

Waiting.
They have gone through life together,
They have braved its stormy weather,
Many a year;
Time has filched from beauty's treasures,
But love scorns the hoard he measures,
With a leer.
"Mid the world's turmoil and fretting,
They'd no tears, and vain regretting
For the past;
All their troubles firmly breathing,
They have found the time for resting
Sweet, at last.
There are graves upon the meadow—
Baby forms that lie in shadow,
Dark and still;
Ah! they felt life's fountain drying
When they looked on baby, dying,
But—"They will!"
Now with pulses throbbing steady,
Hand in hand, they're waiting ready;
Not a sigh
For the time that joyfully fleeting,
There will be a swift meeting—
By and by.

THE MYSTERIOUS LODGER.

"I don't like it! and the more I think of it the worse it seems!" soliloquized Mrs. Benson, letting her sewing fall in her lap for a moment. "I made up my mind that there was a mystery about him from the first—and now that that brigandish looking young fellow has taken to visiting him and acting so queer, it's getting really dangerous. That comes of being a lone widow woman with no protector! I'm sure, when he came here so pleasant and civil, and offered a good price for the room, and didn't mind if the accommodations weren't first-class, I could never have been expected to imagine—"
A vigorous pull at the door-bell interrupted the lady's musings, and jumping up all in a flutter, she hurried out into the hall. A tall, slender young man with piercing black eyes and long, wavy hair, and carrying a somewhat bulky paper roll, stood before her.
"Mr. Brown in? Don't trouble yourself to call him—I'll go right up."
Mrs. Benson fell helplessly back, and the visitor mounted the stairs with ponderous strides. A door above opened and shut, and after hesitating irresolutely in the hall for a moment, the lady in a state of increased perplexity, returned to her sewing.
The subject of her interrupted soliloquy—a prepossessing young man of thirty or thereabouts, giving the name of Brown—had engaged a room in the house about two months before, as a lodger, simply. His pay was prompt, his hours and manners unexceptionable, and his wants few—and the good lady's heart had quite warmed toward him. After a while, however, he fell into the habit of staying out late; when they met incidentally in the hall, or on the stairs, his passing salutation wore, to the widow's sensitive ear, an element of mystery; and latterly, he had been receiving frequent and protracted visits from the stranger she had just admitted. Once or twice she had tip-toed up-stairs after him, and listened at the door, but failing to catch anything intelligible, and fearing detection, she had been obliged to retreat unlightened.
"I can't consider it my duty to let this go any longer!" she said at last, resuming her meditations. "There's no knowing what dreadful plot may be hatched in my house. I might be arrested, too, as an accomplice. It's well I thought of that closet—the good-for-nothing villain! I'll circumvent 'em! yes, and get a reward, perhaps, for furnishing the information."
Inspired by these mingled ideas, Mrs. Benson once more laid aside her sewing and stole softly up-stairs. The room adjoining that of her lodger, contained a closet built against the partition wall, from which some of the plaster had fallen, leaving a small crack. Creeping cautiously in, Mrs. Benson got down on her knees and applied her ear to the wall. Presently she heard Mr. Brown's voice:
"Yes, that will do—leaves no trace for suspicion. Did you use poison?"
"Poison!" gasped the eavesdropper.
"I thought he looked like a villain!"
"No—I decided that the dagger was better," was the reply.
"What kind did you use?" queried Brown, jocularly.
"Oh, the regulation kind—Italian, with a jeweled handle. I left it there, so as to implicate the lover, you see; then had the girl abducted and carried to a lonely house on the moors. I hope she feels comfortable—hal! hal! ha!"
"Merciful powers!" choked Mrs. Benson. "That's the girl they advertised for in yesterday's Herald! To think what awful characters I've been harboring and abetting! It's just a miracle that I'm alive to tell of it!"
"Well," she heard next, "how about the will and jewels?"
"They're secured. I'll make a division to-morrow."
"Not forgetting me, I hope!" laughed Brown. "And does that wind up the plot?"
"Not quite. I have one more scheme to develop."
"Why what an insatiable fellow you are! Is it another murder?"
"No: I want to secure an easy, unsuspecting body of middle age to act as a duenna for the heiress. One with a small bank-account that I can withdraw after I have her safe, and then have it given out that she had moved into the country. That diverts suspicion again, you see."
"Yes, very clever! How will you manage that point?"
"Oh, I'll come in a carriage with an invitation for her to spend the evening with some friend; then if she becomes suspicious and makes any trouble, I'll fix her with a little 'distilled sleep.' I'm bound to have her, no less you see."
"First-rate! only don't make the dose too big!" said Brown, with a blood-curdling laugh.
"I'll look out for that; and—I tell you, what Brown—"
"Well, what—don't keep a fellow in suspense!"
"I've hit upon the middle-aged person—your worthy landlady!"
Mrs. Benson's heart stood still. How did the wretch find out that she had a little money? Breathlessly she listened for the next words.
"Hal! hal! ha!" roared the lodger. "You'll blossom out into a first-class body-snatcher, Moore! Really, you're a—"
"It is to the Moore!"

the poor woman think if she should chance to overhear us?"
"I believe she considers me a suspicious sort of a character as it is, by the sidelong looks she casts at me every time I call lately," said Moore. "But I regard that idea as a genuine stroke of inspiration, Brown. I'll step in and have a look at my victim before I go, and also see if I can arrange with her for—"
Mrs. Benson could endure it no longer. The only safety for her property or life was to have these cold-blooded conspirators arrested without delay—before they left the house. Rising dizzily to her feet, she tottered from the room and softly closed the door. In her perturbation she failed to hear the door of the adjoining room open at the same instant. The upper hall was narrow and dark; plunging forward toward the head of the stairs, she ran violently against something—heard a stifled exclamation—and found herself seized by a strong pair of arms.
"Murder! murder!" shrieked the landlady, hysterically.
"Hush, madam!" spoke the visitor's voice. "We are only—"
"Oh, I know it all!" gasped his struggling captive. "Let me go—you assassin, you distilled sleeper!—let me go this moment, I tell you! Murder! thieve!—watch!—police!"
She wrenched herself free in a last frantic effort to reach the stairs, and the impetus carried her fairly over the edge, her arms flung wildly out in the attempt to regain her balance, and then over she went, accompanying each revolution with a most ear-splitting shriek, while the two men, with a burst of mingled consternation and merriment, precipitated themselves after her, although in a somewhat more orderly fashion.
Just as they reached the hall, and Mrs. Benson had succeeded in picking herself up, the street-door was burst open, and a policeman's astonished eyes took in the scene. The landlady on one hand, her face covered with perspiration and dust, and giving vent to shriek after shriek with as much persistence and rapidity as her breath would allow, and the conspirators on the other scarce able to stand in their excess of merriment, holding their hands to their sides, convulsed with paroxysms of laughter.
"What's the muss here?" demanded the public guardian.
"Arrest those two villains right away!" sputtered Mrs. Benson gasping for breath.
"Arrest 'em?" echoed the officer, as Brown and Moore went off into another convulsion. "What for?"
"What for?" sobbed the landlady. "A nice reliable set you police are, to be sure! Here they've gone and murdered somebody, and carried off that girl the papers are advertising for, as well as a lot of money, and—oh, dear!" wringing her hands—"they were calculating to attack me, a lone widow woman, and steal my money, and take away my hard earnings, and carry me off to take care of that young girl!" and her over-wrought imagination found vent in a second burst of tears.
"What does she mean, anyhow?" asked the officer, hopelessly mystified.
"Just wait till I get my breath!" choked Moore, with a renewed burst of merriment.
"Distill her to sleep!—oh, hold me!" exploded his friend, following suit.
"Ain't you going to arrest them before they murder me?" demanded Mrs. Benson mopping her face with her apron.
"Just hold on till I hear their side of the story!" replied the officer, grinning.
"Come, what's the row about?" He turned to Brown.
"Suppose we go in here and sit down—I'll make it all clear in two minutes," replied the lodger, as he made a motion to enter the sitting-room.
"No, you don't!" shrieked Mrs. Benson, plunging forward. "My bank-book is in there, in the right hand bureau drawer, and I ain't going to be robbed before my own face and eyes! Beside, they'd like as not jump out of the window and get away—that's the way they always do!"
Controlling his risibilities with difficulty, Brown held the open roll of MS. toward the officer.
"This will solve the mystery," he said. "My friend, Mr. Moore has lately become attached to the staff of a local paper, and is at present composing a thrilling romance for its columns. He has been in the habit of bringing the several installments to me, for revision and criticism, and it occurred to him to-day, as we were talking over the plot, that it would be a good idea to have my landlady figure as one of the subordinate characters. That is the entire extent of our conspiracy!"
"But how did she get wind of it?" asked the perplexed officer.
"Eavesdropping, of course! There's a vacant room next to mine, with a closet in it; and we were talking over the subject rather animatedly. We came out into the entry at the same time that she did, and ran against her in the dark. My friend instinctively caught hold of her, but she pulled away, and being close by the head of the stairs, the rest can be summed up in a few words. Oh, what a fall was there, my countrymen! and the conspirators broke once more into a peal of merriment, in which they were heartily joined this time by the policeman.
In some way the landlady's mind had become suddenly enlightened, and she came forward with a beaming smile.
"Oh! is that it?" she exclaimed, cordially. "Are you a story paper man?"
"I have the honor to be associated with the *Thunderer*, madam!" replied Moore with a low bow. "And one part of my errand here to-day, was to ask if you could accommodate me with lodgings. I will pay whatever Mr. Brown does."
"Oh certainly, certainly!" cried the delighted widow. "So long as you ain't—"
"Quite such a villain as I appeared to be, eh?" laughed Moore. "And you shall have complimentary copies of all my productions."
"Well, since there ain't nobody to arrest, I'll bid you good afternoon," remarked the policeman, in lofty defiance of Mrs. Benson's Grammar; and he bowed himself out, while Mrs. Benson, leading the way herself to the sitting-room, invited the gentlemen to "rest a

bit," while completing the arrangements in regard to her prospective lodger.
Mr. Moore took possession of his room the next day. Mrs. Benson's bank-book remained undisturbed, and her "savings" gained undisturbed. Messrs. Moore and Brown are two of the brightest stars on the staff of the *Thunderer*, and Mrs. Benson has never been tempted to repeat the dangerous experiment of eaves-dropping, but stoutly maintains that she always did and always will consider her two lodgers as "the two very nicest, cleverest gentlemen in the whole city."
ENGAGEMENT RINGS.
The Fashion Now Permits Using Colored Stones.
"Just now there is," said Mr. Frank G. Smith of the firm of M. S. Smith & Co. in a recent conversation, "a decided fancy for colored gems as engagement rings. A diamond of course, is the very taking. Light, graceful settings are the rule for them, and this style of mounting throws the stone into beautiful relief. The disposition to group diamonds of different colors in ornaments is very decided. Especially is this done in finger rings. Bronze, canary, amber, violet, opaline, and blue are desirable colors. They make a pretty ring. Of course it is a fancy."
"What colored stone is the most popular?"
"We sell a great many sapphires, grouped with a diamond. Some prefer rubies for engagement rings. Both bronze and canary-colored diamonds are pretty blended with white diamonds."
"How do the colored compare with the white diamonds in price?"
"The value of fancy-colored diamonds is a style. There was a time when diamonds had a fixed standard of value, but the great increase of diamonds makes the value now a relative one."
"What has decreased the value?"
"The market is overstocked. The African mines have been very prolific and these new tinted diamonds have taken the popular fancy. Anything off color is sought. A purple tinge or an incandescent shade like an opal are new and popular."
"How is it with pearls?"
"Pearls are always popular. Some gentlemen have nothing else. They associate it with purity and hold it as emblematic of character, as is very natural. Opals would also be very popular were it not for the fear of ill-luck; but it is a beautiful stone, so full of fire and warmth like amber."
"Do you sell more rings at certain seasons than others?"
"In the spring after the holidays and in the fall after the summer season conquests we notice somewhat of a boom in engagement-rings; that is, we sell more rings, and it is probable they are chosen for 'the best girl.'"
"Do gentlemen usually make the choice?"
"Generally. Sometimes they ask advice, but they usually know about what they want—probably have consulted sub rosa."
"What is the usual size chosen?"
"From one carat to two and one-half for engagement rings; seldom exceed that. We sell large stones for 'show rings,' as we call them, but they are for actresses or sporting men."
"Do you reset stones?"
"Not often for the first ring. That is the case in England. Family diamonds are reset and are entailed; but in this country ladies have no such associations and much prefer rings chosen and bought expressly for themselves. The resetting can come afterwards."
Modern Songsters.
There is no talent less remunerative than musical composition, but song-writing yields fair profits at present, compared to the miserable pittance that was formerly considered adequate payment for a successful song.
The English song-writers of the present whose works are more popular are Arthur Sullivan, Stephen Adams, J. H. Molloy, Ciro Pinski, "Claribel," Frederic Clay and Frederic Cowen. "Claribel's" songs have had remarkable popularity.
Some of Stephen Adams' songs have also had a great run, "Nancy Lee" probably leading, as it is said that the author has realized a snug fortune from the royalties therefrom. "Stephen Adams," by the way, is the nom de plume of a Mr. Maybrick, a baritone well known in London.
Molloy who wrote "The Kerry Dance," "The King's Highway," "The Vagabonds," and other fine songs, is an English barrister whose talent is all natural and it is said that he cannot read or write a note of music.
Ciro Pinski once complained that his most profitable song was a trifle called "It is I," a composition which the composer regarded as insignificant and which he was tempted to destroy after it was completed.
The verses for many of the prettiest of contemporaneous songs have been written by Fred Weatherly, who is a "coach" at Oxford. He writes graceful verses and has a fancy for the bizarre and the picturesque.
American song-writers are addicted to the composition of trash, but as trash is in active demand the musicians are scarcely to be censured.
Millard, the late Alfred Pease, G. H. Osborne, Dr. Root and a few others have written pleasing songs of a high class, but the large royalties are paid to minstrels and alleged comedians, who put together doggerel and jingle, sing it to audiences and boom it into popularity.
The successful results attending the putting down of wells for gas illuminating and heating purposes at Painesville and Willoughby, O., during some years past has induced other persons to decide on similar enterprises. Not long ago a gentleman living about two miles from the center of Willoughby decided to bore for gas and commenced operations. His well has now reached a depth of 476 feet, and he is getting already a fine supply of gas. He expects to push the well down 200 feet more, when he will doubtless have enough gas to light and heat his residence and illuminate his grounds. The gas well of W. C. Andrews at Willoughby has been in operation for about ten years and shows no signs of exhaustion.

RATTAN AND ITS USES.
An Important Business of Which Even the Schoolboy Knows Comparatively Nothing.
Among the smaller, least known and most profitable of local industries is the preparation of rattan for the various uses to which it is applied. There are said to be only five other establishments in the country, the one in the Eastern district being the third largest. A reporter, desiring to learn something of the rattan industry, went to this factory and soon found there was an air of secrecy about it. He was met at the door by a pleasant gentleman, who, observing the reporter closely watching the splitting of the rattan into threads as fine almost as whip cord, by being run through a curious-looking machine, asked him if he had any special business with the establishment. The reporter replied that he had been attracted to it by curiosity. The Rev. Dr. Talmage, he added, had once said in his hearing that he always, when abroad, made it a point to enter any and every place upon which he saw the warning sign: "No admittance" posted, for then he felt assured that there was something within worth looking at.
"I'm sorry," remarked the superintendent, "but my instructions are to admit no one who is not armed with a permit from the firm in New York. Recently," he continued, "there came here, as you have, two very innocent-looking gentlemen, and they were so reserved in their manners and so full of curiosity that I forgot to be suspicious, and whenever they inquired about this or that piece of machinery, I would unhesitatingly explain its construction, how it worked and the class of cane it turned out. I have since learned that the two inquiring gentlemen were seeking information about certain combinations, and that it was their intention to open a like manufactory in Newark."
The reporter explained why he called, and then his attention was attracted to a machine, through a hole in which rattan following rattan, each not less than twenty feet in length and about a quarter of an inch in diameter, were thrown in and split and quartered and thrown out upon a receiving shelf for the hand of the chair-maker, or for baskets or other classes of ware.
"I notice that there is thrown out on the left of that splitting machine very fine fibrous threads of rattan. They are so thin I should say they were valueless for even the finest work."
"Much of it," the foreman answered, "helps to get up steam, but those fibers, nearly as fine as your hair, by deft hands are used in making what I call miracles of art. You would be surprised at the range of uses to which rattan is applied, and the demand is yearly growing larger. I'll show you a piece of rattan dressed for hat linings. Formerly whalebone was used, costing, when dressed, not less than \$2 the pound; but this fine rattan cord, quite as good for the purpose, as tough and as elastic, can be prepared at a much lower figure, probably for about \$1 the pound. That is quite a saving to the hat manufacturer, particularly if he is largely in the business."
"It must be costly to import. It is so light; a ship could never take in a full cargo of it," remarked the reporter.
"It is not so light in bulk as you imagine," was the reply. "The last ship that came to this port had about eighty tons of it snugly stowed away in the original packages—each package weighing between sixty and seventy pounds."
"From what part of Asia do you lead-ingly import the cane?"
"Our rattan comes to us usually direct from ports in Borneo, Sumatra, the Celebes and the Moluccas, and from the Malay peninsula. The rattans of Borneo and Sumatra are considered the best for the purposes to which we devote the cane. We do not import many tons of the thicker growth, which often has a girth of six inches. What we seek is the finer grades, such as are worked up into chairs, bedsteads, carriage bodies, baskets, picture frames, brushes, brooms for streets and so on. The older or coarser growth, say of half an inch or so in diameter, are made into walking canes, whip handles and other useful things. Good fishing rods are also manufactured from it. In this and for many other things it is preferable to the bamboo, another, as you are aware, of East India growth."
"Have you any idea of the tonnage of the rattan that is shipped to this country?"
"I roughly guess it at about 400 tons."
"I notice," continued the reporter, finding the foreman in a communicative mood and no longer distrustful, "that you make brooms of the rattan—strong, coarse ones—for stables and yards, I presume?"
"Yes, there is a great demand for them," he continued. "That young man over there is stented. His task is to make six and a half dozen each day. He accomplishes his work in about nine hours, for which he is paid \$2."
"Do you manufacture chairs, baskets and so on?"
"No; we take them in exchange for prepared rattan. The firm in New York finds no difficulty in disposing of them to jobbers and dealers in furniture. There is a large business transacted in that way. There is quite a colony of workers in willow and rattan goods in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth wards, and they regard such exchanges as an accommodation."
"Then, beyond making these brooms for yards and stables, you manufacture but little that can be put immediately on the market?"
"It is not necessary that we should," was the answer. "Our leading business is to prepare rattan for the different trades that find use for it. Of the prepared canes we always keep a marketable stock on hand. For example, we have rattan enough for hatters' use at this moment to supply that trade material for a million hats. The rattan trade is in what may be called its youth with us. It is growing rapidly. Rattan is being used largely where whalebone was at one time thought useful. An article that is as durable and as elastic as whalebone, that can be purchased at one-third or one-half less the price of the bone, is not going to lie unused, you may rest assured. There is plenty of rattan, and with the machinery we have, much of it of recent invention, we

can prepare and dress it at an almost nominal cost. It can be used in so many ways in the lines of utility and art that it has become a necessity. Its flexibility is wonderful. Like a stout string it can be bent and twisted and tied in knots and afterward straightened without breaking or weakening its fiber. Why, sir, it could be introduced as an element in rope-making—you see it often grows to a height of 100 feet, and its strength would at least be three times that of hemp of the same bulk and many times its weight. This almost thread-like piece, which is similar to that used by hatters, will lift twice the weight a string of its size made of hemp could do, and yet it is as light as a piece of tissue paper or as a feather!"
The reporter was not permitted to inspect the machinery.
THE MANDOLIN.
An Italian Musical Instrument That is Just now in Fashion.
The mandolin is the reigning fashionable caprice, having quite superseded the banjo in the esteem of the ladies. That it should have done so is by no means strange, for it is really a charming little instrument when at all decently played, is not very difficult to learn, and has a good deal more style and finish about it than the banjo has. However the latter may be adorned, with nickel-plating, mother-of-pearl, and all sorts of gaudy ornamentation, it has a plebeian look about it, and suggests the idea of a field hand in his Sunday suit. But the mandolin, especially if one of the good kind, made of joined strips of dark mahogany, has an aristocratic polish and finish about it, and wears it in a jaunty fashion peculiarly its own.
The only unpleasant feature about it to the learner is the knife-blade-like sharpness of its fine wire strings. There are eight strings, in pairs, all of steel wire. Two pairs are wound with German silver, and are not so cruel as the others, but the unwound four, hardly thicker than horse hairs, seem to cut to the bone the finger ends that press them down upon the frets. Of course that pain and trouble ends when each finger of the left hand is tipped with a boy's callous spot, and one must expect some such trouble in forming a close acquaintance with any stringed instrument. When nature has provided that protection, the mandolin player, if an expert, can produce some very pleasing effects by producing the tones by percussion on the strings over the frets, instead of by strumming with a bit of tortoise shell held between the thumb and fore finger of the right hand, which is the ordinary way of playing.
The tone of the mandolin very much resembles that of the zither, having the same clear penetrating quality, but the compass of the instrument and its capabilities are much below those of the zither.
The Spanish mandolin is much like the Italian mandolin in its general features, but has important differences from it nevertheless. Its body is shallower, shaped more like the bowl of a spoon than the half of an egg divided lengthwise, which is the form of the instrument beloved in Naples and Rome; its strings are of catgut instead of steel, and its tone is not so sharp and incisive. Either mandolin or mandola, however, has a surprising volume of sound for so small a body, and dominates pleasingly the tones of a guitar, or even those of a piano. Expert players have a way of maintaining an unceasing tremolando by keeping the little instrument in a constantly quivering motion while they are executing a solo, that at least looks as if it would be rather hard to effect and harder yet to continue for any length of time, but the lengthening of vibrations thus achieved pretty well supplies the lack of a supporting instrument. The power of controlling the volume of sound in a crescendo or diminuendo possessed by a skillful performer is really surprising and extremely effective in rendition of the peculiar passionate and sensuous music to which the mandolin is best adapted.
While the mandolin is easy to learn, up to a certain point, it is, like all seemingly simple instruments, very difficult to develop to its highest artistic capabilities, and the Italian who has achieved complete mastery of it not only very justly respects himself highly, but is even respected in an extraordinary degree by his countrymen. The best players are said to come from Naples, where a native who does not at least think that he can play upon the mandolin is a curiosity. Here in New York we have not many who deservedly rank high as experts. Prof. Dominico Tiplaldi is regarded as a very correct and artistic performer, but in expression and delicacy of tone shading Signor F. A. Ericeo, who is proprietor of an Italian restaurant and curiosity store in John street, and only an amateur mandolinist, is deemed by critics the most finished artist here. But inferior players find as much employment as they want in teaching the mandolin to the young men and women of Gotham's "upper ten," and from present indications, the instrument will be the rage when fashion returns to the town with the early frosts.
A good mandolin costs from \$25 to \$50, and all procurable here are imported from Naples.
Peaks of the Cascade Range.
Of the Cascade Mountains in Oregon and Washington Territory, there are five notable peaks: Mounts Hood, Adams, St. Helen, Tascom and Baker. Rising almost from a sea level to a height of from 10,000 to 14,000 feet, isolated and pre-dominant, they are more impressive and beautiful than the prominent peaks of equal height of the Rocky Mountains, which reach but a few hundred feet above their fellows.
Two thousand miles of switches laid during the first six months of the year by the tireless railroad men. This example should not be lost upon parents and guardians. About a mile of switch laid daily, where it would do the most good, and put down light and sealed with whacks, would safely side-track lots of boys now making limited express time on the broad gauge, down grade, which leads to destruction.

THE LANGUAGE OF STAMPS.
A Method of Exchanging Sentiments Without the Possibility of Detection.
If you have a distant creditor who is capable of taking a delicate hint, you should, without comment (silence is golden), inclose his unrecipited bill in an envelope bearing his address, and having placed the stamp upside down on the right upper corner, mail it. In the language of the post-office, says the *New York Star*, this means, "write no more."
"Just about this season of the year," said the veteran assistant postmaster of Brooklyn, Mr. Smith, "a very large proportion of the letters mailed to the various summer resorts, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred addressed to Miss So-and-So, have the stamp placed in some peculiar position. This doubles the work of the canceller, and sometimes results in these letters being rejected at first as unstamped. It is only of recent years that the practice has assumed the proportions of an annual nuisance. The force of habit impels all sensible men and women to put the stamp on the upper right-hand corner of the envelope, straight up and down. Only lovers and lunatics stick it on where the canceller has got to hunt for it."
Recently a young man of unquestionable intelligence, and old enough to claim American citizenship, visited Mr. Smith in a pitiable condition of despair and wanted him to stop a letter addressed to a young lady at the Kaaterskill Mountain House. He had dropped it into a letter-box fastened to a Clinton avenue lamp-post.
"Is the address wrong?" asked the assistant postmaster.
"No; the address is fatally correct," replied the young man between gasps for breath.
"Isn't it stamped?" further inquired Mr. Smith.
"Yes, and that's the trouble," said the young man. "You see, the young lady and I are not exactly engaged, but we would be if it wasn't for her mother. She is down on me, and reads all my letters to her daughter. So we don't say much in our letters, but say unutterable things by passing the stamps according to the code. Her mother isn't aware there is a code. I got the stamp wrong on the letter I mailed to-day, and I will give \$5 for a chance to fix it."
The assistant postmaster finally consented to one of the carriers looking over the mail from the Clinton avenue route. The letter was found. The young man was too happy to speak. He was not allowed to mutilate the envelope, which was stamped on the upper left hand corner straight up and down. So with feverish haste he produced another stamp and glued over the first one, but upside down. Blushing with the heat and the consciousness of acting like a lunatic, he exclaimed:
"Upside down means 'I love you. Right up and down means 'Good bye, sweetheart, good bye.' What would she have thought if that letter had reached her?"
Mr. Smith's curiosity was aroused. Here was a cipher mystery that he had always attributed to the transitory idiosyncrasy of unsettled minds. Filled with gratitude, the young man gladly disclosed the glossary of the postage-stamp vernacular. The secrets of the upper left hand corner are many and momentous. Hear also the message: "My heart is another's," may be conveyed by placing the stamp crosswise. By sweeping the little parallelogram to a right angle the dreadful confession, "I hate you," stands revealed.
In the event of your wife becoming so much interested in the nature of your correspondence as to wish it to cease, all that she need to do is to stamp your letters for you, in a thoughtful, wifely way, and by simply putting the head of George Washington upside down on the right hand-upper corner, tell the fair unknown to "write no more."
Very coyly the maiden you love may say you nay, by putting the stamp in the center of the lower edge of the envelope, which may contain only a formal note of inquiry after your health or nothing at all. With equal coyness she may convey the glad tidings of her "yes" by planting the bust of George in the middle of the border.
Perhaps you are in serious doubt as to her real feelings towards you, despite the fact that she danced with you until no little comment was excited. You dare not ask her if she loves you. To write might seem equally presumptuous. Just pen a passionate note of invitation to the theater and mail it with the usual tax receipt adhering to the lower right hand corner at an angle of forty-five degrees towards the name of the State. Her perturbed missive, politely declining your invitation, will reach you with the stamp affixed; still you might have impressed her with the humility of your spirit by placing the stamp at the right angle on the lower corner of the left, which means "I seek your acquaintance." Later on you could have asked her to accept your love by gluing the mask of the hatcher here rigidly up and down on a line with the surname towards the left. Should the stamp be at right angle, although in the same place, she expresses her longing to see you so unmistakably that it is doubtless a case of love at first sight.
It sometimes happens, but very seldom, that a woman writes a letter without a postscript injunction to "reply immediately." Occasionally she puts this in the body of her letter, and has to think of some other excuse for a postscript. Should this be forgotten until the letter is sealed and directed, much trouble may be saved by causing the postage stamp to cling on the right hand edge.
It is understood that Postmaster Hendrix will employ a special clerk to keep track of the erratic postage, so that at the close of the season he may be able to supply a reliable data upon the fluctuations of the matrimonial market.
Surveys made during the past two years have shown that the river Rhone has cut for itself a channel in the bottom of Lake Geneva, through which it flows between parallel banks, like an ordinary stream on the earth's surface. The Rhine makes a similar passage through Lake Constance.