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THE COMING IN OF THE "MER-MAIDEN."

BY JEAN INGELOW.

The moon is bleached as white as wool,
And just dropping under;
Every star is gone but three,
And they hang wide asunder—
There's a sea-ghost all in gray,
A tall shape of wonder.

I am not satisfied with sleep,
The night is not ended;
But look how the sea-ghost comes
With wan skirts extended,
Stealing up in this weird hour
When dusk and dawn are blended.

A vessel! To the old pier-end
Her happy course she's keeping;
I heard them hands her yesterday—
Some were pale with weeping,
Some with their heart-hunger sighed:
She's in, and they are sleeping.

Oh now with fancied greetings blest,
They comfort their long aching;
The sea of sleep hath borne to them
What would not come with waking,
But the dreams shall most be true
In their blissful breaking.

The stars are gone, the rose-blooms comes,
No blush of maid is sweeter;
The red sun half-way out of bed
Shall be the first to greet her;
None tell the news, yet sleepers wake,
And rise, and run to meet her.

Their lost they have, they hold; from pain
A keener bliss they borrow.
How natural is joy, my heart!
How easy after sorrow!
For once, the best is come, that hope
Promised them "to-morrow."

SETH HATHRON'S FOURTH.

I ALWAYS was a black-browed, broad-shouldered brute of a fellow, always from a boy. At school (not that I had much of that sort of thing), but at school if old Miss Peggy found out any mischief she laid it to my score because of my looks, when often and often, while I was holding out my hand to be ruled, the prettiest boy in the school was grinning over his good-luck in getting off so safely. She had her preconceived notions of a villain, I presume, and I answered the description.

For the matter of that, of all the books and stories I've read since, especially those written by ladies, I've noticed there isn't one where the burglar, or forger, or pirate, or what not, who does all the wickedness of the book as though he's taken it on contract, wouldn't do for *me* on a passport, while their pets, who do the grand and noble things, are generally slender, and fair, and pretty. Now the worst wretch *I* ever saw—one who was afterward hung, and who deserved hanging richly, even on his own showing—had blue eyes, and white lashes, and a pink mouth like a girl's. It's so over and over again; but it's my opinion that if women were put on the police, before the year was over every hulking, awkward, bilious fellow whose eyebrows met would be locked up in the State Prison on suspicion.

I never was a favorite with any woman but my mother, and she died when I was eight years old. So instead of growing up with the idea that most men have, that every girl they meet is ready to fall in love with them, I never had the slightest hope that any one would ever like me well enough to let me fall in love with her even. And I liked girls so. It was odd for a fellow like me, but *how* I did like girls!

I never could bear to see one cry, or to hear of their being imposed upon or hurt. I couldn't pass one with a heavy basket or bundle without at least *wanting* to offer to carry it for her. I could never bring myself to sit in stages or cars when one was standing. I don't think I could if I had been weak or lame instead of the giant I was. Yet I've seen *gentlemen* lounge with their hands in their pockets while poor old ladies, who might have been their grandmothers, stood up before them! And their manners were good and mine those of a bear, and I myself only a workingman, who learned all he ever knew at old Miss Peggy's school.

Something as a man might have felt just in sight of the angels, who were too much above him to be spoken to or touched, I felt about all girls. That is, good, pure girls. When a woman was intoxicated or in any way debased she never seemed a woman to me, but a dreadful sort of creature, all the worse for having something of the pretty womanly look about her.

I was a maker of fireworks, as my father had been before me. I don't know that I liked the business particularly, but there I was, and there I staid. I made good wages, and saved them; for I didn't think enough about my looks to dress much, and I never drank. "Sulky," the other men called me. What of that? It was better to be sulky than raving mad, as some of them were so surely as Saturday night came round. Men with nice, good-looking wives too, whose children wanted for bread and shoes what they spent in drink. I never expected to have a wife and children, but I knew how they ought to be used better than they did.

I suppose I had come to be twenty-eight or so, and no girl had ever looked at me, except as she might at a tamish polar bear, when, one day, old Mr. Williams, the proprietor of the place, came to me as I was going home to dinner, and said, in his own quick way:

"Hathron, can you drive?"

"Yes, sir," said I.

"I want you to take the wagon and go over to the railroad depot at Baldwin, and bring down a new hand and her traps," he said. "She'll be there at half-past twelve, so you'll have barely time to snatch a bite and go; and you can have the rest of the day to yourself, if you like, as it's Saturday. Her name is Annie May."

Before you can understand what he meant I must tell you that our place (they called it the "Ne plus ultra Pyrotechnic Establishment," bless you!) employed some five-and-twenty girls, and that they generally came from a distance, and boarded while they staid with an old woman close by, all in one place, to keep them out of harm's way.

Mr. Williams insisted on that, and had a lot of rules about the hours they were to keep and the way they were to behave; good rules, and not so rigid but that there was plenty of innocent courting and more than one wedding in a season. As for we men, we went where we chose. Some put up at the tavern, some with the people who would take a few boarders, and those who lived in the place with their families. There were very few girls who had homes there to go to; for the village was an uppish kind of place, full of country-seats and villas, and the factory stood all by itself, quite a distance away, and the tavern and the few common houses were grouped close about it, as if the others were too genteel to mix with them. So Mrs. Munson's place was always full. When a new girl came down somebody always had to be sent over to Baldwin to bring her to the factory. I had never been before, and why I was chosen this time it was hard to tell. However, I was willing enough, and so, when I had taken a bite, I put on my best coat and drove over. It was a day to tempt a man out—a beautiful Spring day, with tender green grass on the earth and tender pink buds on the branches, and in the sky there were only two or three fleecy bits of clouds, like carded wool, amidst the blueness. It took only half an hour to get to Baldwin. I'd have been willing it should be ten whole ones.

The train had got in, and there were people waiting in the little house at the depot—a couple of stout old ladies, a gentleman who looked like a minister, and a young woman. I looked at her and made up my mind *she* couldn't be the new hand, not because she was more dressed than they usually were, but because she wasn't dressed half so much. Generally they had on their brightest gowns, and big beads around their necks, and roses enough in their bonnets to fill a garden. This girl was all in gray, and wore a veil to match. The things were cheap and not new, but they made her look like a lady. I walked up and down and waited. The fat women went away in a wagon; the clergyman had a gig sent for him; and there the girl sat beside her trunk, looking now and then out of the window and beginning to seem anxious. At all events it could do no harm to speak; so I took off my hat and stepped up with a bow.

"I beg your pardon, Miss," said I, "but has there been anybody here asking about being taken to Mr. Williams's place?"

"I want to go there myself," she answered; "that is, if you mean the firework factory. I'm Annie May."

"I do mean the firework factory," I said. "Mr. Williams sent me down to fetch you. I'm Seth Hathron, one of the hands. The wagon is outside; will you get in? Wait a bit; I'll put the trunk in first."

"Shan't I help you?" she said, and she put her little hand to the handle nearest her. It looked so small I burst out laughing.

"I don't need any help," said I—but I thought I could carry both the trunk and its owner together, if I chose, and she'd let me. She was the smallest creature, to be a full-grown woman, that I ever saw. A piece of the blue sky for her eyes, and a bit of the golden sunshine for her hair, and some of those wild roses that would climb with the barberries over the stone fences seen for her cheeks, and you know how to paint her.

After I had helped her in and had taken the reins in my hands, I kept stealing looks at her and thinking how beautiful she was; and I tried to talk about things that would please her, and pointed out the places on the road, and felt that, bright as the day had been before, it was somehow a great deal brighter now with her beside me.

We stopped at Mrs. Munson's and said good-by. I carried her trunk into the hall and called the old lady, and drove the horse back to the stable. Then, having a holiday, I got a newspaper and went out into the woods—Baldwin's Woods they called them—and I think I knew every tree by heart.

I sat down by chance under a great oak, where Jack Varne, one of the hands, had carved J. V. for his name, and O. G. for Olive Grey's, and had put a ring around them both; and as I looked at the work fell to wondering why Jack Varne should have a sweetheart and I none, and whether it was only his pretty face or something or other in our ways that made all girls like him and none me. And somehow I felt lonesome and unhappy, and couldn't read my paper, and sat down with my head on my hands, sulkier than ever, I suppose, to look at. Maybe it was an hour, maybe two, that I sat there before I heard a step coming over the grass, and looking up, saw the girl I had driven over from Baldwin—Annie May—coming toward me. She did not see me at first; but when she did she started and stopped, and smiled at me just as I'd seen other girls smile often at other men, but never once at me before that moment. I never thought what I was doing, but held out my great brown paw and shook hands with her as if we had been friends for years.

"I found there was nothing for me to do in the factory until Monday," she said, "and I came out to see what these woods were like. It's a pretty place."

"Prettier in Summer," I said, "and prettiest of all in Autumn, when the leaves are burned gold and scarlet."

"I like Spring best," she said; "everything is new and fresh, and just begun. In Autumn everything is nearly over—and that is sad."

"I don't mind it," I said; "I haven't a gay disposition, I suppose," I said. "But look here—if you like fresh young things I'll show you something;" and I took her to where, behind a fallen log, the first Spring violets always grew. There were a dozen there now, and she went down on her knees to smell them. She would only pick one, though; it seemed wrong, she said.

That one, after we had walked for an hour or so, somehow dropped out of her hair. She did not know it, but I did; and when she had gone home I went back and found it lying on the path and put it in my bosom. It was so sweet and fresh and beautiful that I could but think it was like her. I liked to think so. Oh, what a day that was for me! What a night when I dreamed it over!

Next day was the Sabbath, and I did what I'd never done before. After I was dressed, and angry with myself for not looking handsomer all the while I stood before the glass, I went over to Mrs. Munson's and asked for Miss May.

She came down in a muslin dress and a pretty bonnet with pale blue ribbons; and I remember stammering out something about thinking she might like to go to church and would like to know the way. That was all nonsense, of course, for there was the steeple in full sight, but it gave me what I wanted, leave to be with her again.

I'm afraid I couldn't have remembered the text to save my life, and that the sermon was thrown away on me. But I was very happy—happier than I had ever been before; for this sweet young thing seemed to like me, was frank and pleasant with me, and found, I was so glad to think, a sort of protection that she liked in my great arm where her hand rested, going home over the fields, like a falling snow-flake. It almost seemed to me that I must be crazy to believe that she had taken a notion to me; but it was true. So true that when four of those Sabbaths had passed I made her walk with me again in Baldwin's Woods, and sat down beside her on the hollow log, behind which a great patch of violets were in bloom by that time, and told her how I loved her, and asked her to be my wife.

Only a month since she came there—only one month since I drove her over in the little wagon; but if the answer had been anything else than what it was I should have prayed to die. It may not be such a mighty matter to other men to have one woman's love, but I had no one else on earth to care for. So when she said, "Yes," and let me kiss her, it was only shame that kept me from crying outright for joy.

She was mine now, and how proud I was of her! How glad to know that she was so near me when I was at work! How happy to see her so trim and neat among the other girls, who were most of them slovenly when they were not fine! and how full of dreams of the future!

She had promised to marry me in the Autumn, and after that she should work no more in the factory. I was saving to buy a little three-roomed cottage in the village, and to furnish it—humbly, of course, but so that it should be a home for her; and when she was its mistress I should not envy any king his palace. Meanwhile we saw as much of each other as we could, both working so industriously.

One week we had been more than usually busy, for it was near the end of June, and we were making fireworks for the Fourth of July, and the first I had seen of Annie that day I saw in the great salesroom where we always gathered to receive our wages. The men on one side, the girls on the other, stepping up to the great desk one by one as old Griffin, the clerk, called our names. I looked across the line of girl's faces, and saw her smiling at me, but I could not get near her. Besides, at the moment, my name was called—"Hathron"—and I stepped up to the desk. Then, for the first time, I noticed that old Griffin was not there. A nephew of Mr. Williams, whose name I knew to be Richard Janes, was paying the hands instead. He was a handsome young fellow, and very gentlemanly—one of the fair kind. I remember thinking as he laid my wages before me that his hair was just the color of Annie's.

He had a sort of amateur way with him very different from the business-like manner of old Griffin, and when it came to the girls he had something pleasant to say to each one, instead of the old man's snapping—"Sixpence deducted from yours, Jane!" or, "You were late three days last week, Martha!" What he said to Annie I don't know, but she blushed like a wild rose from brow to chin.

Walking home together, she asked me who he was.

"Mr. Janes," I answered; "did you never see him before?"

"No," said Annie. "How very handsome he is!—don't you think so?"

I gave a grudging "Yes." I couldn't bear to hear her praise him. She might, for all I knew, be contrasting him with me. That was the first pain I had had since she had promised herself to me; but there was more to come of it.

Besides her daily work Annie had got into the way of doing some fine sewing and embroidery of evenings for a Miss Redford, a beautiful young lady, who lived in the prettiest house in the village, and once a week she carried it home. Generally I went with her; but there was overwork for the men to do one night, and I could not get off. I fretted and fumed about it, and when the time came I couldn't for the life of me help slipping away to a stair-head window to try and catch a glimpse of her. Sure enough, I did see her a good way on the road, with her little basket on her arm, but there was some one with her. It was too far to see faces, but I knew the light-gray coat he wore, and it was Mr. Richard Janes. He was bending over her as though talking very earnestly; and when some one inside called "Hathron!" and I could stay no longer, they were still going on close together—her face turned up and his bent down, both earnest and eager in whatever they were talking of.

I went back to my work, but I kept that picture before my eyes all the while. I thought of it until it seemed to be burned into my heart in fiery outlines. After all, it was only what might easily have happened if Mr. Janes had walked the same way by chance; but I could not look at it that way—or perhaps I would not.

It was like my sulky, brooding nature, too, never to say one word about it to Annie, but to keep on thinking and watching in silence. I found out more than I wanted to in that way; for one day when I had made an excuse to enter the women's work-room after Mr. Janes had gone there, I plainly saw him slip a little note slyly into Annie's pocket. The time had come around for her to go over to Miss Redford's with her work; but that evening, instead of going with her, I watched her—hiding like a thief behind trees and buildings on the road. She went alone and came alone, and I saw nothing for my pains. I did at church next Sabbath, though. When the hymn was given out Mr. Janes, sitting in the handsome family pew, seeing Annie in doubt as to the number—for the old clergyman didn't always speak distinctly—reached over and took her book to find the place (she sat but a pew behind him). When he gave it back I saw that there was something between the leaves, and come what might, I would have snatched it; but at that moment Miss Redford, who sat in the side isle, whispered to Annie to show her the number, and I lost the chance, for in passing the books it was hidden. That it was a note I knew by the white glimmer of the edge as well as if I had seen the whole of it, and surely as I live I saw Annie give Mr. Janes a meaning smile as he passed us on the church-path going home.

Miss Redford looked at Annie as if she knew something of it too, as she stepped after her father and mother into the carriage. They were carriage people—the Redfords—and the old folks looked down on everybody else. There was a feud between them and the proprietors of the factory, and they never spoke to either the Williamses or Mr. Janes; so there was no social chatting on the porch, and the Williams people smiled sarcastically, and the old Redfords scowled and looked haughty, until they were all fairly shut in and driven away. Not Mr. Janes—he was too gentlemanly; nor Miss Redford—she was too sweet. The feud was among the old folks. The farmers' families made up for their ill-temper though, and half the genteel people from the villas were smirking and bowing to each other.

The factory hands who were at church—a dozen in all, I suppose—hurried home pell-mell by short cuts, not to lose their dinners, and of them all only Annie and I were left. She was waiting for me to join her, a thing I didn't mean to do.

I leaned against the iron railing of the church-yard, wishing I was sound asleep under one of the green mounds, but only looking darker and sulkier, no doubt, than usual, until I saw her turn toward me. Then I leaped the railing and went away, never looking back. I did not go home, but spent the day in Baldwin's Woods alone.

On Monday I was at work as usual. It was the third of July, and the Fourth, of course, was to be a holiday. There were to be grand celebrations at Baldwin, and the show-pieces for the evening were being finished at our place, under the superintendence of Mr. Richard Janes. It was hard to keep the younger hands at their work. They were half crazy about the Fourth, and I suppose every one of them had a pistol. I never cared for banging at nothing, and should not have had one even if I had felt differently. One young fellow tried hard all day to sell me his; like a goose he had bought two, and was sorry for it.

About dusk I went to get my supper, and was coming back when, among the shadows, I saw two figures standing whispering together. I felt in a moment who they must be, and got close enough hear their voices. It was as I thought. One was Annie May, the other Richard Janes. They were parting, but I heard enough in the last few words:

"Eleven will be the best time; the moon will be up by then. I'll have the carriage waiting under the the two elms in Baldwin's Woods. Be certain about the hour, for the down-train starts a quarter to twelve. Good-by—God bless you."

Not another word—but I knew the whole. She was going off with Richard Janes. She whom I loved so. The one of all the world who had seemed to love me. I heard his firm tread die away. I heard her light footsteps rustle over the grass, and went back my self to the work-room, for we were to work till a late hour that night. I walked straight up to the young fellow who had been trying all day to sell me his superfluous pistol.

"Smith," said I, "I think I'll trade with you after all."

"Good for you," said he. "The Fourth ain't no Fourth without a pistol, and this is goin' cheap. A good load in it too, so be careful."

I counted down the money and took the weapon away with me. Do you want to know what I meant to do with it? Shoot myself through the heart. The idea of murder had not crept into my mind then. I'd swear that with my dying breath.

I only wanted to get rid of my tiresome life. There was nothing left to live for; so it seemed to me.

At half past ten I got the chance I wanted, and slipped out. I was going to kill myself in Baldwin's Woods, on the dead log behind which the first Spring violets grew, and where we had sat so often since together. The moon was just rising round and yellow behind the black trees, and the factory windows were all ablaze. As I slunk by the office I saw Mr. Richard Janes there alone, he was standing exactly under a swinging lamp. A trying light for any but a very handsome face, but his was not hurt by it. Great Heavens! how handsome he looked, and how happy! My blood boiled with rage, and jealousy, and grief. I was as mad for the moment as any lunatic could be. My hand went into my bosom and caught at the pistol hidden there. The next instant I had fired, taking aim at the handsome head.

But it was not good aim. The ball passed over its mark and struck the swinging lamp. I saw it fall, and a great blaze spring up on the instant, and knew that the fire work factory was on fire. That factory filled to the roof with explosive substances, and with a hundred and fifty men and boys, and pretty, innocent girls shut up within its walls. I do not know whether Satan ever feels remorse, but if he does it must be such as I felt—hopeless, maddening, scorching.

The next instant there was a horrible report, and I was throwa into the air.

Not hurt, though. I picked myself up from the grass and stood looking at my work. The windows were belching forth flame up in the air, amidst the smoke. Hundreds of rockets, and blue lights, and Catherine wheels were tossing and flaming—scarlet, and yellow, and purple, and pink, and green, and blue. Hundreds of cannons seemed to be roaring; and over it all you could hear screams—women's screams—and I went down on my knees and prayed:

"Oh, save her, save her—to be his wife, to hate me—only save her!"

People were flocking in from the village. Workmen, singed and scorched, forced their way through the flames; and in the midst of the wildest tumults some one caught my arm. I turned—it was Annie, and beside her, white and trembling, stood Miss Redford.

"Oh, Seth—thank God for this!" cried Annie; "you are safe. Oh, dear young lady, try to hope; he may be too."

And then that beautiful Miss Redford sank on her knees before me, and clasped her hands, and prayed me to save *her Richard!*

"I should have been his wife in an hour," she said. "Oh, save my husband—save my husband—my love, my life, my darling!"

The truth rushed into my mind then. I saw all my blind folly. I remembered the feud between the Redfords and the Williams family, and knew that my Annie had only been helping Miss Redford to meet and correspond with her lover; that it was to her the message I had heard that evening had been sent, and that it would have been better for me to be dead.

"Go out of danger!" I panted. "I'll bring him to you or die with him!" and with Annie's scream of terror in my ear, dashed away. They were playing on the burning building with the one engine they had at hand by this time, and I could see that most of the workmen were alive.

I clutched one by the arm as I went past.

"Are the women in there yet?" I yelled.

"No, thank Heaven," he answered. "Didn't you know the women were dismissed five minutes before the explosion took place? There wasn't one there. All the men are out too, I guess, but them that were setting the last show-piece in the room next the office: about a dozen. The rest jumped out o' the window. There's a broken limb or two, I guess. But that's better than the poor fellows inside roasting alive or blown to pieces. Young Mr. Janes is there too. His uncle is offering anything to have him got out. Life's worth more than money, though, nobody can do it."

He was right. For hours we worked at the fire before it was out; and then a great heap of lumber was piled over the bodies of the thirteen men who must be, inside—dead, we supposed—and I heard some one say that Miss Redford was going from one swoon into another at the Williamses, and that it had come out that she was to have eloped with Mr. Janes the night before.

It was the Fourth of July; but no guns were fired and no bells rung at Baldwin. All the people of the town were about the factory helping as best they could. We lifted great charred logs and heaps of beards and molten cans, and at last one stopped. "Hush," he cried; "for God's sake no noise. I hear a voice!" And then, amidst a breathless silence, we heard a moan under our feet.

We worked with a will now, and at last heard more.

One of the men put his head close down and cried, "Are any of you alive?" And some one groaned, "Yes."

Black with smoke, scorched by the cinders we handled, we went at it again, and at last came to a spot where the beams had made a kind of peat-house. There, jammed together and half suffocated, but alive, were four men. And such a yell went up as mortal ears never heard before. Four saved! Four saved! And we drew them out and gave them over to the doctors. Then there was another shout not so loud, for we had come to one insensible, jammed between two logs. He breathed though as soon as we brought him to the air.

It was a time no one ever forgot. Judge what it was to me!

At last all were out but Mr. Janes, and somebody cried that they could see him under some beams. It was a dangerous place to get at; but I would not stop for that. I forced myself into the narrow aperture, and set to work. I called to him, but there was no answer. At last I come to him, lying with a great beam across his chest. His beautiful golden hair and beard were singed and scorched, and one of his hands was blistered. I touched him, and screamed in his ears, but they were deaf to me. I got the log off somehow, and dragged him to the light, and then I had help enough. They took him between them and laid him on the grass, and the doctor unfastened his vest.

"Is he dead?" I asked; and I meant as truly as I live, if the answer were "yes," to tell the crowd before me what I had done, knowing well that if I did no law could save me.

There was no answer for a moment, and I spoke again, "Is he dead?" And God bless the dear, white-headed old man who answered so kindly:

"No, my man, he isn't dead. I think he's coming to."

Oh, the mercy of the good Lord—think of it! Of the whole not one was killed. There were burns, and broken limbs, and black eyes, but there was no death; and soon I saw Richard Janes—pale and faint, but out of danger—standing before me. I couldn't believe God had been so good to me.

Then that old white-haired doctor mounted on a pile of burned logs and lifted his hat, and there were three such cheers as were never heard before, and a dozen boys sped in to Baldwin to ring the joy-bells; and women came crying to thank me for helping to save their dear ones—so that for shame I went and hid myself in Baldwin's Woods and cried, with my head hidden in my arms, on the old log where the violets were.

Then somebody came softly up the path and sat beside me, and bent over me, and took me, singed and smoke-stained as I was, in two white arms—and only one of all the world could do that—and without looking I knew it was Annie.

"My noble, brave darling," she said; "my own dear that I am so proud of!" and sobbed and kissed me.

"They are so happy too," she said; "and Mr. Janes is only scorched and burned a very little, and old Mr. Redford is reconciled to old Mr. Williams, and they will be married after all. They are so fond of each other, Seth; as fond as you and I."

And then I stood up and put her gently from me, and made atonement for my sin by an awful sacrifice. I told her the truth—what I was, and what I had done, and why, and waited to hear her renounce me.

She did not do it. She was shocked and grieved, but she pitied me, and I dared to take her in my arms and call her mine again. I believe that all my life there had been an evil spirit in my breast, and that he left me forever at that moment.

It was some time before the factory was rebuilt, and some had been injured, and many were out of work. I knew my duty. To those in need came little gifts of money every week, with no clue to its donor, until my savings were all gone.

So we did not buy the three-roomed cottage, and perhaps never shall; but, penniless as I was, she married me, and we are happy.

Mr. Janes and Miss Redford are married too; and when we sit in church she smiles across the pews to that little wife of mine, and I think, with a pang of terror even yet, from what God's mercy saved me.

CURIOSITIES OF HUMANITY.

SOME author or other wrote himself blind, as we have heard, on the "curiosities of literature;" but he certainly would have used up two or three pairs of eyes if he had set himself seriously to work looking out for the curiosities of humanity. We could have mentioned a few to him, and here they are:

The husband that says to his wife on a Monday night, when cook is in revolt, dinner is behind hand, and "stocks down," "My dear, you look tired; let me walk up and down with the baby while you rest!"

The wife who expends as much pains upon her toilette on a rainy morning when there is no one but "John" at the breakfast-table, as she does on the evening when her old sweetheart is coming to call!

The husband who reads all the Congressional debates to his wife without meanly skipping every other paragraph, and always keeps her posted in floating politics.

The wife who provides herself with spools of cotton, thimbles, and sewing-work before the reading begins, and don't have to jump up once in five minutes to "fetch something from the other room!"

The man who is consistent, and goes out to chop kindling for exercise after having recommended bed-making to his wife as a healthful method of expanding the chest!

The woman who tells her husband just exactly how much money she spent in that shopping expedition yesterday!

The man who is always delighted with the domestic puddings and pies, and don't expect a daily bill of fare like unto a French restaurant!

The woman who don't look into all the envelopes in her husband's vest pocket when she mends that garment!

The man who never saw a collar pattern that fits so much better than his ever did!

The woman who can't tell the color of her neighbor's new Winter bonnet!

The husband who, especially during northeast storms, and during the prevalence of domestic toothaches, makes up his mind that it is a great deal cheaper to be amiable than to scold.—*Phrenological Journal.*

SOCIABILITY.

IT is often said of persons, in a complimentary way, that they are sociable, meaning that they are friendly and talkative; but it depends somewhat on the character of a person's speech, as well as its quantity, whether his acquaintance is desirable or not. Persons may be ever so well meaning, but if their conversation is only of the prevailing sickness, or the last horrible murder in papers, unless you incline particularly to such kind of entertainment, they will be likely to prove dull companions in the end. Or if an acquaintance is simply prosy, and talks with as dignified an air as if he fancied himself to be delivering a lecture on some moral subject, without any of the familiar language which makes intercourse with friends so charming, you will be as likely to go to sleep during his discourse as you would in a railway carriage while it is in motion, and wake up when he stopped. Or, if your caller should happen to be one full of his or her own petty cares, who will treat you to a history of all their little vexations, you will soon become tired, or irritable, or both; but no matter, you must hear all their plans for the present and future, whether you will or not. Sometimes, too, from this kind of sociable people you will hear nothing but bits of flying gossip about people you are not at all interested in. But when a friend enters about your own stamp, and you cannot speak without calling up a response from his mind; when your ideas and experiences correspond, and your heart grows lighter with the friendly interchange of thought, you are enjoying one of the highest pleasures of social intercourse. Such hours need not be counted among the vanishing pleasures, for the recollection of them is agreeable to both ever after.

HOW DUTCH GAP GOT ITS NAME

THE following is told by a Southern correspondent of the Brooklyn *Eagle:* "An Englishman and a Dutchman, so the story runs, undertook, for a wager, to row their respective skiffs from a place seven miles below the gap to a point above it. The man who first arrived at the place of destination was to be considered the champion, and to receive the stakes. Both started. The Englishman pulled out vigorously, while the Dutchman, with true Teutonic impartability, suffered his opponent to go ahead without an apparent effort to keep up with him. When the Englishman began to round the bluff, after passing the gap, the Dutchman was "hull down" and almost out of sight of his antagonist, who was counting on a "sure thing of it." When the Dutchman reached the gap, he run his skiff on shore, raised it on his shoulders, and made his way with all possible despatch across the few hundred feet of intervening space. When the Englishman arrived at the point at which the race was to terminate, what was his astonishment to find his opponent in his skiff, calmly awaiting his appearance, having relieved the weariness of his stay by smoking, with Dutch leisure, three or sour pipes of tobacco. Whether the Dutchman succeeded by his trick in winning the wager is not known, but he gave a name to the gap.

DR. STUCKLEY once waited upon Sir Isaac Newton a little before dinner-time; but he had given orders not to be called down to anybody till his dinner was upon the table. At length a boiled chicken was brought in, and Stuckley waited till it was near cold, when, being very hungry, he ate it up, and ordered another to be prepared for Sir Isaac, who came down before the second was ready, and seeing the dish and cover of the first which had been left, lifted up the latter, and turning to the doctor, said: "What strange folks we studious people are! I really forgot that I had dined."

WHAT commodity is always offered at cost? The law.

WHAT things increase the more you contract them? Debts.

WHAT is higher and handsomer when the head is off? A pillow.

How does the hair-dresser end his days? He curls up and dyes.