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The Retort.

Old Birch, who taught the village school, walked a maid of monstrous habit. He was stricken to a quill. And she was played to a ribbon. From Birch had never become a wife before his husband thought to make her the pink of country polished life. And palm and fanned to a shiver.

Literary Curiosity.

Happy that one may pass his life in the sea from mechanical chains; Who is devoted to a wife. What never is able to offend. The thousands that in woman dwell? The worth in woman you behold is almost imperceptible.

THE PRESERVE CLOSET.

"Upon my word, this is about the oldest proceeding I ever knew!" Colonel Templar sat in his bachelor apartment, where the rays of an April sunshine shone in lines of glittering gold among the Neapolitan violets in the window, and drove the little canary wild with silver-voiced delight—a metron crowded with a miscellaneous infusion of meercrimms in different ages of color, dressing-gowns, cigars, newspapers, and gorgeous velvet pappas—he contracted his brows coolly over a letter whose pink papered delicate scent of foreign perfume bespoke a troublesome lady correspondent.

ting mandin and romantic—oh, Sidney Templar? This will never do, old fellow.

The Colonel gave his heavy black locks a backward toss, as if impatient at his own folly, and vigorously directed his attention to the list of eligible residences in his pocket-book.

"No. 41—street, here's the very place. Wants painting badly on the outside, but may present a more promising appearance within. At all events we'll try."

He rang the bell, and a brief skirmishing of servants in the hall, a faded lady, in dyed silk and hair in crimping-pins, appeared.

"Is this house to let, madam?" inquired our Colonel deferentially.

"Well, yes, it's to let, but you can't see it now."

"Can't see it now?"

"No," sneered the lady, vindictively. "Hours are between two and four."

"I'm quite sure the female in the circumstances is an old maid," decided the Colonel, mentally, "and I think she must have breakfasted off broken glass and cambric needles. I wonder if the people at No. 171—street will be any more affable."

A pretty blue-eyed woman in a torn wrapper, and slippers down at the heel, answered the door bell.

"Can I see this house?" meekly questioned Colonel Templar.

"Could you call again in about an hour?" asked the blue-eyed one. "My husband is out, and we've been so troubled with thieves and respectable looking agents who carried keys with 'em, that—"

"Oh, I beg your pardon. Under the circumstances I will not intrude," said Colonel Templar, with a comic elevation of his eyebrows. "Perhaps, however, you will be good enough to observe that I leave the door-mat behind me, quite safe."

The blue-eyed lady looked after Colonel Templar as he strode away, with a puzzled face.

"It's as well I didn't let him come in," was her internal comment. "He looks as if he might be a little crazed."

While Colonel Templar stroked his moustache and pondered dubiously within himself:

"I wonder if I do look like a rogue."

"Herbert! Bertie! don't you hear the door-bell? Bertie, I say!"

The gentleman apostrophized as "Bertie" was sitting at an old fashioned mahogany desk, absorbed in a pile of blotted manuscript, with dishevelled hair, and middle finger deeply stained with ink—evidently a young author, very much in love with his profession.

Directly before him stood the speaker, a young lady of twenty years or thereabouts.

She was exceedingly pretty, with the innocent, dimpled beauty of a white kitten or a pet rabbit; blue eyes, with a complexion where faint roses seemed to glow through the transparent skin, and a mouth like a dash of scarlet velvet.

While her lovely golden hair was fastened straight back, in a great lustrous twist. *En dishabille*, evidently, but quite pretty enough to excuse all defects of flour-sprinkled hands, and hair half loose.

"Door bell?" repeated the young man, staring vacantly.

"Yes; some one to see the house, I suppose, and I such a figure. Do, please, go to the door, Bertie; there's a jewel. Mary has gone to the grocer's, and see what a state I'm in."

She held up both dimpled hands, and nodded archly in the glass at a huge lumpy patch on the peach-bloom cheek.

"There it goes again! Do make haste, Bertie, and on your life, don't show any one into the kitchen. Tell 'em it's a gem of a little kitchen, but don't let 'em in for the cake 'is half made and the bread half baked, and I'm half distracted; and the rolling-pin, and spice-boxes, and egg-beaters are all lying around loose, and—there."

And the young lady expedited matters with a push that left five white dots from her five finger ends on the back of Mr. Herbert's cashmere dressing-gown.

"The dear, absent-minded goose!" she pondered as she fluttered downstairs into the kitchen; "if there's any made he'll be sure to make it. The more absent-minded he grows I do believe."

"Why, yes, this house is to let," said Mr. Bertie, in answer to the courteous inquiry of the tall stranger. "And I suppose you want to look at it?"

Sidney Templar glanced carelessly around the lofty rooms, thinking they would suit his ambitious little cousin very well, suddenly a portrait hanging over the carved marble mantelpiece caught his eye.

"Marion Caryl!" He did not articulate the syllables, but they sounded through his brain as if a thousand silver-tongued bells had pealed them forth! Yes, it was Marion Caryl, with the bright golden ringlets floating away from her fair, blue-veined temples, and the rose-mouth ready to break into smiles that were answered by the dewy sparkle of her eyes.

"Marion Caryl!" he repeated vaguely to himself. "And this is Marion's house, and Marion's husband is leading me through the rooms. How dreamlike it seems!"

"I'm afraid you are tired," said honest Bertie, looking compassionately at Sidney's ashen pale face and wondering that he had not before noticed how colorless it was.

"A little tired," stammered Colonel Templar, feeling the hot blood rush to his brow once more. "But no matter—don't let me detain you. I believe you said the rent was—"

"Rent? I haven't the least idea. I believe it's either one hundred or eighty, or perhaps sixty. I know we paid fifty, but the landlord is going to raise it, and Marion and I are thinking of a furnished cottage in the country—somewhere."

"Marion's husband is not a man of business," thought Sidney.

"Marion's husband!" How the words cut to his heart.

"Well I'll ask Marion—she knows," said Herbert. "Now, then, I'll take you down into the lower department."

Oh, Bertie, Bertie, had you already become oblivious of the words of caution heaped on your luckless ears?

Pretty Marion, screwing the top on to one of her spice boxes, heard the advancing of footsteps with a sudden thrill of apprehension.

"It can't be possible that that goose Bertie has forgotten what I told him," she thought. "He has thought, as sure as the sun is shining, and I'm caught."

Marion dropped her box of fragrant soap, and looked with wide open eyes of dismay at her big-brother.

"They are coming," she stammered, turning alternately red and white.

"There's no help for it. I shall have to hide in the preserve-closet."

And our little heroine, ignominiously taking refuge in flight, ran lightly across the kitchen floor and hid herself among preserved strawberries, East India ginger, and glimmering jars of cherries.

"If I don't lecture Bertie," said Marion, setting her little white teeth together like belligerent pearls, as the two gentlemen came into the kitchen, and she heard their voices discussing the relative merits of stoves and ranges.

"By the way," said Herbert, suddenly, "I believe there are some nice closets down here; at least, Marion says so, and—built! the door seems to stick!"

He gave it a jerk. Marion's two hands held resolutely on the door knob on the other side. Another resolute pull, full of well-directed energy, and two little hands succumbed.

The door flew open.

Bertie staggered back into the middle of the room, and Marion stood there among the preserves, woefully confused, yet laughing wiald, like a marvelously pretty mouse in a novel species of trap.

"Oh, Bertie, Bertie, I—"

She stopped suddenly as her shy glance met the eyes of the tall stranger. She stopped in the middle of the floor, checked in her instinct of flight by some still stronger instinct, and blushing like a pink moss-rose down to the very tips of her tapery-fairy fingers that were so lightly interlaced, while the blue eyes, half hidden by their white lids, were full of sparkling tears, and the mouth was breaking into a tremulous smile; for Marion did not know whether she most wanted to laugh or cry.

"Sidney, oh, Sidney."

He bowed gravely.

"Until you introduce me to your husband, Marion, I scarcely know by what name to address you."

"My husband?" repeated Marion, wondering following the direction of Sidney Templar's eye. "Oh, you mean Bertie! but he isn't my husband—his is my brother! Herbert, this is Colonel Templar, who fought so bravely."

Marion's face lighted up as she spoke; she had forgotten all about the preserve closet and the big-apron now.

"Colonel Templar, I'm glad to shake hands with you," said straightforward Bertie. "Marion has talked about you many and many a time—and, and cried, too, when she talked of you."

Now she colored indeed; deep, deep crimson, like the red heart of a pomegranate blossom opening under tropical skies.

"But your husband, Marion?" Bertie Caryl broke into a genial laugh.

"What follows you soldiers are for sticking to one idea. Our Marion isn't married!"

"Not married! Oh, Marion!" He took her hand and looked wistfully into her eyes.

"Marion, we were very foolish once, but I think we are both wiser now."

She did not raise her long lashes, and he went on:

"But, Marion, the crippled, war-worn soldier dare not ask the question that the lover would have pleaded so earnestly once."

She looked up now, with tears lying brightly on her flushed cheek.

"Then I will ask it. Sidney, do you care for me still?"

"Do I care for heaven's sunshine? do I care for the blessed life that beats within my own heart? Oh, Marion—mine, mine forever."

As he murmured the tender words close into her ear, Herbert Caryl, who had been abstractedly spinning the rolling-pin round, brought it down on the snowy pine table with a bang.

"I have it! Fifty pounds a year!"

"What is fifty pounds a year?" questioned his brilliant sister.

"Why, the rent, to be sure!"

"Never mind the rent just now, Mr. Caryl," said Colonel Templar, laughing good-humoredly.

"Oh, but it really is fifty pounds a year," said Herbert solemnly, "and—why, look here! what is this about?"

For Marion had led Sidney Templar up to him, and was smiling even while the tears hung on her wet eyelashes.

"Will you love him very much, Bertie? For—I think he is going to be your own brother."

"Exactly like the last chapter in my novel," said Caryl, sagely. "Shake hands, Colonel. And now, Marion, you take care of him, for most of my writing is shockingly behindhand!"

So it happened upon that sunny April day that Colonel Sidney Templar engaged not only a house for his Cousin Bertha, but a wife for himself.

"We'll take down the bill, Bertie," said Marion, demurely, "because Colonel Templar likes the house, and—and I don't exactly think showing rooms is your forte!"

"Don't you?" retorted Herbert.

"Now only suppose Colonel Templar had gone away without seeing what a very convenient closet that was where the preserves are kept!"

But Marion made him no answer!

ABOUT ORDERS.—Put things right back in their places when done with. Never leave them all about helter-skelter topsyturvy, never. When you use any article, hoe, shovel, rake, pitchfork, axe, hammer, tongs, boots or shoes, boxes, slates, pencils, writing apparatus, pins, dainties, needles, work-baskets, kitchen furniture, all articles of house-wifery, or husbandry, no matter what it is, the very moment you have done using it, return it to its proper place. Be sure to have a special place for everything, and everything in its place. Order, perfect order, is the watchword. Heaven's first law. How much precious time is saved (aside from vexation) by observing order, systematic regularity! And little folks should begin early to preserve order in everything. Form habits of order. These loose, slipshod, slatternly habits are formed in childhood, and habits thus formed are apt to cling for life.

Young friends, begin early to keep things in their proper places; study neatness, order, economy, sobriety; in everything be just, honest, pure, lovely, and you will have a good report!

AMERICAN GIRLS.—Good taste may do much toward checking extravagance, and we seriously believe that a more artistic eye would often lesson by one half the cost of dress and furniture, and save our daughters from the barbarous folly that sacrifices true beauty to mere expensiveness. It may cost something too much to dress handsomely, yet it is clear that the best dressed women do not spend the most money on their clothes, and that they who are most likely to ruin their husbands by their monstrous bills at the jeweler's or silk and lace stores, generally succeed more in imitating the fashion plate of our magazines, and the windows of our fancy stores, than in presenting a fairer image of feminine humanity decked with the pearl of greatest price. It will be a day worth noting in the calendar when woman emancipates herself from the yoke of vulgar fashion, and when good taste and true beauty, not the scale of mere expensiveness and rarity, preside over her wardrobe and drawing rooms.—*Rev. Dr. Osgood.*

Words of Wisdom.

INDOLENCE.

If idleness does not produce vice or malevolence, it commonly produces melancholy. Let every man be occupied, and occupied in the highest employment of which his nature is capable, and die with the consciousness that he has done his best.

FRIENDSHIP.

Life is to be fortified by many friendships. To love and be loved is the greatest happiness of existence. If I lived under the burning sun of the equator it would be a pleasure to me to think that there were human beings on the other side of the world who regarded and respected me; I could and would not live if I were alone upon the earth and cut off from the remembrance of my fellow-creatures.

It is not that a man has occasion to fall back upon the kindness of his friends. Perhaps he may never experience the necessity of doing so; but we are governed by our imaginations, and they stand there as a solid and impregnable bulwark against all the evils of life. Friendship should be formed with persons of all ages and conditions, and with both sexes. I have a friend who is a bookseller, to whom I have been very civil, and who would do anything to serve me; and I have two or three small friendships among persons in much humbler walks of life, who, I verily believe, do me considerable kindness according to their means. I am for a frank explanation with friends in cases of affront. They sometimes save a perishing friendship, and even place it upon a firmer basis than at first; but secret, discontent must always and badly.

CHEERFULNESS.

Persons subject to low spirits should make the rooms in which they live as cheerful as possible, taking care that the paper with which the wall is covered should be of a brilliant, lively color, hanging up pictures or prints, and covering the chimney piece with beautiful china; a bay window, looking upon pleasant objects, and, above all, a large fire whenever the weather will permit, are favorable to good spirits, and the tables near should be strewn with books and pamphlets.

HARDINESS.

Attention to others. It does not proceed from malignity or a carelessness of inflicting pain, but from a want of delicate perception of those little things by which pleasure is conferred or pain excited.

HAPPINESS.

The longer I live the more I am convinced that the apothecary is of more importance than Seneca, and that half the unhappiness in the world proceeds from the little stoppages from a ditch choked up with food passing in the wrong place from a vexed duodenum or an agitated pylorus. The deception is practised upon human creatures, is curious and entertaining. My friend suppers late; he eats strong soup, then a lobster, then some tart, and he dilutes these excellent varieties with wine. The next day I call upon him. He is going to sell his house in London and retire to the country. He is alarmed for his eldest daughter's health. His expenses are hourly increasing and nothing but a timely retreat can save him from ruin. All this is the lobster; and when over excited nature has had time to manage this tasteless encumbrance, the daughter recovers, the finances are in good order, and every rural idea excluded from the mind. Exercise without fatigue; generous living without excess; early rising and moderation in sleep. These are the apothegms of old women; but if they are not attended to happiness becomes so extremely difficult, that very few persons can attain it.

EVERY DAY MAXIMS.

Remember that every person, however low, has rights and feelings. In all contentions let peace be rather your object than triumph; value triumph only as the means of peace. When you meet with neglect let it arouse you to action; instead of mortifying your pride, set about lessening those defects which expose you to neglect, and improve those excellencies which command attention and respect. If you desire the common people to treat you as a gentleman, you must conduct yourself as a gentleman should to them. Do not attempt to frighten children and inferiors by passion. It does more harm to your own character than it does good to them. The same thing is better done by firmness and persuasion. Find fault when you must find fault, in private, if possible, and some time after the offense rather than at the time. The blamed are less inclined to resist when they are blamed without witnesses. Keep up the habit of being respected, and do not attempt to be more amusing and agreeable than is consistent with the preservation of respect. Don't be too severe upon yourself and your own feelings; keep on, don't faint, be energetic to the last. If you wish to keep your mind clear and body healthy, abstain from all fermented liquors.—*Sidney Smith.*

AS AIR GUN.—The following is a description of an air gun as usually made now-a-days, and which was the instrument of a murder at Brooklyn a few days ago:

In appearance it is a cane, and is simply a tube of about three feet in length, hollow throughout, and made of highly wrought iron. It is divided into two nearly equal lengths, the upper part toward the head forming the air-chamber, and the lower half the barrel from which the projectile is discharged. The two sections are screwed together, and when united fit so closely that there is not apparent, except upon the closest examination. When it is to be prepared for use the sections are separated, and by means of a pump, which is, for the time being, attached to the upper end of the tube, the chamber is filled with compressed air. The operation completed, the pump is removed, a tight-fitting cap is screwed upon the open end, the barrel is attached, and the weapon is then, so far as the motive power is concerned, ready for use. The bullet, known to the trade as "size No. 140," or about twice as large as a common pea, is then passed into the barrel and "rammed home," where it remains until discharged by an ingenious contrivance, upon one side of the barrel just below the joint of the two sections, is a small hole, into which the key is fitted, and turned until a small steel knob is forced to stand out from the opposite side of the barrel. The key is then withdrawn, and when the bullet is sent upon its destructive mission, the weapon is raised, aim is taken by means of eight-pins upon the barrel, the knob is pressed by the index finger of the left hand, a valve in the air-chamber is thereby opened and just enough air is released to discharge the bullet. The air-chamber once filled, thirty bullets may be discharged without replenishing, but not more than the tenth one may be relied upon to penetrate the object. The distance from which the weapon is effective is from 50 to 125 feet. Many of the air guns of English manufacture have rifled-barrels, and are loaded at the breech. In an experiment made a short time since, in a shooting-gallery in New York, bullets were driven from an air gun cane, through a German white-wood plank an inch and a half in diameter, and that at the average distance of thirty yards. The noise which accompanies the discharge of the weapon is scarcely perceptible, the report being similar to the snapping of a small whip-lash. This fact makes the air gun an exceedingly dangerous instrument in the hands of the assassin. In the Brooklyn murder referred to, had not the police officer been in close proximity to the scene at the time and observed the fall of the victim and the flight of the murderer, the deed might have remained forever an indissoluble mystery.

THE CARE OF FURS AND WOOLENS.—We are pretty well satisfied from long experience that there is no efficacy in camphor, tobacco, drugs, or even cedar closets and chests, in protecting furs and woolen stuffs against the moth. They only lull us into a fancied security, to be woken up to find our most valuable furs and cloth ruined by this mischievous little insect.

To preserve these articles with entire safety, shake them thoroughly, in order that any moth already in them may be dislodged; then place them in close cotton or linen bags, and tie them as tightly as possible to exclude the miller, and there will be no danger of damage from moth. There need be no special place to hang the bag in—Wardrobe, closet, garret, or whatever you please, is all the same. Old newspapers, entirely without fractures, will answer just as well in which to wrap up furs and woollens, but they must be so pasted together as to leave no place for the entrance of the millers.

Will housekeepers please heed this, and abandon all their other methods of protection against the moth.—*An Old Housekeeper, in Germantown Telegraph.*

Some time since a gentleman died in the town of X, who during life, refused to believe in another world. Two or three weeks after his demise, his wife received through a medium a communication, which read as follows: "Dear wife I now believe. Please send me my thin clothes."

A Quaker gentleman, riding in a carriage with a fashionable lady decked with a profusion of jewelry, heard her complain of the cold. Shivering in her lace bonnet and shawls light as a cobweb, she exclaimed:

"What shall I do to get warm?"

"I really don't know," replied the Quaker solemnly, unless she should put on another breast pin."

My Doctor says so.—My doctor told me to get some good brandy for my rheumatism, and drink it several times a day," said a man who had hitherto been disposed to abstain from the use of spirituous liquors.

The patient obeyed without demur, for the doctor knew, of course, better than any one else, what was good for a sick man. The "good brandy" was such as could be had—made up of various poisons; its use, "several times a day" soon grew to be many times daily. It did not take long for the sick man to cling to his medicine as a drowning man to a straw. In short, the disease was a god-send, for the prescription acted like a charm, and soon charmed the patient into a confirmed sot.

His friends tried to alarm him, persuade him, arrest him in his downward slide to destruction of mind, estate, every thing which had once made him a man. In vain all their efforts.

"My doctor says so," was the reiterated reply, "and I guess he knows what will cure me."

"But you are not cured, not even helped," persisted the warning friend, and why continue in a practice which will work your ruin?"

"What the doctor orders I shall obey." And so the effort for his reformation has to be abandoned.

"What are you drinking?" asked a visitor of a little girl some ten years of age, who held a tumbler to her lips with a prolonged relish.

"Oh! it's what is left of my brother's medicine, and it is real good to take," the child replied.

"The doctor orders wine for our James, and that is some of it," explained the mother.

"I wish I was sick and had such good stuff to take all the time," continued the girl.

"But do you think wine necessary in a disease so like that?" asked the visitor of the mother.

"My doctor says so, and I suppose he knows," was the satisfied answer.

The sick child recovered after a protracted siege with disease. Nothing tasted to him like wine until he learned to love something stronger.

He became a drunkard, and his sister drank all she could get, as she affirmed, because she loved it.

ONE OF THE OLD ONES.—A funny story is going the rounds in Paris.

A lady in the first society was obliged to dismiss her servant on account of excess of firemen and soldiers too often repeated. After choosing as a successor to this criminal a young and pretty girl, the lady expressed why the first one was sent away, and enjoining it on the second not to do likewise.

She admitted that she should not. "I can endure a great deal, but soldiers I won't endure."

After a week or ten days, the lady came one morning into the kitchen, opened the cupboard and discovered a youthful military character.

"Oh, my dear!" exclaimed the frightened girl, "I give my word I never saw that soldier before in my life—he must be one of the old ones left over by the other girl!"

COFFEE AND TEA.—When Dr. Dodge, an electric physician, was lecturing on the evils of coffee and tea, he happened to meet one morning at the breakfast table a witty son of Erin. Conversation turned to the doctor's favorite subject, and he addressed our friend as follows.

"Well," said the doctor, "if I convince you that they are injurious to your health, will you abstain from their use?"

"Sure and I will, sir."

"How often do you use tea and coffee?" asked the doctor.

"Morning and night, sir."

"Well," said the doctor, "do you ever experience a slight dizziness of the brain upon going to bed?"

"Yes, indeed I do."

"And a sharp pain through the temples, in and about the eyes, in the morning?" asked the doctor.

"Troth, I do so."

"Well," said the doctor with the air of confidence and assurance in his manner, "that is coffee and tea."

"Is it, indeed? faith I'm thankful; I always thought it was the whiskey did that same."

The company roared with laughter, and the doctor quietly retired.

—A waggish journalist, who is often merry over his personal plainness, tells this story of himself; "I went to a drug store the other morning for a dose of morphine for a sick friend. The night clerk objected to giving it to me without a prescription, evidently fearing I meant to destroy myself. 'Fehaw!' said I; 'do I look like a man who would destroy himself?' gazing at me steadily for half a minute he replied: 'I don't know. Seems to me if I looked like you I should be greatly tempted to kill myself.'"

—Sister—"Look here, Charlie; supposing you had twenty sugar plums, and you wanted to divide them in four parts. You give five to the baby and five to Carrie; and what would you do with the other ten?" Sweet child—suck'em.