THE MILAN EXCHANGE.

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MILAN. - - TENNESSEE

FORFEITS.

They sent him round the circle fair, To bow before the prettiest there. I'm bound to say the choice he made A creditable taste displayed: Aithough—I can't say what it meant— The little maid looked lil-content.

His task was then anew begun— To kneel before the wittlest one, Once more that little maid sought he, And went him down upon his knee. She beat her eyes upon the floor— I think she thought the game a bore.

He circled then—his sweet behest
To kiss the one he loved the hest.
For all she frowned, for all she chid,
He kissed that little maid, he did.
And then—though why I can't decide—
The little maid looked satisfied.
—H. C. Banner, in The Century.

A MODERN PURITAN.

Stephen Billings had finished his dinner-a meal eaten at nooh by the in-habitants of the thinly settled farming town of Hillside -and was shoving back his chair, when he heard a rap at the front door. It stood open-for it was a warm day in the last week of Mayand framed a delightful view across slope and valley, a view at this moment eclipsed by the figure of a tall and handsome girl, who stood waiting at the aunt living in New York, the wife of

"Eh, Miss Sophrony!" said Mr. Billings, bowing his head to peer at her between the shaggy gray tufts c. his knitted brows and the upper rim of his silver-bowed spectacles. "Won't ye silver-bowed spectacles. "Won't ye her parents. As it was, Mrs. Bird had walk in? How's Mis' Newcomb? Children doin' well to school? Heva cheer, pretty girl the advantages of a full

"Sartin ye can-what's to hender?" said the old bachelor, bluntly. "There's the gal in the kitchen, busy mostly abreakin' on the dishes, an' she won't hear; so speak right out, Miss Sophrony, an' git rid on't, for I own I'm powerful curis to know what's brought ye!"

The girl blushed; it was, in fact, the first time she had ever been under Stephen Billings' roof. "I've come to see you about the mortgage on father's

The old man started, straightening up stiflly. "Ye jest go right straight back hum, an' tell yer father not to send none o' his petticoats to me. I don't do business with gals,"

"O, Mr. Billings, father doesn't know

that I came!" cried the girl, quickly. "It is all my own doing; no one knows a word about it, and you mustn't tell." "Mustn't, hey?"

"No, you will not tell; you have no right, for I have come to you in confidence, and you are a gentleman, and can not betray me." She was pale, and trembled very much, but there was no mistaking the resolu-

tion in her voice and glance.
"I ain't no gentleman," Stephen
Billings answered, after a pause; "but upon, fur's I know, to go a-givin' on ye away by tattlin'. What is't ye want?" "I'll tell you'the truth, Mr. Billings,

and I'll speak as I would if you were my own father instead of my father's

The old man's face changed suddenwere in the balance. "I don't understand business very well, but I do know that father can not pay up the mort-gage, and that you have said that he must pay, or you must have the farm. I want you to grant him one year, and at the end of it, if he can not pay you, Mr. Billings, I will. I've come here to ask you to do this great kindness to me, Mr. Billings—not to my father or my mother, but to me. And I ask you to deal with me as you would wish to have a hurt themselves. I've never believed man deal by your daughter, if she were in such trouble as I am."

The sweet, passionately earnest voice ceased, and the speaker came forward and, sinking into the chair at the end of the sofa, laid her hand on the old man's arm. She had proudly refrained from allusion either to her mother's delicate health, or her father's age and rheumatthem, even through her, to vainly supplicate this hard man, but herself she freely humbled for their dear sakes. The Newcomb farm was small, and the mortgage but a trifling sum, if only Daniel Newcomb had not been poor, physically disabled, and through the misdeeds of others in debt. On the other hand, Stephen Billings was rich, at least for a Hillsider; but he was known to be a grasping as well as a thrifty man, and few people who knew him would have dreamed of such an at- they walked or rode, the poor, and the tempt as Sophronia Newcomb had made. Yet courage and devotion sometimes answer better than the subtlest worldly wisdom. It was a long time since any one had spoken to Stephen Billings with this tone of complete confidence in his doing what was sight, whether pleasant or not, just because it was right; and it was a very long time since a warm young hand had touched him kindly like this girlish hand he felt trembling on his arm. When, after a pause, he were enthusiastically pronounced to be raised his eyes to hers, his features were the finest impersonations which had working with unaccustomed and strong-

ter cum ter a man as ye've cum to me amusement, called on Mile. Bland for -in trouble, ve said-I'd want him ter the most curious incident which she say: Jest ye be easy; I'll give Dan'l-I'll give yer father a year. Sho! what profession, be ye doin'?" Sophronia had caught "The th

picter o' yer mother when she was a gal, an' Dan'l an' me were boys. I suppose ye don't know ye cum mighty nigh to bein' my darter?"

Sophronia had risen when he did. Her heart was full, and her tongue was no longer fluent.

"I don't mind tellin' on ye," he said, a little huskily, "for ye ain't the gal to go repeatin' on't; yer mother waz the only gal I ever asked to marry me, an' I wuz a soft-hearted lad in them days. She said no, and it sp'iled things for me a good deal ever sence.'

He walked away again, and stood some moments in the front doorway. When he returned it was with his old manner. He too had in his way been proud, for he had refrained from telling Sophronia that it was chiefly due to an ungenerous action on her father's part that her mother, when she was pretty Anna Green, had refused him, and

steeled his heart once and for all.
"It's a bargain," said he, "an I'll stick to't jest as if ye were my own darter an' not my enemy's darter."

This bit of humor and half retaliation made it easier for Sophronia to thank him, and they who had passed each other in the village ways for all her twenty years as strangers, parted now as friends, with an odd bond of secreey in their alliance. Stephen Billings had not been the only direction in which Sophronia had sought re'ief. She had an one of its wealthy merchants. Mrs. Bird was very fond of her niece, and having no children of her own, would long ago have adopted Sophronia if the latter could have been induced to leave won't ye?—ye look real beat."

"Mother is well, thank you," said
Sophronia, hurriedly. "Can I see you
a few moments alone, Mr. Billings?"

"Sartin ye can—what's to honder."

"Sartin ye can—what's to honder."

"Sartin ye can—what's to honder." cure for her some young pupils for a forenoon class. Mrs. Bird in reply warmly expostulated with Sophronia, offering her a permanent home, and proposing an immediate loan. But Sophronia was firm, declined all these kind overtures, and pleaded for the forenoon class; and the very next day after her interview with Stephen Billings she received a letter from Mrs. Bird announcing, still with much tender protest, that the class was arranged, and she could assume its direction at any moment.

With this letter in her hand, Sophronia broke the matter to her parents, who were not only surprised and loath to part with her, but urged that there could be no necessity for it, now that "Old Grind," as Mr. Newcomb dubbed his old school-mate and creditor, had "shown such a soft spot," and granted him a "whole year on the pesky mort-

Nevertheless Sophronia persisted in carrying out her plan. On arriving in New York, Sophronia amazed her aunt who received her warmly, and made her at once the mistress of a lovely room-by going out on the third day "I ain't no gentleman," Stephen Billings answered, after a pause; "but had found and taken cheap but reputify e reely cum by yerself, I ain't called table lodgings in another part of the city.

with kitchen privileges.

"Kitchen privileges!" cried Mrs.
Bird, looking at her niece in real dismay. "My dear Sophronia, what on earth can you want of kitchen privi-

leges?"
"Why, to board myself, of course. I ly, and he pressed his hand hard upon the arm of the hair-cloth sofa where he said Sophronia, earnestly, "I have At last Mile, Bland appeared. A tall sat; but the girl went on, without pause given my word, and I will keep it. and remarkably handsome young man or visible hesitation, as if life and death And can't you see, dear aunt, there is pressed forward, with an air of privibut one way?"

"No. I can't;" and Mrs. Bird folded and unfolded her hands in sincere vexation. "You do not need to be so proud. If this is what is meant by New England pride, I'm sure it's a very ugly virtue. It was all very well for those delicate women who had to come over in the Mayflower, and be dumped on -for there's no sense in it-that they came of their own free-will, and chose hard times and everything dirty and disagreeable. But with you, Sophro-hia, it is very different, and you might please me if you would."

Sophronia gently shook her head. "Do let me do as I feel I ought, without having to feel that I vex you," she pleadic disabilities. She would not permit ed; and then she kissed her aunt with so sweet a look of tenderness and inflexibility that Mrs. Bird yielded.

The arrangement in no way interfered with Sophronia's management of her class, which she met daily in the vestry of a chapel which had been fitted and assigned to this purpose through Mrs. Bird's representation and at her expense. Sophronia enjoyed her work. As she went to and fro she observed unobtrusively but keenly the people and the incidents of the streets; the rich, as devices to which they resorted-the apple women, the candy stalls, the ragpickers, the bouquet girls, and the news-boys. As a result of all these observations, part of her first earnings she sent home, and part she invested.

One evening, when Sophronia had been some four months in the city, Mrs. Bird gave a reception to the lovely and popular tragedienne Mile. Bland, who had opened the season early with what graced the New York stage for many ly repressed emotion.

"Wa'al. I've heered ye," he said, been severally contributing little anecdates and recollections for the general dotes and recollections for the general dotes. amusement, called on Mile. Bland for could recall in connection with her

be ye doin'?" Sophronia had caught one of his hands and kissed its brown very week. Last Wednesday, near the freekled back. He rose and walked over close of the matinee, I met a young lady with her?"

to the window, then came back and in the passages who begged me to direct then paused in front of her. "Ye're the her to Mile. Bland. Of course I took her to my dressing-room. She was plainly dressed, but in good taste, and was not only beautiful, with charming manners, but so earnest and so frank I was captivated by her. She made a strange request. She said, without any prelude, that she was in great need of money, and to obtain it wished to procure the disguise of a poor old woman, and to learn how to assume it readily. I should have liked to give her the money at once, but if you had seen her you would understand how it was quite impossible to think of it for a moment. I assure you I would quite as soon offer my purse to a queen. I was so interested, and, I must confess, so curious, that I said if she was going upon the stage I would gladly bear her rehearse her part, thinking that this offer would bring me some hint of her purpose. But she might have been an oyster, for any information I could elicit. She pleased me so much that I took great pains to teach her how to make herself up as an old woman, and I gave her a dress suited to her purpose, a melange from my Meg Merrilies and other costumes. It was a great success. She caught every suggestion of mine with the quickness of an artist; and at the last, imagine my perplexity when she attempted to pay me, not for my kindness, she said, but for the costume and the little parcel of cosmetics. I had really to quarrel with her."

"Where did she come from?"
"What name did she give?" asked several of the guests together.

"Ah, that is the oddest of all," said Mile. Bland, laughing. "She didn't give her name, and absolutely I couldn't ask it. I should know the costume anywhere; so if it appears on the stage here, we may yet discover her."

As the year passed on, small sums steadily made their way to the old people at the Newcomb farm, and Stephen Billings had received nearly all his

Sophronia had, in the first instance, explained to her aunt that until her pledge was redeemed she desired retirement, and to avoid any introduction to Mrs. Bird's multitude of fashionable acquaintances. Therefore, she had been very seldom to Mrs. Bird's Fifth Avenue home, where she would have been so welcome.

At last the debt was paid, the last farthing had been dispatched, the old home was ransomed, and would be the happy humble shelter of her parents' closing days.

One night in spring, when the appletrees were beginning to blossom in the orchards and sweeten the airs of Hillside, and the wealthier classes of New York were beginning to plan and prepare for the usual summer exodus, an old woman who had become familiar to the passers on a certain beat as the bearer of a tray of excellent and al-was fresh candies, which sold as fast as she could replenish her store, took her stand, with her last travful for that evening, near the stage-entrance of a theater. She had found that she could generally clear a tray to the players as they came out in a tired yet generous

and jesting mood. The occasion had been especially brilliant, for it was both the first and last appearance in months of the great popular favorite Mile. Bland. The actors began to come out. Several of them spoke to the old woman, and purchased from her tray, which was attractive lege, to hand her to her carriage.

In the same instant Mile. Bland saw the old woman. Breaking from her companion with an excited exclamation, Mile. Bland grasped the old woman by the wrists. The latter stood transfixed; her tray fell to the pavement, and the scene being misunderstood, she was somewhat rudely handled before Mile. Bland could prevent, and her hood and wig falling back, the disguise was evident to all. The wonder was rebuffed and the gathering crowd kept off by the quick-witted action of Mile. Bland. "Forgive me, my dear," she said to the candy woman, so that all could hear it, and to the crowd, "It's all right," and helped her into the carriage, the young man following, which rolled away while the by-standers were still gaping. The next morning Mrs. Bird received an early call from Arthur Lynd, the young man in whom she was most interested of all her large circle of acquaintance. She admired his character, believed in his future, and had of late begun to think in the secreey of her soul that she could not do a better thing than to bring about an acquaintance between him and her lovely niece But how to accom-plish this with the intractable Sophronia. "Well, what is it?" said Mrs. Bird, as

she received the young man,
"She's found!" he exclaimed in an
excited tone, as he tossed his cap aside.

"Who is found?" "The old woman - the young woman, I mean, that Mile. Bland told us about last fall. Don't you remember? And she is the most beautiful young girl I ever saw in my life. For all she was in an old dowdy brown dress, and her face stained, she had the air of a princess, and such noble features, and the most proud and modest eyes?"

"Why, my dear Arthur, you have lost your head! Where is she, and who is she?"

"That's just it! Nobody knows where she is, nor who she is. It's just as Mile. Bland told us last fall; it isn't possible to ask this young lady anything she doesn't voluntarily tell. Mile. Bland pounced on her as she came out of the theater, and her hood and wig fell off, and it wasn't an old candy woman at

all, but the loveliest-

Mile. Bland whisked her out of the crowd and into her carriage so quickly that we were at her apartments in no Then we asked her if we might time. bring her to you, for Mile, Bland was wild to have you see her and help us to prevail with her to give us a little of her confidence. But she just thanked us so quietly, and asked that we would place

her in the care of a policeman. "You don't mean to say you did it?"
"We couldn't belp it. I tell you it wasn't possible to question or detain

"And that's all you know?" cried Mrs. Bird. "Well, I would never have let her off in that idiotic manner-nev-

"That's just why we wanted your help," said Arthur, looking at her despairingly. "You would have known how to find out all about it, and you would have been a friend to her.'

A few days later Sophronia called on her aunt to say good by; her class was disbanded, at least for the present, and she was going home. In vain did Mrs. Bird urge her to take a little rest, and consent to be her guest for at least week or two before returning. Sophronia was firm, and at last confessed with a sudden burst of tears that she had been very homesick.

"Go home, then, darling," said Mrs. Bird, tenderly. "But really, Sophronia, you are so very unflinehing and obstinate I don't understand why I can not be anory with you. I never knew any-thing like your obstinacy, except Mile. Bland's mysterious old lady."

"Who is Mile, Bland's mysterious old lady?" asked Sophronia, with some interest.

Then her aunt gave a spirited account of the affair. "And the worst of it is," she added, "Mr. Arthur Lynd has completely lost his heart to this proyoking incognita, and I wanted him to lose it to you."

One day, about a month later, Arthur Lynd received a letter, which he read with apparent annoyance. "Just like my crabbed old uncle," he muttered. "Just like "As he particularly wishes it I suppose I ought to go to him; but I sha'n't stay long unless he has some reason.'

The "crabbed old uncle" did have some reason, which he made known very bluntly on the morning after his nephew's arrival.

"I've found a wife for ye Arty," said he, crossing his knife and fork on his plate, and shoving himself away from the breakfast table.

"I'm in no hurry." said the young man; exerting some self-control.

"But I be," exclaimed his uncle. "Ef ye don't step lively, ye won't stan' no chance at all. She's bright as a star,

as pooty as a posy, an' good as the The old man's emotion was inexplicable to his nephew, but it prevented his

making a light rejoinder, and piqued his curiosity. They walked out togeth-er, and the old man returned to the sub-"Ye hain't ben here this dozen year, an' ef ye ever seed her, she wuz a chit

ye wouldn't remember. D'ye see that leetle brown house yender jest by the turn o' the road? Wa'al, she lives there. Lemme tell ye what that gal done. Ye see, her folks got into trouble, an' I warn't good frens with 'em; but she cum over here ter me as white an' tremblin' as a lamb, an' vit as bold as a lion, an' she axed me ter lift the morgige an' make it easy for her father for a year, an' ef he didn't pay it up by then, she would, an', by gracious, my boy, the gal done it! She made me say I would, an' then she never cum near me as ef she wuz afeerd I'd need a leetle remindin'-not she; but she jest posted off to New York City, an' took a school."

At this point Arthur stopped walking, and turned toward his uncle. who stopped walking also, but hurried on speaking:

" An' she paid the hull thing, cleared off every cent o' debt from the farm! An' when she cum back I see her one day, an' I sez to her, sudden, 'Ye didn't do all that by teachin', you'd orter seen the look she gin me. An' then I made her tell me how 'twas, arter she'd woman, an' she larnt how to make all sorts o' candies, an' went onter the streets at night an' sold it like hot cakes Why, what ails you? Are ye crazy?"

Arthur Lynd had seized the old man's hard brown hand in his supple white one, "an' gin me the toughest squeeze I ever had in my life," as the old man said afterward.

"What is her name?" cried Arthur. "She's niece to that city woman. Mis" Bird. She's Dan'l Newcomb's darter, an' blest if she ain't too smart an' good an' harnsum to stay a Newcomb while there's any o' Stephen Billings' blood

Arthur Lynd was yards off, on his way to Newcomb farm.

Stephen Billings crossed the Newcomb threshold for the first time in twenty years on the day of Sophronia's marriage to his nephew, which happy event came off in the autumn of that year. He announced then and there that the bride, to whom he had given a handsome marriage portion, would his sole hair on one condition, which would be found mentioned in his will. And that same night he wrote, in his own cramped but plain and sturdy hand, at his end of his will:

"The above is to be carried out ekzackly as it is heren sot down, as bein' my last will and testymunt, on the sole condishun that Sophrony's fust darter shall be named Anna Green Lynd-"Where is she? What did you do sorry it can't be Billings, -Harper's

FACTS AND FIGURES.

-Of the English-speaking people 13,-500,000 are Roman Catholics and 59,-000,000 Protestants.

-Over 12,500,000 feet of lumber are estimated to have been destroyed by the recent Pennsylvania forest fires.

-The Eureka District, Nevada, has produced ores to the value of \$31,000,-000 during the past seven years.

-The Georgia Railroad and Banking Company has paid in dividends since the war the immense sum of \$4,626,576. -Ohio last year made about 450,000

gallons of maple syrup and 3,000,000 pounds of sugar, and will have as much more this year. - Detroit Post. -The English Channel tunnel is to be

22 miles long, 18 by 20 feet in diameter with two railroad tracks, and the income is expected to be \$6,000,000 annually, from which, if the eggs all hatch, there will be \$3,660,000 in dividends.

-The average distance for the oldfashioned railroad wheels to traverse was about 50,000 miles, but with the wheels with steel bands actually em-ployed on passenger cars 300,000 miles have been frequently traversed, while 500,000 miles were traversed by two wheels belonging to one of the largest railroad companies.

-In New York last year there were 9,814 white males married, and 9,827 white females. Thirteen white women therefore married colored men. Of the men married 4.477 were native born, and of the women 5,336, so that more than 800 native born brides took foreign born husbands. Of the births during the same period 6,886 were children of native born parents, and 13,754 of children of foreign born parents. - Chicago

-A few days ago the application for settlement of final account and distribution of the estate of the late William S. O'Brien was granted in a modified form by Judge Finn, of San Francisco. Under this order a total amount of \$6,-328,652.79, less \$1,143,750 to satisfy future claims against the estate, will be distributed. Of this amount Mrs. Maria Coleman receives \$2,592,451.39; Mrs. Kate Mary Macdonough receives \$2,160.376.17; Joseph Macdonough receives \$432,075.26.

-The cost of a private wire from New York to Philadelphia is \$2,500 a year, the company furnishing nothing but the wire and the instruments at both ends of the line. To Boston it is \$4,500 a year, and to Chicago \$7,000 a year. The expense of an operator at each end adds about \$1,500 a year to the total cost. There is a saving of money to concerns doing a large business, but the chief advantage is in the saving of time, especially to stock brokers, as minutes on the stock exchange sometimes represent fortunes.—Utica (N. Y.) Herald.

WIT AND WISDOM.

-Can a shepherd's crook be termed a ram-rod?

-"I'll make a note of this," as the sharper said when he got a farmer to write his name on a slip of paper.

-Smiles is the longest word in the language. Between the beginning and the end of it there is just a mile.

-Ex-Secretary Evarts, who is increasing the size of his Vermont farm, is the man who, when asked by a friend for something from his pen, sent the gentleman a fine young porker .- Chicago Tribune. Just as we expected. Thomas

Hardy's new novel is called 'Two on a Tower." and already an intelligent Tower," and already an intelligent compositor has set it up "Two on a Tare." He's been there himself with more than two.-Burlington Hawkeye.

-Powder explosion: A literary man, who had recently published a book, was observed to be very downcast last week. "What is the matter?" said a friend; "you look all broken up." "No wonder," was the answer, "I've just been blown up by a magazine."

It is alleged of Melville that he is made me promise—an' she's a master hand to get a promise out of a man—I'd never tell her parents on't. Wa'al, how do ye think she done it? She went to "That ice will surely oppose our progress," "So ice suppose," was Melan inveterate punster, and that after

-Useful dentistry: "You look cheerful, Mr. Spiser," said a friend who met the old gentleman ambling down the avenue. "Yes," said the interrogated: "I have just had a troublesome grinder pulled," and when the sympathizing gentleman asked him if it hurt him much. Seth cheerfully responded: "Not a bit; it was an organ-grinder, and a policeman pulled him."—Chicago Times.

-How dear to my heart is the school I attended,
And how I remember, so distant and dim,
That red-headed Bill, and the pin that I bended
And carefully put on the bench under

And how I recall the surprise of the master When Bill gave a yell and sprang up with

—A little Albany boy, aged eight years, was greatly annoyed by the destruction wrought upon his toys by his two-year-old brother. The other night he asked his father how to spell the word "dangerous," and the next morning ing his mother was startled at the warning "dangerous" printed in big black letters across the top of the box. "Why. Tommy, said she, "why have you spoiled your nice, new present?" "I ain't, ma. Jamie spoils all my things, and I put that on to seare him, so he'll leave my box glone. - Albany /N. Y.