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Select Poetry.

HOUSEHOLD WALLS.

BY ELIZA COOK.

We talk of "old familiar faces,"
And love them warmly and sincerely;
But there are old familiar places,
That cling to us almost as dearly.

Say, who among us, with a heart
Where feelings holy sunshine falls,
Can bear, untouched, to turn and part
From even long-known household walls?

Walls that have echoed to our pleasure,
Walls, that have hidden us in grief,
Been shaken by our dancing measure,
And garnished by our Christmas leaf.

The chairs, that we have drawn around
The twilight fire, with friends beside us,
When in that tiny world we found
The peace the larger world denied us.

The table, where our arm was leaned,
And held our brow in pensive thinking,
The cosey curtain that has screened
When north-east draughts have found us shrinking.

Oh! are there not some hearts that ever
A tint of love from these can borrow;
And when they say "Good bye," can never
Take the last look without deep sorrow.

And how the spirit learns to talk
To some old tree, or whitethorn hedge,
Or worship some poor garden walk,
As though 'twere bound by sacred pledge.

Oh! many a throbbing heart will yearn
To household wall, or old green lane,
And many a farewell glance will turn,
Half dimmed, to peep just once again.

At some familiar noteless thing,
Which we have dwelt with, till it seems
A feather in the gentle wing,
That nestles all our happiest dreams.

Oh! love, thou hast a noble throne
In bosoms where thy life-light falls,
So warm and wide, that they have sighed,
At leaving even household walls.

Choice Miscellany.

TALE OF A BARRISTER.

Esther Mason.

Above forty years ago, Jabez Woodford, a foreman o shipwrights in the Plymouth dockyard, while carelessly crossing one of the traverse beams of a seventy-four gunship, building in that arsenal, missed his footing, fell to the bottom of the hold of the huge vessel, and was killed on the spot. He left a widow and one child—a boy seven years of age, of placid, endearing disposition; but weak intellect,—almost in a state of destitution. He had been a coarse-tempered, improvident man; and like too many of his class, in those days at least, dissipated the whole of his large earnings in present sensuous indulgence, utterly careless or unmindful of the future. Esther Woodford, who at the time of her husband's death scarcely numbered five-and-twenty years, was still a remarkably comely, as well as interesting, gentle-mannered person; and moreover had, for her station in life, received a tolerable education. Her rash, ill-assorted marriage with Woodford had been hastily contracted when she was barely seventeen years of age, in consequence of a jealous pique which she for some silly reason or other, had conceived regarding Henry Mason, an intelligent young seafaring man of fair prospects in life, and frank disposition, with whom she had for some time previously, as the west country phrase it, "kept company," and who was, moreover, tenderly attached to her. Esther's married life was one long repentance of the rash act; and the severance of the tie which bound her to an ungenial mate—after the subsidence of the natural horror and compassion excited by the sudden and frightful nature of the catastrophy—must have been felt as a most blessed relief. A few weeks afterwards, she accepted an asylum with her brother-in-law, Davies, a market gardener in the vicinity of Plymouth, where, by persevering industry, with her needle, and thrifty helpfulness in her sister's household duties, she endeavored to compensate her kind-hearted relatives for the support of herself and a helpless half-witted child. Mason she had never seen since the day previous to her marriage; but she knew he was prospering in the busy world, and that some time before her husband's death, he had been appointed chief-mate in a first-class merchant-ship trading to the Pacific. He had sailed about a fortnight previous to that event; and now ten lazy months having slowly floated past, the lover of her youth, with whom in that last sunny day of her young life—how distant did it seem, viewed through the long intervening vista of days and nights of grief and tears!—she had danced so joyously beneath the flowering chestnut-tree, was once more near her; and it was—oh happiness!—no longer a sin to think of him—no longer a crime to recall and dwell upon the numberless proofs of the deep affection, the strong love, he had once felt for her. Once felt! Perhaps even now! How swiftly had the intelligence communicated by her sympathising sister tinted with bright hues the dark curtain of the future!

"And yet," murmured poor Esther, the flush of hope fading as suddenly as it had risen, as with meek, sad eyes she glanced at the reflection of her features in the small oval glass suspended over the mantlepiece—"I almost doubt, Susy dear, if he would recognize me; even if old feelings and old times have not long since faded from his memory——"

"Stuff and trumpery about fading away," broke in Mrs. Davies. Henry Mason is the same true-hearted man he was eight years ago; and as a proof that he is, just read this letter which I promised him to give to you. There, don't go falling into a flustration; don't now, Esther, and to-morrow market-day and all! Don't cry, Esther," she added vehemently, but at the same time sobbing furiously herself, and throwing her arms round her sister's neck: "but perhaps—perhaps it will do us good, both of us!"

It may be necessary to state that I owe the foregoing particulars to the interest felt by my wife—herself a native of the beautiful Devon—in the fortunes of this humble household. Esther was her foster-sister; and it happened that just at this period, it was vacation time, we were paying a visit to a family in the neighborhood. A few hours after the receipt of the welcome letter, my wife chanced to call on Esther relative to some fancy needle-work; and on her return, I was of course favored with very full and florid details of this little bit of cottage romance; the which I, from regard to the reader, have carefully noted down, and as briefly as possible expressed.

We met Henry Mason with his recovered treasure on the following evening; and certainly a more favorable specimen of the vigorous, active, bold-featured, frank-spoken, British seaman I never met with. To his comparatively excellent education—for which I understood he was indebted to his mother, a superior woman, who, having fallen from one of the little heights of society, had kept a school at Plymouth—in addition to his correct and temperate habits, he was indebted for the rapid advance—he was but a few months older than Esther—he had obtained in the merchant service. The happiness which beamed upon Esther's face did not appear to be of that exuberant, buoyant character that kindled the ruddy cheek and ran over at the bright honest eyes of the hardy sailor; there seemed to mingle with it a half-doubting, trembling apprehensiveness; albeit it was not difficult to perceive that sorrowfully as she passed her noon of prime, an "Indian summer" of the soul was rising upon her brightened existence, and already with its first faint flushes lighting up her meek, doubting eyes, and pale, changing countenance. Willy, her feeble-minded child, frisked and gamboled by their side; and altogether, a happier group than they would, I fancy, have been difficult to find in all broad England.

The next week they were married; and one of the partners of the firm, by which Mason was employed, happening to dine with us on the day of the wedding, the conversation turned for a few minutes on the bride-groom's character and prospects.

"He has the ring of true metal in him," I remarked; "and is, I suppose, a capital seaman."

"A first-rate one," replied Mr. Roberts. "Indeed, so high is my father's opinion of him, that he intends to confer upon him the command of a fine brig now building for us in the Thames, and intended for the West India trade. He possesses, also, a singular courage and daring. Twice, under very hazardous circumstances, he has successfully risked his life to save men who have fallen overboard. He is altogether a skillful, gallant seaman."

"Such a man," observed another of the company, "might surely have aspired higher than to the hand of Esther Woodford, dove-eyed and interesting as she may be!"

"Perhaps so," returned Mr. Roberts, a little curtly; "though he, it seems, could not have thought so."

The subject then dropped, and it was a considerable time afterwards, and under altogether altered circumstances, when the newly married couple once more crossed my path in life.

It was about eight months after his marriage—though he had been profitably enough employed in the interim—that Henry Mason, in consequence of the welcome announcement that the new brig was at last ready for her captain and cargo, arrived in London to enter upon his new appointment.

"These lodgings, Esther," said he, as he was preparing to go out, soon after breakfast, on the morning of his arrival, "are scarcely the thing, and as I, like you, am a stranger in Cockney-land, I had better consult some of the firm upon the subject before we decide upon permanent ones. In the meantime, you and Willy must mind and keep in doors when I am not with you, or I shall have one or other of you lost in this great wilderness of a city. I shall return in two or three hours. I will order something for dinner as I go along; I have your purse. Good by: God bless you both."

Inquiring his way every two or three minutes. Mason presently found himself in the vicinity of Tower stairs. A scuffle in front of a public house attracted his attention; and his ready sympathies were in an instant enlisted in behalf of a young sailor, vainly struggling in the grasp of several athletic men, and crying lustily on the gaping bystanders for help. Mason sprang forward, caught one of the assailants by the collar, and hurled him with some violence against the wall. A fierce outcry greeted this audacious interference with gentlemen, who, in those good old times, were but executing the law in a remarkably good old manner. Lieutenant Donnaghue, a somewhat celebrated snapper-up of loose mariners, emerged upon the scene, and in a few minutes was enabled to exult in the secure possession of an additional prize in the unfortunate Henry Mason, who too late discovered that he had embroiled himself with a *press-gang!* Desperate, frenzied were the efforts he made to extricate himself from the peril in which he had so rashly involved himself. In vain! His protestations that he was a mate, a captain in the merchant service, were unheeded, or mocked at.

To all his remonstrances, he only got the professional answer—"His majesty wants you, and that is enough, so come along, and no more about it."

Bruised, exhausted, almost mad, he was borne off in triumph to a boat, into which he was thrust with several others, and swiftly rowed off to a receiving-ship in the river. Even there his assertions and protestations were of no avail. Nothing but an Admiralty order, the officer in command candidly told him, should effect his liberation. His majesty was in need of seamen; and he was evidently too smart a one to be deprived of the glory of serving his country. "You must therefore," concluded the officer, as he turned laughingly upon his heel, "do as thousands of other fine fellows have been compelled to do—grin and bear it." In about three weeks from the date of his impressment, Mason found himself in the Mediterranean serving on board the "Active" frigate, Captain Alexander Gordon, without having been permitted one opportunity of communicating with the shore. This was certainly very sharp, but it was not the less very *common* practice in those great days of triumphant battles by land and sea.

Very drearily passed the time with the bereaved wife. Her husband had promised to send home something for dinner, and various groceries; yet hour after hour went past, and nothing arrived. Morning flushed into noon, day faded to twilight, and still the well-known and always eager step sounded not upon the stairs! What could have detained him from his wife, shut up, imprisoned as it were, in that hot, hurrying, stifling city? She feared to listen to the suggestions of her boding heart; and with feverish restlessness ran out upon the landing, and peered over the stairs every time a knock or ring was heard at the street-door. This strange behavior was, it seems, noticed by the landlady of the lodging-house, and injuriously interpreted. A knock came to the door, and that person entered to know at what time *Miss*——, she had forgotten the young woman's name, expected the dinner she, the landlady, had undertaken to cook.

Esther timidly replied that her husband had promised to return in two or three hours at latest; and that she did not comprehend his continued absence—was indeed quite alarmed about it——

"Your husband!" said the woman, glancing insolently at Esther's figure. "Are you sure he *is* your husband?"

The hot blood suffused the temples of the indignant wife as she said, "This apartment, madam, I believe is mine?"

"Oh! certainly, as long as you can pay for it;" and rudely slamming the door, the landlady departed. The long wretched night at last over, Esther rose with the light, and after giving her son his breakfast from the remains of that of the day before, set off with him to the place of business of the Messrs. Roberts. It was early, and one clerk only had yet arrived at the office. He informed her that Mr. Henry Mason had not been seen, and that the partners were greatly annoyed about it, as his immediate presence was absolutely necessary.

Stunned, terrified, bewildered by the frightful calamity which she believed had befallen her, she felt convinced that her husband had been entrapped and murdered for the sake of the money he had about him: the wretched woman tottered back to her lodgings, and threw herself on the bed in wild despair. What was to be done for food even for her boy? Her husband had not only his pocket-book with him, containing his larger money, but had taken her purse. She was alone and penniless in a strange city! The hungry wailings of her witless child toward evening, at length aroused her from the stupor of despair into which she had fallen. The miserable resource of pawning occurred to her; she could at least, by pledging a part of her wardrobe, procure sustenance for her child till she could hear from her sister: and with trembling hands she began arranging a bundle of such things as she could best spare, when the landlady abruptly entered the room, with a peremptory demand—as her husband was not returned, and did not appear likely to do so—for a month's rent in advance, that being the term that the apartments were engaged for.—The tears, entreaties, expostulations of the miserable wife were of no avail. Not one article the woman declared should leave her house till her claim was settled. She affected to doubt, perhaps really did so, that Esther was married; and hinted coarsely at an enforcement of the laws against persons who had no visible means of subsistence. In a paroxysm of despair, the unhappy woman rushed out of the house; and accompanied by her hungry child, again sought the counting-house of the Messrs. Roberts. She was now as much too late as she had been too early in the morning: the partners and clerks had gone, and she appears to have been treated with some rudeness by the porter, who was closing the premises when she arrived. Possibly the wildness of her speech and manner, produced an impression unfavorable to her. Retracing her steps—penniless, hungry, sick at heart—she thought, as she afterwards declared, that she recognized my wife in one of the numerous ladies seated before the counters of a fashionable shop in one of the busiest thoroughfares. She entered, and not till she approached close to the lady discovered her mistake. She turned despairingly away; when a piece of rich lace, lying apparently unheeded on the counter, met her eye, and a dreadful suggestion crossed her fevered brain; here, at least, was the means of procuring food for her wailing child. She glanced hastily and fearfully around. No eye, she thought, observed her; and horror of horrors! a moment afterwards she had concealed the lace beneath her shawl, and with tottering feet was hastily leaving the shop. She had not taken half a dozen steps, when a heavy hand was laid upon her shoulder, and a voice, as of a serpent hissing in her ear, commanded her to restore the lace she had stolen. Transfixed with shame and terror, she stood rooted to the spot, and the lace fell on the floor.

"Fetch an officer!" said the harsh voice, addressing one of the shopmen.

"No—no—no!" screamed the wretched woman, falling on her knees in wild supplication. "For my child's sake—in mercy of the innocent babe as yet unborn—pity and forgive me!"

The harsh order was iterated; and Esther Mason, fainting with shame and agony, was conveyed to the prison in Giltspur-street. The next day she was fully committed to Newgate on the capital charge of privately stealing in a shop to the value of five pounds. A few hours after her incarceration within those terrible walls, she was prematurely delivered of a female child.

I have no moral doubt whatever, I never have had, that at the time of the committal of the felonious act, the intellect of Esther Mason was disordered. Any other supposition is inconsistent with the whole tenor of her previous life and character. "Lead us not into temptation," is indeed the holiest because the humblest prayer.

Three weeks had elapsed before the first intimation of these events reached me, in a note from the chaplain of Newgate, an excellent, kind-hearted man, to whom Mrs. Mason had confided her sad story. I immediately hastened to the prison; and in a long interview with her elicited the foregoing statement. I readily assured her that all which legal skill could do to extricate her from the awful position in which she stood, the gravity of which I did not affect to conceal, should be done. The offence with which she was charged had supplied the scaffold with numberless victims; and tradesmen were more than over clamorous for the stern execution of the law which, spite of experience, they still regarded as the only safeguard of their property. My wife was overwhelmed with grief; and in her anxiety to save her unhappy foster-sister, sought, without my knowledge, an interview with the prosecutor, in the hope of inducing him not to press the charge. Her efforts were unavailing. He had suffered much, he said, from such practices, and was, "upon principle" determined to make an example of every offender he could catch. As to the plea that the husband had been forcibly carried off by a press-gang, it was absurd; for what would become of the property of tradesmen if the wife of every sailor so entrapped, were to be allowed to plunder shops with impunity. This magnificent reasoning was of course unanswerable; and the rebuked petitioner abandoned her bootless errand in despair. Messrs. Roberts, I should have mentioned, had by some accident discovered the nature of the misfortune which had befallen their officer, and had already made urgent application to the Admiralty for his release.

The Old Baily sessions did not come on for some time: I, however, took care to secure at once, as I did not myself practice in that court, the highest talent its bar afforded. Willy, who had been placed in a workhouse by the authorities, we had properly taken care of till he could be restored to his mother: or in the event of her conviction, to his relatives in Devonshire.

The sessions were at last on; a "true bill" against Esther Mason for shoplifting, as it was popularly termed, was unhesitatingly found, and with a heavy heart I wended my way to the court to watch the proceedings. A few minutes after I entered, Mr. Justice Le Blanc and Mr. Barron Wood, who had assisted at an important case of stock-jobbing conspiracy, just over, left the bench; the learned recorder being doubtless considered quite equal to the trial of a more capital charge of theft.

The prisoner was placed in the dock; but try as I might I could not look at her. It happened to be a calm, bright summer day; the air, as if in mockery of those death sessions, humming with busy, lusty life; so that sitting with my back to the prisoner, I could, as it were, read her demeanor in the shadow thrown by her figure on the opposite sunlight wall. There she stood, during the brief moments which sealed her earthly doom, with downcast eyes and utterly dejected posture; her thin fingers playing mechanically with the flowers and sweet-scented herbs spread scantily before her. The trial was very brief; the evidence, emphatically conclusive, was confidently given and vainly cross-examined. Nothing remained but an elaborate *ad misericordiam* excusative defence, which had been prepared by me, and which the prisoner begged her counsel might be allowed to read. This was of course refused; the recorder remarking, they might as well allow counsel for felons to address juries, as read defences; and that, as every practical man knew, would be utterly subversive of the due administration of justice.—The clerk of the court would read the paper, if the prisoner felt too agitated to do so. This was done, and very vilely done. The clerk, I dare say, read as well as he was able: but old, near sighted, and possessed of any thing but a clear enunciation, what could be expected?—The defence, so read, produced not the slightest effect, either on the court or the jury. The recorder briefly commented on the conclusiveness of the evidence for the prosecution; and the jury, in the same brief, business-like manner, returned a verdict of guilty.

"What have you to say," demanded the clerk, "why sentence of death should not be pronounced upon you, according to law?"

The shadow started convulsively as the terrible words fell from the man's lips; and I saw that the suddenly uprised eyes of the prisoner were fastened on the fearful questioner. The lips, too, appeared to move; but no sound reached my ear.

"Speak, woman," said the recorder, if you have any thing to urge before sentence is pronounced."

I started up, and turning to the prisoner, besought her in hurried accents to speak. "Remind them of the infant at your breast—your husband"——

"Who is that conferring with the prisoner?" demanded the judge in an angry voice.

I turned and confronted him with a look as haughty as his own. He did not think proper to pursue the inquiry further; and after muttering something about the necessity of not interrupting the proceedings of the court, again asked the prisoner if she had any thing to urge.

"Not for myself—not for my sake," at last faintly murmured the trembling woman; "but for that of my poor, dear infant—my poor witless boy! I do not think, sir, I was in my right mind. I was starving—I was friendless. My husband, too, whom you have heard"——. She stopped abruptly, a choaking sob struggled in her throat, and but for the supporting arm of one of the turnkeys, she would have fallen to the ground.

"Unhappy, guilty woman," said the recorder, with the coolness of a demon, "the plea of insanity you would set up is utterly untenable. Your husband, it seems, is serving his majesty in the royal navy; defending his country whilst his wife was breaking its laws, by the commission of a crime which, but for the stern repression of the law would sap the foundations of the security of property, and"——

I could endure no more. The atmosphere of the court seemed to stifle me; and I rushed for relief into the open air. Before, however, I had reached the street, a long, piercing scream informed me that the learned judge had done his duty.

No effort was spared during the interval which elapsed previous to the recorder presenting his report to the privy council—a peculiar privilege at that time attached to the office to procure a mitigation of the sentence. A petition, setting forth the peculiar circumstances of the case, was carefully prepared; and by the indefatigable exertions of an excellent Quaker gentleman—whom, as he is still alive, and might not choose to have his name blazoned to the world, I will call William Friend—was soon very numerously signed. The prosecutor, however, obstinately refused to attach his name to the document; and the absence of his signature—so strangely did men reason on such matters in those days—would, it was feared, weigh heavily against the success of the petition.—The amiable and enlightened Sir Samuel Romilly not only attached his name, but aided us zealously by his advices and influence. In short, nothing was omited that appeared likely to attain the desired object.

Two days before the petition was to be forwarded to the proper quarter, Henry Mason arrived in England, the exertions of his employers having procured his discharge. The "Active" was one of Captain Hosto's squadron, which obtained the celebrated victory off Lissa, over the Franco-Venetian fleet commanded by Admirable Dobourdieu. Henry Mason, appeared by the testimonials of the captain and officers of his ship, had greatly distinguished himself in the action. We enclosed these papers with the petition; and then, having done all in our power awaited with anxious impatience the result of the recorder's report. It was announced to me, as I was sitting somewhat later than usual at chambers, by Mr. William Friend. The Judgment to die was confirmed! All our representations had not sufficed to counterbalance the supposed necessity of exhibiting terrible examples of the fate awaiting the perpetrators of an offence, said to be greatly on the increase. Excellent William Friend wept like a child as he made the announcement.

There are many persons alive who recollect this horrible tragedy—this national disgrace—this act of gross barbarity on the part of the great personage, who, first having carried off the poor woman's husband, left her to die for an act, the very consequence of that robbery. Who among the spectators can ever forget that heart-rending scene—the hangman taking the baby from the breast of the wretched creature just before he put her to death?—But let us not rake up these terrible reminiscences. Let us hope that the truly guilty are forgiven. But let us take consolation from reflecting that this event led the great Romilly to enter on his celebrated career as a reformer of the criminal law.

The remains of Esther Mason were obtaing from the Newgate officials, and quietly interred in St. Sepulchre's churchyard. A plain slab, with her name only plainly chiselled upon it, was some time afterwards placed above the grave. A few years ago I attended a funeral in the same graveyard; and after a slight search discovered the spot. The inscription, though of course much worn, was still quite legible.

I had not seen Henry Mason since his return; but I was glad to hear from Mr. William Friend that, after the first passionate burst of rage and grief had subsided, he had, appearently at least, thanks to the tender and pious expostultions of his wife—with whom, by the kind intervention of sheriffs, he was permitted long and frequent interviews—settled down into calmness and resignation. One thing only he would not bear to hear even from her and that was any admission that she had been guilty of even the slightest offence. A hint of the kind, however unintentional, would throw him into a paroxysm of fury, and the subject was consequently in his presence studiously avoided.

In a few days after the execution, Mr. William Friend called on me just after breakfast, accompanied by the bereaved husband. I never saw so changed a man.—All the warm kindliness of his nature had vanished, and was replaced by a gloomy, fierce austerity, altogether painful to contemplate.

"Well, sir," said he, as he barely touched my proffered hand, "they have killed her, you see, spite of all you could say or do. It much availed me, too, that I had helped to win their boasted victories;" and he laughed with savage bitterness.

"Henry—Henry!" exclaimed William Friend, in a reproving accent.

"Well, well, sir," rejoined Mason, impatiently, "you are a good man, and have, of course, your own notions on these matters. I also have mine. Or perhaps you think it is only the blood of the rich and great, which, shed unjustly, brings forth the iron harvest? Forgive me," he added, checking himself. "I respect you both; but my heart is turned to stone. You do not know—none ever knew but I—how kind, how loving, how gentle was that poor, long-suffering girl."

He turned from us to hide the terrible agony which convulsed him.

"Henry," said Mr. Friend, taking him kindly by the hand, "we pity thee sincerely, as thou knowest; but thy bitter, revengeful expressions are unchristian, sinful. The authorities whom thou, not for the first time, railest on so wildly acted, be sure of it, from a sense of duty; a mistaken one in my opinion, doubtless; still"——

"Say no more sir," interrupted Mason. "We differ in opinion upon the subject. And now, gentlemen, farewell. I wished to see you, sir, before I left this country forever, to thank you for your kind though fruitless exertions. Mr. Friend has promised to be steward for poor Willy of all I can remit for his use. Farewell. God bless you both!" He was gone.

War soon afterwards broke out with the United States of America, and Mr. Friend discovered that one of the most active and daring officers in the Republican navy was Henry Mason, who had entered the American service in the maiden name of his wife, and that the large sums he had remitted from time to time for the use of Willy, were the produce of his successful depredations on British commerce. The instant Mr. Friend made the discovery, he refused to pollute his hands with money so obtained, and declined all further agency in the matter. Mason, however, contrived to remit through some other channel to the Davies's with whom the boy had been placed; and a rapid improvement in their circumstances was soon visible. These remittances ceased about the middle of 1814, and a twelvemonth after the peace with America, we ascertained that Henry Mason had been killed in the battle on Lake Champlain, where he had distinguished himself, as everywhere else, by the reckless daring and furious hate with which he fought against the country which, in his unreasoning frenzy, he accused of the murder of his wife. He was recognized by one of his former messmates in the "Active," who, conveyed a prisoner on board the American commander, Macdonough's ship, recognized him as he lay stretched on the deck, in the uniform of an American naval officer; his countenance, even in death, wearing the same stormful, defiant expression which it assumed on the day that his beloved Esther perished on the scaffold.

FASHIONABLE GIRLS.

Mrs. Swisshelm of the *Pittsburgh Saturday Visiter*, one of the pleasantest and most original writers of the age, gives the following matter-of-fact information in one of her admirable "letters to country girls:"

"There are hundreds of girls in every large city, who parade the streets in feathers, flowers, silks and laces, whose hands are soft and white as uselessness can make them, whose mothers keep boarders to get a living for their idle daughters. These mothers will cook, sweep, wait on tables, carry loads of marketing, do the most menial drudgery, late and early with very little more clothing than would be allowed to a Southern slave, while their hopeful daughters spend their mornings lounging in bed, reading some silly book, taking lessons in Music and French, fixing finery, and the like. The evenings are devoted to dressing displaying their charms and accomplishments to the best advantage, for the wonderment and admiration of knights of the yardstick and young aspirants for professional honors—doctors without patients, lawyers without clients—who are as brainless and soulless as themselves. After a while the piano-sounding simpleton captivates a tape-measuring, law-expounding, or pill making simpleton. The two ninnies spend every cent that can be raised by hook or crook—get all that can be got on credit—in broadcloth, satin, flowers, lace, carriage, attendance, &c.,—hang their empty pockets on somebody's chair, lay their empty heads on somebody's pillow, and commence their empty life, with no other prospect than living at somebody's expense—with no higher purpose than living genteelly and spiting the neighbors.

This is a synopsis of the lives of thousands of street and ball room belles, perhaps of some whose shining costume you have envied from a passing glance. Thousands of women in cities dress elegantly on the streets, who have not a sufficiency of wholesome food, a comfortable bed, or fire enough to warm their rooms. I once boarded in a "genteel boarding house" in Louisville.—There were two young ladies and a piano in the house; hall and parlors handsomely furnished. The eldest young lady, the belle, wore a summer bonnet at ten dollars; a silk and blond concern that could not last more than two or three months; silk and stain dresses at two, three and four dollars per yard, and five dollars a piece for making them, and the entire family, woman, boys, and babies, nine in all, slept in one small room, with two dirty bags of pine shavings, two straw bolsters, and three dirty quilts for bedding; no sheets, no slips, and there on the wall hung the peagreen and white satin, the rich silk and lawn dresses. These ladies did not work, but played the piano, accordion and cards; and nearly broke their hearts the week before we were there, because another, who I presume lived just as they did, called on them with a great clumsy gold chain on his neck. None of them had one, and Mrs. Labalinda, the belle, could eat no supper, and had a bad fit of the sulks to console her for the want of a chain. But, dear me! I had no notion of running away off here. I was just thinking how busy your country girls are apt to be in the fall, and this led me to think what a blessing it is that you have something to do, and that you think it a disgrace to live idly. It is a great blessing to live in a country where it is a credit to work, for idleness is the parent of vice and misery. So do not get weary, or think your lot a hard one when putting up pickles or preserves, apple butter, sausages and sauce for future use."

CORNERING.—The following from the Albany Dutchman, would not be amiss in this region:

"Corners have always been very popular with every body, except Othello—who getting wrathy one day, blated out that he would rather have the phoby and bay the moon, than keep a *corner* in the thing he loves, for other's uses. He was excited. With the single exception, we say that corners have been popular with everybody, and justly so. The chimney corner, for instance, is endeared to the heart from the earliest to the latest hours of existence. The corner cupboard! What stores of sweet things has it contained for us in youth? With what luxuries have its shelves groaned in manhood? A snug corner in a well! Who ever objected to such a thing? A corner in a woman's heart! Once get there, and you may command the entire domain. A corner in the temple of fame! Arrive at that and you become immortal. But a word of caution to the corner loafers. It is said by a good natured cotemporary, that young men that hang round the corners of our streets, very often *hang* in a different corner when they grow up—that of a prison yard!

SENDING AN UMBRELLA BY TELEGRAPH.—Among the very gentlemanly conductors on the Erie railroads, says the N. York Journal of Commerce, none is better known for his politeness and humor than Mr. Ayres. Not long since, an old lady from the neighborhood of Binghamton on the upward train of cars, when they had passed Cochecton and were upwards 100 miles from Piermont, suddenly missed her umbrella. "There!" she exclaimed, dolorously, in a voice that attracted the attention of all in the cars. "There! I do declare, I've left my umbrella aboard the steamboat down to Piermont," and continued bewailing her great loss till Ayres entered. She repeated her grievence and sorrow to him. "Bless you madame," said he, "is that all? We can put all right in a minute. Send for it by telegraph, ma'm—and so saying he reached up his hand to the bell rope that passes through all the cars, and jerked it once or twice, and then went to another car, where by arrangement, all articles picked up on the boat are carried along with the train." He returned a moment afterwards with the umbrella. "Lord-amassy? exclaimed the old lady in a fever of delight and astonishment, "I knowed they sent letters and newspapers by Telegraph, but it's the fust time I ever heard of sending an umbrella!"

KISSING AT THE CARS—THE LOUDEST YET.—Friends are in the habit of warmly greeting acquaintances upon the arrival of the passenger trains, at this as well as at all other station houses. It was only the other day that a young gentleman rushed through the crowd towards a lady, seized her hand and gave her a hearty kiss, the smack of which sounded above——we were going to say, the din of *gongs:* but it is enough to state that the report startled a country lass hard by, who exclaimed to her feller:—"*Massy Josh! what on airth's gen way on the keers?*"

SCIENCE IN A SCHOOL.—A school teacher, a young lady, put the question to her scholars one morning, "Who made you?" The largest boy in school could not tell, neither could any of the scholars, till she questioned the smallest and youngest urchin in the school—He answered promptly that God made him. The teacher, turning to the largest boy, said—"Are you not ashamed not to know what this little fellow knows?"

"He," replied the "big un" "Thunder? think he might know; 'taint a fortnight since he was made!"

A CURE FOR 'SPARKING.'

SOME months since, a joyous, courageous young woman, residing in this city, the daughter of highly respectable parents, found himself somewhat intentionally detained at the house, one evening; and before she was aware of the fact, scarcely, night had set in. The distance to her own home was but a few blocks, however, and as she expected a little gathering of ladies and gentlemen that evening at her father's, she determined upon returning homeward unattended; and bidding her friends good night, she hurried along upon the walk, towards her residence, into which her family had quite recently removed, from another part of the city.

Upon turning the first corner, she was suddenly startled by the approach of a well dressed young man, who accosted her with a "good evening," and offered his services to escort her home! Alarmed, for an instant, she would have avoided the stranger; but as he advanced to her side, she ventured to turn towards him, and a glance satisfied her;—she recognized the young gentleman as a familiar acquaintance. Disguising her voice, and replying in a timid tone, she accepted the proffered gallantry, determined at once to administer a lesson to her young friend, which he should not forget. The conversation which passed was brief, and the beau suspecting nothing, as he was not aware that the family had changed their quarters, tripped along at the young lady's side, apparently very well pleased with his companion. In a few minutes they halted before a modest brick house, in a somewhat retired street, at the west end, and the lady relinquished her attendant's arm.

"Will you come in?" whispered the lady, softly.

"Thank you," was the reply; and his fair companion opened the front door. Closing it carefully, they found themselves in the entry, in total darkness.

"Wait a moment," said the young woman, "and be perfectly quiet. I will return instantly;" and with these words, she ascended the stars which led to the parlors.

The first thought of the young man, as she retired, was to open the front door and move: for he suspected all was not as he at first anticipated. He turned to the door, it was fast. He fumbled for the latch, or lock, or whatever secured it, it was not to be found; and an instant afterwards, he heard footsteps approaching, in the darkness. His heart thumped against his ribs, and he began to wish himself safely out of doors again: but he was quickly re-assured by the encouraging whisper of the new made acquaintance, who approached him, apparently with great caution.

"Hush!" she said, "all is safe. Be quiet now, a moment—remove your boots from you feet—I will return in an instant."

Our hero was content: and drawing off his boots, he secured them together, and held them in his hand, to await the return of his lady friend, who again ascended the front stairs.

Entering the parlor a moment afterwards, the female rogue found some half a score of young lady friends, with their brothers and beaux present, to whom she quickly and briefly communicated the adventure.

"I've got him in the entry, down stairs," she said.—"Put out the lights, keep perfectly still, don't betray the slightest sound, and I will show you some sport in a moment."

The lights were removed, the party arranged themselves around the room—the bulk of the company knew the victim intimately—and again the lady descended the stairs, and approached her friend.

"Softly, now," she said, taking the hand which was unoccupied with the boots, "softly. All is quiet up stairs—all is arranged—come!" and she led her gallant shyly along up the stairway. His boots dangled against the railing—" "sh!" exclaimed the fair one; "for pity's sake, make no noise—or all is lost!"

The beau moved on—grasped his boots more securely at his side, nor dreamed of aught save bliss! Least of all did he suspect the existence of a huge rent in his stockings—but he was a bachelor, and this was but a trifle!

They entered the parlor. All was darkness and silence. The lady closed the door behind them, and led her companion into the center of the room. Not a breath was heard, and little did the gentleman suspect that he was at that moment surrounded by a dozen of his acquaintances.

"Remain here one moment," said the girl, "I will get a light—"

The gallant raised the soft hand which had conducted him thus far towards—he knew not what!—and ventured to press upon it a kiss; but it was dexteriously withdrawn, at the very "nick of time," and his lips came in contact with his own fingers!

"Wait a moment," added his inamorated, leaving him quickly—and, then, passing through a door at the farther extremity of the room, she disappeared. A minute had scarcely elapsed, but it seemed a month to the little party, who were nearly choking with suppressed merriment—it was an age to the victim. But gentle footsteps were heard again; the beau gazed anxiously towards the direction of the door; it opened with a single movement, a blaze of light gushed into the parlor, and behind it he beheld the face of an old familiar acquaintance!

"Ladies and gentlemen," she said, "*this is Mr. Smith.*".

"Such a 'ha, ha!' as went up from that little eterie, at that moment, was seldom heard in the neighborhood before, or since! Poor Smith stood for a moment, not exactly paralyzed—that would be a faint term of expression; he was frozen—actually *statue-ized* in his tracks, and he hugged his boots to his side, coughed, sneezed, choked—then grinned, a ghastly smile!

As soon as the paroxysm of laughter was over, the lady brought forward a chair, and placing it before the victim, said—

"Pray, be seated, Mr. Smith."

He turned upon his tormenter a look of comical recognition, and, like Falstaff, his wits coming quickly to his relief, he replied:

"Did you think, Cally, *I did'nt know you?*"

Another roar followed this remark, and the company was very soon upon good terms.

This was his first and last effort at *picking up an acquaintance;* and it proved a cure for "sparking" with him. Within six months he made ample apology for his error, by making Miss Cally—Mrs. Smith!—*Flag of our Union.*

☞ Mankind might do without physicians, if they would observe the laws of health; without lawyers, if they would keep their tempers: without soldiers if they would observe the laws of Christianity; and perhaps without preachers, if each one would take care of his own conscience; but there is no dispensing with the newspaper.

☞ A wag has truthfully said, that if some men could come out of their graves and read the inscription on their tombstones, they would think they had got *into the wrong grave.*

PRIZE CONUNDRUM.—The following, by Miss E. P. Brown, of Meriden, was adjudged the best by the committee:—"Why is the Great Russian Bear, Nicholas, like a half-starved fox? Because he's got Hung(a)ry and wants Turkey."

MATRIMONY.—A young lady was told by a married lady that she had better precipitate herself off the Niagara Falls, into the basin beneath, than marry. The young lady replied—"I would, if I could find a husband at the bottom!"

☞ When Julia Long stood up at the alter, the priest remarked,—"Is your name Julia Long? The innocent girl replied, "it ain't nothing *shorter!*" But it wasn't so *long.*