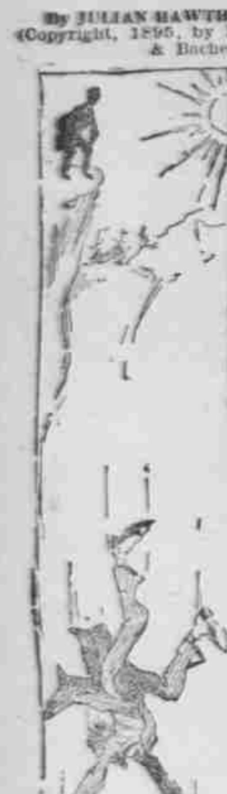
THE SUNDAY TIMES' PAGE OF GOOD SELECTED STORIES.

The Adventure of the Lost Object

By JULIAN HAWTHORNE.
(Copyright, 1895, by Bacheller, Johnson & Bacheller.)



"I Simply Let Him Drop."

On referring to my notes for the year 1895, I find that on Wednesday, the 13th of March of that year, I drove to St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica, to meet the coast steamer containing my weekly bundle of periodicals. Leaving the buggy in the shadow of the bank, I walked across to the pier just as the boat from the steamer made fast to it. The first figure to spring ashore was a tal, thin, active [illegible] blue flannel yachting suit. Judge of my astonishment when I recognized in him my long lost friend, Sherlock Holmes! He cocked his eye at my open mouthed stupefaction, and as usual answered my thoughts before I had time to have any.

"Ah, Watson," said he, "sorry to stultify that last story of yours, my dear fellow, but the best I could do was to keep out of the way until the edition was sold out. No, I didn't accompany my friend, Prof. Moriarty, in his grand aerial flight; I simply let him drop—as you say in society—and backed away in my own tracks (which may account for your having seen no footsteps returning in the opposite direction.)—"Well," he continued, running his eyes over me, "since you seem to have driven yourself down in your buggy, with the bay and the real brown horses, perhaps you wouldn't mind taking me up in it. It has a break in the top frame on the left hand side, but I don't mind that. As you had breakfasted on a goat stew just before starting, and ate well in spite of the fact that you had to add a good deal of salt to it, I presume you won't care to stop here for lunch. I'm glad to see that you have taken a proper amount of exercise by chopping down that pimento tree on the slope of the hill going up to the summer house; one can't be too careful of one's health in the tropics. On the way we can stop and post that letter to Messrs. Ogden, your London attorneys, which you forgot to mail as you came down."

"My dear Holmes," exclaimed I at last, finding my voice, "this passes belief. How on earth—"

"Tut! Simplicity itself. A few horsehairs on your coat, a couple of grains of salt under your right thumb nail, the omnipresence of the goat in Jamaica, the blister on the inside of the right forefinger, the pimento odor emanating from your person, the earth stain on your trousers where you slipped on the slope, your old army penchant for elevated coigns of vantage, the tuppence ha'penny stamp on the corner of the letter peeping out of your breast pocket, coupled with the fact that except your attorneys you have no correspondents in London—"

"How do you know that?"

"My dear Watson," said Holmes, shaking his head, "you must credit me with common intelligence. Your notorious neglect of that long-suffering little wife of yours, culminating in a judicial separation, so disgusted your friends that they cut you in a body and compelled you to seek seclusion in the colonies. You are now endeavoring, through your attorneys, to get the decree set aside that compels you to pay her ten and six-pence a month, and—but perhaps I need not continue."

"You are as wonderful as ever. But the break in the buggy frame—"

"An abrasion on your sleeve where it rubbed against the splintered wood. But really these explanations are poor policy. They destroy the sense of mystery, which is one of the great elements of power. How do you like your neighbors, the American family?"

He met my speechless state of bewilderment with an amused smile.

"The paterfamilias, with his native humor and his classical attainments, must be good company; the seven children may in some respects be a drawback, though they constitute a practice in themselves—"

"Holmes, you positively alarm me."

He pulled a copy of the Jamaica Standard out of his pocket and pointed to this paragraph:

"Lost—A small object. Particulars at Southcum Pen."

"Does this allay your fears?" he asked.

"On the contrary. It is true that the place adjoining mine is called Southcum, but how—"

"And backed away in my own tracks."

"A very superficial deduction, I assure you. Southcum is not down on the maps; it must then have recently been renamed—that is, it must have got a new occupant. In Jamaica new occupants are sure to be Americans. The name Southcum indicates that the family has recently come south, but the last syllable being spelled "cum" points to a pun, only possible to a Latin scholar—hence the sense of humor. "Cum" means "with;" Southcum Pen—came south with a pen; in other words, a literary man. Is not literature his profession? Living expenses in the States are high. The literary profession, seldom remunerative anywhere, is this year especially precarious in the great republic. Hence a poor author would be especially apt this year to seek a cheap environment, if incumbered with a family. Life in the tropics is supposed to be cheap. Owing to the facilities for marriage and divorce in America families are often larger there than elsewhere. Do you follow me?"

"I can see how you arrive at the fact that he has a large family, but how you hit upon the number of the children—"

"Ah, you never read, I see, my little monograph on the ratio between the family, the latitude, and the nationality, divided by the profession. It gained the medal at the Royal Society, but that is a trifle."

"Holmes," said I, "you are, in my opinion, the best and wisest man I have ever known."

Holmes chuckled. "To a superficial eye, I know I must seem egotistic in admitting the truth of your estimate," he said, "but I should hold it the height of affectation to disclaim supreme powers and virtues merely because they happen to be my own."

"And was it the 'Standard' advertisement that brought you here to-day?"

"Excellent! Watson, you are improving! Yes, although recent services to the crowned heads of Scandinavia and other European empires have relieved me from any pressure of necessity in these researches, still, in the interest of chemistry, I like occasionally to work out a human problem or two. I can't, of course, expect another Study in Scarlet or Naval Treaty, but this affair promises to be amusing, in spite of its commonplace external aspect. In some respects, indeed, it is quite unique."

"May I ask what makes you think so?"

"Have you observed that the advertisement contains just eight words and forty letters—an average of five letters to a word? What would be your own deduction from that?"

"I should infer," replied I, after some thought, "that the advertiser wished to say as cheaply as possible that some member of his family had lost something which he was anxious to recover."

I could see that Holmes was a little nettled at the insight I had displayed. "You make your usual mistake of not putting enough emphasis on the significance of details," said he. "It is the omissions in this paragraph that are important. From them I have already been enabled to form seven distinct theories as to the problem, any or all of which may be correct. And now, as we probably have some hard work before us, you will pardon me for improving this opportunity for a little rest."

And before I had time to reply, this extraordinary man had folded his arms, closed his eyes, and fallen into a profound and dreamless slumber.

A few hours later we were seated on the veranda of my American friend Higgins' house. Our host was a man of average height and indeterminate figure, with ma habit of crossing mhislegs occasionalmly and of smiling mslightly when anymthing of an amusming nature transpired in our conversation. I need not say that none of these eccentricities were lost upon Holmes, though he sat with his eyelids still closed as if in sleep. For reasons which will immediately appear, I omit Mr. Higgins' account of the events leading up to the advertisement, as irrelevant.

Holmes looking over her shoulder.

When he had finished, Holmes unclosed his eyelids and brought together the tips of his long fingers.

"Your statement is singularly lucid," he remarked. "But as an error at this stage might prove serious let us recapitulate. The Object, you say, was lost three days ago by one of your children, but you have been unable to discover by which one of them, or what the Object itself was. You remember, Watson, my saying that this case was sure to develop a bizarre interest. Now, Mr. Higgins, let me ask you one question. How came it to your knowledge that any Object at all had been lost?"

"On entering my study the morning before last," replied Higgins, "I found upon my table this sentence.—'I have lost somthin'.' The last word lacked the 'e' and the 'g'."

Holmes' eye gleamed. "Did you recognize the handwriting?"

"I did not."

"Why?"

"Because the words were formed by putting together some letter-blocks which were given to the children last Christmas."

"This is of immense importance," said Holmes, making a note upon his shirt cuff. "Did you preserve the document?"

"I am sorry to say that Charlotte, my negro housemaid, removed it in my absence."

"Hum! But you have the blocks! I think we shall manage. Will you oblige me by calling the children?"

"All of them?"

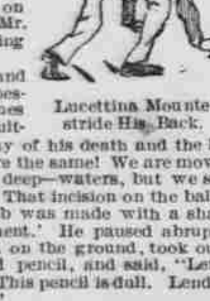
"By all means. Watson"—he bent towards me, caught my pith helmet from my head, and sent it whirling down into the yard. "As you go down to pick it up, Watson," he added, "take a look underneath the veranda. It is always well to make sure that one has been overheard." Knowing his methods, I did as he suggested, and reported the coast clear.

Holmes now stretched out his long legs so that they completely covered the breadth of the veranda. The seven children appeared in the order of their ages, from a gawky girl of twenty-five with sandy hair and an ill-fitting riding habit, to a little miss of ten with yellow hair, a sore thumb and her frock unbuttoned behind. Ordinary disguises were superfluous for Holmes, but, familiar though I was of his power of utterly changing his appearance by mere force of will, I was hardly prepared for the amazing alteration in his physical aspect, which he now affected. It hardly seemed possible that the short, fat, bald-headed old gentlemen, with the bulbous nose, heavy gold earrings and strong smell of musk, who now sat in his chair, was really my lean and ascetic friend. In fact, I was on the point of exclaiming, "Why, what has become of Holmes?" when, recollecting his dislike of being interrupted, I restrained myself and remained motionless.

The children were required to pass in single file from the door at the western end of the veranda to that at the eastern. All of them did this without mishap until it came to the turn of the youngest, who, in lifting her left foot to step over Holmes' leg, accidentally put it through a rent in the hem of her frock and stumbled. Holmes instantly shot out a long arm and caught her, at the same time recovering his natural appearance.

"Your name is Lucettina," he said, with intense energy. "It is marked in indelible ink on the top corner of your pinafore. You are in the habit of riding a horse astride in the pasture. Here are the filaments of the horse blanket on both sides of your petticoat. You have a dog eleven inches high—it was his teeth that tore this rent in your skirt. You—"

"I haven't got any dog now," interrupted Lucettina, looking at him with childish curiosity. "The horse kicked his head last Thursday."



Lucettina Mounted stride His Back.

"Thursday—and this is Saturday—'

"Pardon me, but my little girl is mistaken. The dog was killed on Monday," said Mr. Higgins, crossing his legs.

"Monday—and to-day is Wednesday," Holmes went on exultingly. "The day of his death and the loss of the object are the same! We are moving in deep—very deep—waters, but we shall swim to land. That incision on the ball of your left thumb was made with a sharp-cutting instrument.' He paused abruptly, squatted down on the ground, took out a note book and pencil, and said, "Let us play a game. This pencil is dull. Lend me your penknife.'

"I lost it," said Lucettina, unconsciously putting her hand in her pocket.

"Quite so, you lost it!" repeated Holmes, a flush of triumph stealing into his sallow cheeks, "never mind, here is another pencil that will do better. You can read?—I thought so! I shall right down the words, 'I am going to give you something nice.' There," he continued, after having inscribed the sentence in the book, "see if you can read that."

Lucettina studied it a few moments and then said, "You have left out 'somethin'."

"Ah, how very careless of me," returned Holmes, with an air of embarrassment. "I was quite ill five years ago, and I suppose I have not yet quite recovered. Will you kindly supply the missing word yourself?"

Lucettina placed the book on her knee and wrote slowly and carefully, Holmes looking over her shoulder. "Ah!" he ejaculated, as she finished, "so you spell 'something' without the 'e' or 'g;' well, it is a matter of taste, after all. And, now we will go down in the pasture."

"Shall I go with you?" inquired Mr. Higgins.

"No; you will have the goodness—you and Watson—to remain sitting precisely where you are till we return. Come, Lucettina."

"But where is the nice thing you said you'd give me?" asked the child.

"I was playing a game on you then, you know," Holmes replied, cocking his eye at me, "however, you shall have something when we get back. Come on."

From where we sat we commanded a view of the pasture, which was at the bottom of a small valley just below the house. I had never before seen Holmes with children; his avoidance of them may have been connected with his aversion to female society, to which I have made allusion elsewhere in these memoirs; if you have not the volume by you, you can procure it at the book shops, price $1.25. The truth is, he was always reticent as to his early history, and as I had no source of information except himself, I do not know much about it. I regret to add that instead of adopting Lucettina at the conclusion of this adventure, as I hoped he would, he appeared to lose all interest in her and never mentioned her again.

Holmes' conduct in the pasture was strange, and in anyone but himself would have been unaccountable. When this remarkable man was on the hot scent of investigation he was hardly recognizable as the cold, rather indolent and indifferent personality that he commonly affected. His thin nostrils dilated; his cheeks flushed; his teeth were set; he was like a setter crossed with a bloodhound. Every few moments he flung himself face downward on the ground, wriggling about like a serpent, and examining everything through the strong lens that he always carried about him. Often he would put in his pockets bits of mud, small sticks and stones, and similar things which an ordinary detective would doubtless have regarded as mere rubbish. Lucettina meanwhile, seemed to find him vastly entertaining, and once she mounted astride his back, and he conveyed her a considerable distance in this manner. It was perhaps half an hour before they returned together to the veranda.

HE STRODE MOODILY UP AND DOWN THE VERANDA.

"Well, Holmes," I exclaimed, "what success?"

He gave me a vacant glance, but made no reply. His face was pale, and there was a drawn stern look about his mouth. For ten minutes, during which neither Higgins nor myself ventured to draw breath, he strode moodily up and down the veranda, his hands thrust deep into his trouser pockets, and his chin sunk upon his breast. Suddenly, without a moment's warning, he dashed through the western door, which opened into the dining-room, and slammed violently behind him. What did it all mean?

Higgins and I exchanged a startled look. We listened. A low, unmistakable gurgling noise struck our ears. We sprang to our feet, and could it be that my poor friend, defeated at last by the insurmountable difficulties of this problem, had preferred death to dishonor? We rushed into the room.

The following spectacle met our gaze: Holmes sat at the table holding to his lips a pocket-flask the last drops from which he was pouring down his throat. I know it to contain Three-Stars Brandy, and I leaped forwards, hoping to secure a drain for myself. But he had been too quick for me.

"Holmes," I gasped, staggering back from a well-delivered blow on the eye, "have you solved the problem?"

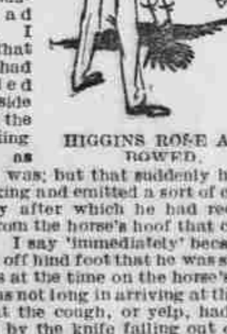
"The problem?" he repeated with an amused smile, rolling up the solid silver flask as if it had been a whisp of paper in his sinewy fingers, and placing it in his watch-fob. "The problem, as you call it, my dear Watson, was solved three hours ago!"

"How?—what?" exclaimed Higgins and I in a breath.

"I have here," replied he, producing the article as he spoke, a twelve-ounce bag full of perique tobacco, and a pipe. If you have no objection I will smoke the former in the latter while relating my investigations."

Higgins signified his compliance, we all three returned to the veranda, where Holmes, from the midst of the blue cloud in which he speedily enveloped himself, spoke as follows:

"My friend Watson, here, will bear me out in saying that my interest in this case has been due rather to its romantic and semi-tropical surroundings than to anything specially abstruse in the circumstances themselves. The two volumes of my "Adventures" and "Memoirs," which he has already published, and which, if you have not already secured them, I should advise you to obtain without delay, contain, somewhat embellished perhaps, a few of such of my experiences as the present state of European politics make it judicious to publish. I was about to say that my first glimpse of your little advertisement convinced me that it must be Lucettina who had lost the Object. Of course, the stumble of the little girl over my legs was not the accident that it seemed to be, but a part of my carefully prepared plan. My subsequent cross-examination of her, which to you no doubt appeared so aimless and inconsequential, really informed me that she had had a knife which she had lost, and a dog which had been killed by a kick from a horse on which she had been riding. It was at this juncture that we visited the pasture, during our stay in which I elicited the information that she had put her knife in her pocket just before taking her ride. Her pocket having at the time been full of other matter, I at once perceived that the knife might easily have become dislodged, probably in the act of her being placed on the horse by the groom, or in the subsequent gallop. The pocket is on the right-hand side of the dress; it was therefore on the right-hand side of the path that I conducted my scrutiny. Satisfied that it was not on the ground, the problem, by the process of exclusion, was narrowed down to the dog, on whom from an early stage of the proceedings, my suspicion had been fixed. I learned that this dog had gambolled along beside her during the ride, barking playfully as his custom was; but that suddenly he had stoped barking and emitted a sort of cough, immediately after which he had received the blow from the horse's hoof that caused his death. I say 'immediately' because it was by the off hind foot that he was struck, and he was at the time on the horse's right side. I was not long in arriving at the conclusion that the cough, or yelp, had been occasioned by the knife falling out of Lucettina's pocket into his throat, and that it was the confusion thus brought about in his faculties that prevented him from avoiding the horse's hoof, as he would otherwise have done. Having ascertained that the body of the little dog had been deposited upon the compost-heap, and having gathered a few trifles with the help of my lens, I returned to the veranda. Now, Watson, let me ask you what would have been your next step in these circumstances?"



HIGGINS ROSE AND BOWED.

Abrupt though the question was, I was prepared.

"I should cause the corpse of the dog to be produced," I said, "I should perform laparotomy upon it, and search its gastric cavity for the knife."

"Is that the course you would advise, Mr. Holmes?" asked our host.

But Holmes seemed to have become suddenly abstracted. His gaze was turned skywards. "How beautiful and instructive are the phenomena of nature," he murmured. "Take the flight of the birds, for example. How completely does the flight of yonder buzzard illustrate the ideal of power combined with grace! Yet his personal habits are in many respects gross and uncelestial. Let this remind us to exercise charity towards our fellow creatures, who, though they may be inferior to us in some respects, may yet rise high above us in others."

At this odd digression, so alien to my friend's usual style, Higgins threw me a covert glance and significantly tapped his forehead. Meanwhile the buzzard directed his flight toward us, and seemed to contemplate alighting on the roof of the house. Holmes rose, regarded him intently, and then, as the bird swooped forward, he snatched a silver-mounted revolver from his pocket and fired. The buzzard fell dead on the veranda steps.

"Holmes, what have you done?" I exclaimed. "Buzzards are protected by Jamaican law."

"That is Mr. Higgins' affair," he returned coldly. "What concerns me is, that the knife is found."

"The knife found?" I cried. "How? Where?"

"In the buzzard's crop, to be sure. The dog swallowed the knife, the buzzard ate the dog, and the knife along with it."

"But how do you know it was this particular buzzard?" asked Mr. Higgins.

Holmes took out his pocketbook and extracted from it a small brown feather.

"You have, perhaps, never seen my monograph on the plumage of birds as a means of detecting crime," he remarked. "It is a standard work among the scientific societies of Europe. I picked up this feather on the compost-heap. As that buzzard swooped, I noticed that the twenty-seventh feather of the left pinion was missing. This is it. He was the culprit."

"Amazing!" I exclaimed. "Holmes, this is the greatest intellectual triumph you have ever achieved. You omitted, however, to state your reasons for causing Lucettina to write the word 'somthin' in your book. Perhaps you prefer to leave that to the ingenuity or the reader?"

"Although that has never been my habit," he replied, "I am willing to do so in this instance. Well, Mr. Higgins, are you satisfied?"

"It is marvelous," answered Higgins, inserting the thumb and finger in his waistcoat pocket and bringing out a small penknife with a white handle. "Meanwhile, here is the Lost Object. I myself picked it up a few minutes after Lucettina dropped it in an unsuccessful effort to put it in her pocket. But for this trifling detail, I should certainly expect to find the knife in the position you have indicated." He paused a moment, and then added: "I heard that Mr. Holmes was in the Island, and desired to make his acquaintance. The insertion of the advertisement in the paper seemed the method most likely to succeed. I also was desirous to get a little 'copy' for my New York weekly letter. In consideration of the object, I trust Mr. Holmes will excuse the means."

For an instant I feared that Holmes was bested at last. Never was I more mistaken.

"My dear sir," he said, with a broad smile, "I have been from the first perfectly aware that you had found the knife, and in the manner indicated. But recognizing in you an intellect of a caliber nearly equal to my own, I had to resort to extraordinary means to induce you to show your hand. I think you will be the first to admit that I have been successful. Confess, my dear Higgins, that had I not shot the buzzard you would not have produced the penknife!"

Higgins rose and bowed to this incontestable evidence of superior greatness.

"Mr. Holmes, and you, Mr. Watson, have the goodness to walk up to my sideboard," he said. "The drinks are on me!"

The English Novel.

The abolishment of the three-volume novel in England has resulted in the introduction of smaller, much poorer type in the one-volume substitute. This type has been made necessary by compressing three volumes in one. The average English novel is between 120,000 and 150,000 words long and in three-volume shape there was ample room for wide margins and good type, which there is not in the single book. There is not much chance of the novelists making their books any shorter, as they are paid by the publishers so much per thousand words. For them to curtail the length would mean financial loss—Philadelphia Ledger.

She Was No Fool.

"We need no ring to plight our troth," he suggested, as he kissed her impetuously.

"Yes we do," retorted the maiden. "None of your sleight-of-hand tricks with me."—Detroit Tribune.

RAFF'S ENTERPRISE,

1239 and 1241 11th St. Southeast.

Make Us a Visit?

We gladly invite all citizens for an hour's stroll over the house. Not only are they welcome without being buyers, but so also are their friends. All sightseeing and information are freely at their service.

Here you will find honest merchandise at honest prices. Our ever-increasing sales show the appreciation with which you greet our methods of business doing.

50c. the price of Ladies' Percale Shirt Waists.

Our price, 25c.

Another invoice of those Ladies' Percale Wrappers that created such an uproar.

Our price, 49c.

We will sell you the finest selection of new novelty Dress Goods. Regular price, 50c.

Our price, 29c., strictly all wool.

Remember a $4 Strictly All-wool Jersey Suit goes this week at $2.48.

See our window display of Ladies', Men's, and Children's Button and Lace Shoes, all styles, $2 goods. Go at $1.48.

Our Ladies' Black and Tan Capes, $2.48 goods, go at $1.48.

Did you see those Lace Curtains? 98c. goods go at 39c.

New invoice of 6-4 Chenille Table Covers, $1.48. Go at 89c.

All-wool remnants of Carpet, 50c. goods, go at 25c.

$1 Ingrain Rugs go at 49c.

25c. Heavy Seamless Mattings go at 12 1-2c.

15c. Hemp Carpets go at 8 1-2c.

50c. Plain Opaque Window Shades go at 25c.

Remnants.

Remnants.

15c. Duck go at 8 3 4.
12 1-2c. French Percale go at 8 3-4c.
15c. Crepons go at 10c.
15c. Dimities go at 8 3-4c.
12 1-2c. Black Satines go at 7 1-2c.
25c. Boys' Bicycle Hose go at 15c.
50c. Ladies' Opera Hose go at 15c.

Raff's Enterprise,

1239-1241 11th Street Southeast.

Bill's Luck.

By KATHERINE BATES

(Copyright, 1895, by Bacheller, Johnson & Bacheller.)

The back yard of a corner tenement on Twenty-sixth street was always a surprise to those passersby who chanced to go that way on some unwonted errand, and an unfailing pleasure to the whole population of the neighborhood. In the center of the small inclosure was a round bed of flowers, petunias of varied hues, red and yellow marigolds, and other blossoms of the hardy type, all hemmed in by a border of mingled sweet alyssum and mignonette. Narrow paths, accurately defined by white shells, running on each side of the flower bed, separated the more aesthetic part of the garden from the strip of onions near the fence on one side, and of cabbages on the other. At the alley end of the yard stood an old stump of a tree to which boards had been nailed in such a way as to cross each other at random; the whole framework was covered by morning-glory vines, which reached out their tendrils to the

HENERY'S WOOING PROGRESSED RAPIDLY.

fence behind the stump, and even graciously let some off-shoots drop over the garbage barrel outside. At the other end of the yard the pillars of the little porch upon which the basement door opened were also twined with these luxuriant vines, and the two comfortable split-bottomed rockers upon the porch, forced by circumstances into a chatty proximity, were in the shade the greater part of the day. Altogether it was a unique back yard for this region of the city, and its charms were made more evident by its being at least six feet below the level of the sidewalk, so that a loiterer could lean on the fence and look down at the cheery scene without feeling that his act was an intrusive one.

This yard, the ground floor of the tenement, and the bit of grass in front, grass that was clipped each morning, formed the home of William Miller, and a very happy home it was, in spite of the fact that half the men in the neighborhood had said feelingly, "Pore Bill, pore old cuss," when he and his mother and his small sister Dolly had united their fortunes with Maria Kennedy and her three sisters.

"Six women folks is somethin' of a fambly," Bill had admitted, "but, Lor', them girls will be marryin' off in no time and I reckon the two Miss Millers will get along together. Anyhow, a man's gotter get married when the notion takes him, and what yer goin' to do about it if he's got folks and she's got folks? Take 'em all in, I say, and keep on a-sayin' to yerself and to everybody else, 'The more the merrier.'"

During the ten years since his marriage he had faithfully kept up his cheerful speech, and the old and the young Mrs. Miller had gotten on fairly well together in spite of positive convictions cherished by each as to the running of a household, but the girls had not married off at the rapid rate on which Bill had counted. There were still three Miss Kennedys, and even Dolly, undeniable beauty that she had developed into, was still "on pore Bill's hands," as the same sympathetic friends often remarked. It was not for lack of suitors in her case; all the blame, if any had ever dreamed of blaming Dolly for anything, would have to be laid to her own capricious will; it was, however, a matter of pride rather than regret to the whole family when it was surmised that "our Doll's turned off another."

As Bill had grown accustomed to her light-hearted indifference to her lovers, it naturally surprised him one night when he had decided to go into his own pretty back yard for a smoke to have his sisters-in-law say hastily, in rapid succession, "Better not, Bill," "Stay where you are Bill," and "You ain't wanted out there, Bill."

"Why not?" he asked. "Nobody out there but that no-'count Henery Dobbins. They can have the rockers—I don't want to set down. I'm just goin' out to santer 'round a spell."

The three looked at each other. The youngest, Adeline, who was only thirty, giggled a little as she said, "Yes, it's only Henery, but you better do yore santerin' right here in the kitchen, Brother Billy."

"Stay in doors on a night like this? Not much," said Bill. To himself he added, "Doll's like enough tired of Henery by now and mebbe he and me can get a few words on this here last caper of the mayor's. No use tryin' to make the girls understand it, but Henery is a good talker, if he is so lazy."

He started again for the yard, but during his moment's delay his wife and mother had joined in the discussion.

"He ain't worthy of her noticin' him," the older woman said, earnestly. "You go right along out there, Bill. I don't know what's come over Doll to take sech a shine to Henery, after all the good offers she's had!"

Bill looked at them thoughtfully; so Dolly's hard heart was really touched at last, and by shiftless Henery Dobbins, of all people in the world!

"I reckon I jest as leave smoke right here," he said with his usual good nature.

His sisters-in-law beamed at him.

"I think Henery is a right pleasant young man," Jane ventured.

Old and young Mrs. Miller both turned on her.

"You do, do you?" said her sister. "Well, seein' as you are sech a judge"—but she was interrupted by her mother-in-law, who said with ponderous sarcasm, "May I be allowed to ask, Jane Kenney, how many times you've been married, ma'am?"

The spinsters were subdued, and Bill, yielding to the force of family opinion, joined the couple in the yard, but he tender-heartedly spent a large part of the time over by the morning glories near the alley fence.

"I like the way them glories smell," he explained politely when he was invited to sit down on the porch.'

"Bill's a lamb," Dolly said to herself tenderly," and I wish them glories did have some smell to kill out the one from the alley for him."

While Bill's wife and mother were submissive to Dolly's will they grumbled a good deal to each other.

"It will jest mean Bill's havin' to look out fur them," said his mother. "Henery won't work steady, and Bill will have to take 'em in."

"Yes," agreed Maria, "that's what it will come to. Bill's got good pay, but I don't see how he will stretch it any further."

Both women sighed at the prospect before them, but avoided looking at each other as they did so. Theirs were kindly natures, in spite of the frequent jarring, and while Maria was anxious that the old woman should not think she was begrudging Bill's care of his mother and sister, the mother was hoping Maria did not suspect that she felt her boy had had a hard time supporting three sisters-in-law all these years. Bill himself said little to his family, except when he deemed it judicious to throw in a few remarks derogatory to Henery when the latter's lack of thrift was an especial source of annoyance, or a little praise of him when Dolly seemed depressed in spirit. It was difficult balancing even for one who had grown agile in such performances by long years of practice in adapting himself to feminine moods.

To one person, however, he gave a clear view of the real state of his mind, and this was Jim Ruggles, who worked in the shop with him. He lived near the Millers, so Bill had the chance to walk home with him each day, a privilege he prized highly, for Jim was a man, although there were people, notably in his wife's family, who asserted that he was not much of a one. Bill himself had not a high opinion of Jim's mental ability, but he had grown attached to the gaunt young fellow, with his mildly apologetic air.

Jim took a great interest in Dolly's love affair.

"She ain't gettin' much in takin' Henery," he said to Bill one night. The words had a familiar ring to him. He had heard his wife's mother say something of the sort in another connection, and it was pleasant to pass on the criticism.

"No, she ain't," said Bill. "But look a-here, Jim, I'll tell you how I feel 'bout if you'll hole your tongue 'bout my views. Doll likes him, so she'll be happy—and the other girls and ma like him well 'nough if only he went the [illegible]prosperin' kind. Now, it's me that that will come on, and I don't mind the takin' care of 'em so long as they will be content to live right with us."

"What yer want him there for? Ain't yer sorter crowded already?" asked Jim.

"Yes, sorter," said Bill. He was a little ashamed of his own attitude, and continued with rather a hang-dog air: "But you see, Jim, without runnin' down women folks any, it would be sorter pleasant seein' a man now and then. Why I ain't enjoyed election day and the week before and after it for ten years the way I have this last one jest passed. To come home and have a feller there that knowed what was what has jest been prime, I can tell yer. Fact is, I don't mind tellin' yer, jest between you and me, that the extry bother of supportin' Henery wouldn't be nothin' compared to the satisfaction of havin' another man in the fambly to chin with. I know he's dreadful lazy, and would be out of a job a good part of the time, but he's a good talker, and he ain't a woman. I'd re'ly like to hurry up the weddin', if there's goin' to be one, fur my sake as well as Doll's, but I can't tell ma or any of the girls the reason why."

"Why can't yer?" asked Jim. "Of course you couldn't well say to Dolly that you was willin' to put up with his good-for-nothin'ness fur the sake of his tongue, but I don't see why you can't say it to the rest of 'em, at least to yore wife."

They were crossing the street and Bill paused in the center, regardless of the vigorous swearing from the driver of a beer wagon.

"At least to my wife!" he ejaculated scornfully. When they had reached the sidewalk in safety he put his hand on his friend's arm. "Look a-here, man," he said, "ain't you been merried most a year?"

"Yep, but what's that got to do with it?"

"Oh, you plum fool! Well, I ain't been merried ten year fur nothin'. Do you s'pose I'd resk the happiness of our home by actin' as if I want satisfied with my womenfolk's talk? No, sir! I always act as if I liked nuthin' better than hearin' the sort of truck they tell me—didn't care nuthin' 'tall 'bout talkin' to a man—fact is, a man would jest 'bout turn my stomach! Say, does your wife act happy?"

Jim hung his head.

"To tell the truth," he said, humbly, "I ain't made much of an out at bein' a merried man. I ain't a drinkin' feller, as you know, but my wife's talkin' some of goin' back to her own folks."

"Shouldn't wonder," said Bill calmly. "Well, you ain't so much to blame, fur you are young and you didn't have a fambly of a mother and a sister and marry another of sisters-in-law to learn you sense pretty quick. But you take my advice—go home and ask yore wife 'bout how much that baby cried and if the stove has kept on smokin' and if that wan't percal Miz Misenborg had on last Sunday and if those new folks jest moved in don't act mighty queer—and you listen to all she answers yer, and you won't hear no more talk 'bout her goin' back to her folks. And say, don't you try to tell her how the elections went or what the boys was sayin' down to the

"I LIKE THE WAY THEM GLORIES SMELL."

shop, unless it was 'bout somebody she knows. G'night, and don't you forget that talk 'bout Henery was jest between you and me."

They parted at the corner and Bill, whistling gayly, went down the steps to his cheery home. Maria opened the door for him, whispering as she did it, "Henery is here again to supper."

"You don't say," grumbled Bill, suppressing his pleasure. "Well, we do have hard luck."

"We've jest got to put up with it, so don't say a word, Bill; I'll be mad if you do," Maria turned quickly, her vexation vanishing under his sympathy.

For some reason Henery's usual fund of topics for conversation seemed exhausted this evening. He ate his supper in a silence that seemed uncomfortable, and made Dolly look at him time and again wonderingly. When the meal was over he said hesitatingly that he would like to see Dolly in the front room for a moment.

"Got her a ring," surmised Adeline.

"And wants her to set the day, mebbe," chimed in Jane.

Bill listened with a pleased smile. He sat down by the kitchen stove and smoked, making plans in peaceful contentment, but his dreams were soon interrupted by Dolly, who came hastily into the kitchen, banging the door behind her.

"Thank goodness," she said with vim, "I'm rid of him."

"Rid of Henery?" gasped Bill. "Ain't yer goin' to take him?"

"That I ain't," said Dolly, her cheeks flaming and her eyes filling with tears. "The no-count impudent feller!"

"I thought you liked him," said Bill.

"Well, I didn't. Oh, yes, I did sorter, brother Bill."

The girl dropped down by him and took his hand with a sudden touch of tenderness.

"I was sorter taken with him," she admitted, "but I knew all the time he was no count and that it was dreadful hard on you."

"You ain't turnin' him off fur my sake?" asked Bill eagerly. "Oh, you ain't no need to do that, Doll. Here, I'll run call him back. Why, I should like to have him come right in here and live with us."

"You are the unselfishest man I ever saw," cried Dolly, "but it ain't for you I'm doin' it. The sassy feller wanted to tell me he didn't want me to set too much by his 'tentions for he's got another girl! Said that to me, Bill, that's turned off half the men 'round here! There, don't be so mad; it was all a mistake, anyhow, and it's jest pure luck for you that it's turned out so. Say, will you tell the rest I've sent him off?"

"Of course I will," said Bill, sadly.

When Dolly retired he went at his task. The girls were distressed, but his mother and wife congratulated him warmly.

"It's a fine piece of luck for you, Bill," they said, "and you deserve it, Bill. You'd borne well the thought of havin' him to look out for, too."

"Had I?" said Bill, meekly. "He was a modest man in his estimates of his own deserts, and he added with a sigh, "Well, mebbe I did deserve this luck."

"We've certainly got a good 'nough sized family now," mused Maria.

"Oh, yes," said Bill, "six women is quite a fambly. We couldn't have got long with a man, too—p'raps."

Contagious.

Mammy—Do you hear what der physician says? You've got the chicken-pox. Hain't I done tole you dat sompfin dreadful gwine ter happin 'less you kept away fum dat hen coop?"—Harper's Bazar.

DR. CARLETON

FOURTH YEAR AT

507 Twelfth St. N. W.

Over 25 Years' Experience.

A SPECIALIST AND EXPERT ON DISEASES AND DISABILITIES OF MEN.

Do you feel more tired in the morning than on going to bed? Do you have melancholy spells? Are you unable to concentrate your mind? Have you poor memory? Do you feel unfit either for business or society, feel shy, desire to be alone, lack confidence in yourself, irritable, despondent, and almost demoralized, feel generally used up, and that life is losing its charm for you? If so, you are afflicted with

Nervous Debility,

And if you do not receive prompt and efficient medical treatment you may be attacked suddenly by

Nervous Prostration.

CONSULT DR. CARLETON.

Thousands of the busy, brainy, thinking classes of American men exhaust themselves long before they have reached what ought to be the age of

Life's Golden Meridian.

Thousands of others who have burned the candle at both ends, so to speak, indulged in excesses during youth, and after marriage, perhaps, now realize the inevitable result.

It does not by any means follow that all men so attacked have been guilty of either fault or excesses, as only too often do we find the sufferer's habits to have been quite exemplary, except that he has been

The Slave of His Own Ambition.

Perhaps he has been subjected to prolonged mental strain, harrassed and racked by a thousand and one tormenting cares, real or imaginary, and the worry of his business or profession.

Ninety Per Cent.

Of men, at some time of life, between the ages of 21 and 50, become afflicted with organic and nervous weakness and LOSS OF SEXUAL POWER, partial or complete. No other ailment is so disastrous to man's happiness. So intimate and direct is the telegraphic line of communication between the brain and the reproductive system that the man, conscious of organic weakness, is weighed down by miserable forebodings, doubt, disability, fears and embarrassment. The condition demoralizes a man; he loses dignity, becomes despondent, sometimes thinks of committing suicide, sees nothing to live for, and feels generally discontented with himself and all the world.

Do you begin to realize that you are drifting into the above condition? that you are not so vigorous as formerly, have not the old-time energy nor vitality, are losing your grip, and lack the vim of other days which enabled you to thrust trifles aside and march onward to success? If so,

CONSULT DR. CARLETON.

This condition of lost or failing vigor in married or single, no matter how induced, can be cured by the scientific and advanced methods of treatment employed by Dr. Carleton. Age no impediment.

YOUNG MEN

Who are troubled with dreams and drains, which sooner or later exhaust vitality and result in nervous debility or other serious conditions, should consult Dr. Carleton. He will take an interest in them and get them well.

SYPHILIS.

A description of this most dreadful disease is unnecessary here; suffice it to say that its treatment by scientific men to-day is very different and far in advance of what it was some years ago. Dr. Carleton's method of treatment is pre-eminently successful, and he guarantees an absolute cure and complete eradication of the disease in shortest possible time by latest scientific methods; worst cases solicited.

BLOOD AND SKIN.

Blood and Skin Diseases, Blood Poison, Syphilis, affecting the Body, Throat, Skin, and Bones; Mucous Patches in Mouth, Ulcers, Tumors, Warty Growths, &c., scientific treatment; guaranteed cure. Ulceration of Leg or other parts. Worst cases solicited. Cure effected or money refunded.

PRIVATE diseases of any nature, Scalding, Burning, Smarting, Frequent Urination, Discharges, Irritation, Gleet, Stricture, etc.

VARICOCELE, worst cases, radically cured by my unfailing method.

Don't waste precious time. Consult Dr. Carleton. He will take an interest in you, he will get you well. His long residence in this city and his brilliant record of cures effected in apparently hopeless cases entitle him to your confidence.

DR. CARLETON,

FOURTH YEAR AT

507 Twelfth Street Northwest.

Consultation Free. Strictly Confidential

Here's a Howdy-Do!

It's a horrible statement, nevertheless true, that while numerous women are only too ready to give their time and energies to teaching the Chinese male there can hardly be found at the present moment a so-called "charitable" woman who will undertake to teach English to a Chinese female. Just now there is quite a good caste Chinese woman looking for "some Christian American lady who will teach me how to speak English, and the Christian doctrine at the same time." The woman came over a month ago to join her husband, who keeps a little prospering Chinese store—tea, lanterns, fans and the rest—in Bleecker street. When a lady from the city mission went to see her she said that if some good lady would teach her conversation and religion she might even manage to pay a little for the instruction.

Not one conversational or religious lady could be induced to assume the task. One good, charitable lady went down with teaching intentions, thinking a man wanted the lessons, but when she found nothing better than a woman she cooled off and thought she "couldn't find the time." Then the poor Chinese lady, who thought it might be her birth or breeding that was in question, called an interpreter and proclaimed through him to the withdrawing teacher her high pedigree and connection in China. "I am a blue-blooded aristocrat," was what she said, "and if you don't believe my word about it, just look at my feet." The charitable woman did take a look at her feet, which were sufficiently distorted in miniature for any well-looked-after Chinese lady, but all the same the woman, who is very anxious and of a gentle, refined temperament, remains without a teacher.—New York Herald.

A Good Sample.

Here is an alleged sample of obituary poetry taken from a Philadelphia paper:

I gave him his medicine regular
From morn till the set of sun.
He took two powders at ten o'clock
And another powder at one.
But doctors cannot help us
When death knocks at the door.
Good-bye, my darling husband!
You left at ten minutes to four.