the door, and once more brought Mr. Talloir to this evil world.

Mr. Talloir thanked his neighbor even more profusely than before. It is not known by what means he persuaded this neighbor that he was sincere. But after staying with him twenty-four hours the neighbor left him in a cheerful and hopeful frame of mind. But this jollity was mere deceit, for Mr. Talloir only waited twenty-four hours before sticking a knife into himself twice. He lost consciousness, and fell from the lounge where he was lying to the floor. The neighbor, whose ears were trained to that sort of noises, was instantly in the apartment. Mr. Talloir was covered with blood, which was flowing from two wounds in the region of the heart. An ambulance was called and Mr. Talloir was soon in the hospital.

The wounds turned out not fatal, and in something like a week troublesome Mr. Talloir was back in his old apartment, a trifle pale and a good deal thinner, but just as much alive as though he had not resolved to die.

Two days afterward his neighbor was much incensed to hear groans as of one in intense pain coming from Mr. Talloir's direction. He rushed in, and Mr. Talloir explained that he had just taken a dose of phosphorus, which was making him groan in spite of his desire to die quietly. The neighbor had in a doctor at once, and once more Mr. Talloir came around. He had suffered so intensely, and was so evidently disgusted with the refusal of Death to have him at any cost that everybody felt that it was safe to leave him alone.

It took him a few days to get strength to leave his bed, and then he spent a few days in gaining strength to walk. On September 24th he went out and bought a compound of chloroform and bichloride of mercury. He locked himself in his apartment and, stretching himself out, took his last and final road to death.

They found him the next morning dead with an expression of great content upon his face. He had baffled his neighbor and had forced himself upon unwilling death. It is rarely that a person rescued from a first attempt at suicide is not well content to await the action of natural causes. This man, who was a person of education and intelligence, seems to have been perfectly sane. He evidently had the genuine fixed determination to deny the will to live.—N. Y. Sun.

HIS DIGNITY INTACT.

Mr. Marshmallow Quite Equal to the Exigencies of a Trying Occasion.

He was no longer young. Time had not bent his form nor sapped his physical energies, but had laid its hand gently on his head, silvering a thread here and there, and had touched with kindly fingers his brow, cheek and temple, leaving faint yet indelible traces of the caress. In the firm, even tones of his voice there was no suggestion of failing powers. His eye was not dim nor his natural force abated.

"It is true, Miss Mildred," he said, "that there is some disparity in our ages, but that is a peculiarity that will become less noticeable as the years roll by. Call to mind the cases within your own knowledge, Miss Mildred," he continued, leisurely uncrossing his legs and crossing them again inversely, "in which the husband is about the same age as his wife, but looks a dozen years younger. The tendency of the humdrum home life is to make the wife become aged more rapidly, while the husband, on account of his inevitable connection with the busy world, retains his freshness for a much longer period."

"That is a strange argument for a man to use, Mr. Marshmallow—"

"Beg pardon, Miss Mildred, but no argument is a strange one for a man to use who is pleading his suit at the court of beauty."

And Mr. Marshmallow smoothed out a crease in his coat sleeve and looked smilingly at the young lady.

"But—"

"Beg pardon again, Miss Mildred. This is no ordinary affair with me, I assure you. I am deeply—I may say intensely—in earnest. In matters of this kind I never trifle."

"But let me say, Mr. Marshmallow—"

"Don't be hasty, Miss Mildred, I beg of you. Remember, I am offering you my hand and heart, and that I fully mean what I say."

"I understand you, sir," replied the proud young girl, with something like a shiver, "and I respectfully decline."

"What?"

Mr. Marshmallow was both surprised and indignant.

"Is it possible I have heard you aright, Miss Mildred?" he asked.

"It is, sir. I do not know of any reason I have ever given you to suppose that I would listen to a proposal of marriage from you."

"And you refuse?"

"I do, sir, emphatically. Further than that, sir, you will permit me to say I consider you presumptuous and forward to an unpardonable degree."

Mr. Marshmallow slowly uncrossed his legs, rose to his feet, drew himself up to his full height, took his hat, cane and gloves, and with the manner of a man deeply injured, but personally superior to misfortune, he said to the young woman as he made his way way with unruffled dignity to the door:

"It grieves me beyond measure, Miss Mildred, to hear you speak in this disrespectful way to a man old enough to be your grandfather."—Chicago Sunday Tribune.

ROMANTIC MOCK MARRIAGE.

The Groom Was in Earnest, But the Bride Considered It a Joke.

The Newburg News is responsible for the following story: The Kiskatom Retreat House, in the shadow of the old Catskill Mountain House, was recently the scene of a singular affair. Thomas Cook, a youth born in the mountains, who knows not his age, nor is he able to read or write his name, fell desperately in love with a charming young school-teacher who was boarding at the above named hotel. She was of a hay-ride party who had stopped at Leeds for a dance, and it was there that Thomas met her and proposed marriage on the spot. Just for a lark she agreed to marry him the following day at 2 o'clock. The day and the hour came, and so did Tom. His wedding dress consisted of a pair of top boots, a well-patched pair of trousers, and a sunbeam straw hat.

The bride wore an elegant white satin dress, trimmed with orange blossoms, and a tulle veil. The boarders, one and all, gathered in the front parlor to witness the ceremonial farce. Tom and his lady-love soon entered the room arm in arm, and a Brooklyn youth robed as an Episcopal clergyman and two others robed and carrying candles went through the regular marriage ceremony of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Both parties answered all the requisite questions.

After the ceremony a reception was held, during which she told him to "go home to his mother and stay there." This, however, Thomas refused to do, and threatened to have both the mock clergyman and the charming young lady arrested unless she came home with him at once. She finally agreed to go home with him the following day in the afternoon. The following morning both she and the "minister" left the country. This season both of them returned. Thomas heard of it, and is after them, it is said, with a warrant. The minister and the teacher have again fled from the Kiskatom Retreat House.

A YOUNG BACHELOR'S EXPENSES.

How He Gets Along at a Salary of $1200 a Year Not Easily to Explain.

What is the cost for a winter in Washington to an ordinarily careful young bachelor? In the first place his dancing club takes, say $30. Then his own club for half a year is about $25. To live for six months at a moderately expensive boarding-house in a small room is $40 a month, or $240. He smokes cigars and cigarettes, and if he is a generous smoker this will amount to about $50. Supposing him to be a moderate club man, his club bill for "sundries" will be about $10 a month, or $60. Now for his clothes. He may not need a new dress suit, so that can be left out, but he will be quite certain to buy two good suits, and hats and shoes and various other adornments. Of course he must go to a good tailor, and these two suits will cost $125. He must have, say, three pairs of shoes, and not being over-extravagant, will get them for $21. Cravats, gloves, hat, shirts, collars and cuffs may be estimated roughly at $106.

To add up, then, gives a total of $417 for what may be termed luxuries and $240 for necessary living. Of the $417 the dancing club, the social club and the club bill for "sundries" are purely unnecessary. The smoking, if he uses a pipe and only smokes moderately need not cost more than $10, and the clothes could be bought, together with the cravats, etc., for less than $100. If he chose to do it, therefore, he could live for $110 outside of his board; a winter would not cost him more than $350. How on earth does a young bachelor who only gets $1200 a year make two ends meet at the end of the year? The estimate given above is a very moderate one, and yet the six months of the winter have amounted to $657, without taking into account a single ticket to the theater or a single "blowout."—Washington Star.

Vermont women are excited over a contest as to who has the most productive fuchsia in the State. A plant with 500 blossoms, owned by a Felchville woman, is in the lead.

Rescued from the Depths of Misery.

The misery endured by unfortunates whose livers are derelict in duty is unspeakable. Sick headaches, nausea, costiveness, disorder of the digestive apparatus, heartburn, vertigo, unrest, sourness of the breath, uneasiness beneath the short right ribs and right shoulder blade, fickle appetite, are among the hateful indicia of biliousness, which, however, speedily vanish when Hostetter's Stomach Bitters is employed as a regulator. Most effectually is its work of disciplining carried out, as a complete renewal of the digestive, secretive and evacuative functions satisfactorily proves. In cases of malarial disease the liver is the principal gland involved, and for maladies of a malarial type Hostetter's Stomach Bitters is an absolute specific. As a laxative—painless but effective—it is unrivaled, and it is an admirable preventive of chronic kidney trouble and rheumatism, and a superb general tonic and corrective. 43

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