

Autumn.

The aster glows the fading leaves beneath,
The golden rod gleams by the hedgerow
brown,
As though the dying Summer in the Frost
King's tooth
Had hurled her gauntlet down,
So when the shades of solemn silence sink
Upon us, and we reach life's latest
breath,
The soul exultant bids, 'e'en on the grave's
black brink,
Defiance unto death.
We perish not, the mounting spirit towers
In conscious immortality sublime,
And gains, beyond death's foible, floating
hours,
Eternal Summer time.

THE END OF A RIVALRY.

I spent two days of last week at N—, one of those pretty, thriving, picturesque towns which dot the magnificent and bold landscape of Western Pennsylvania, and which are miniature cities in the energy, progressiveness, education and cultivation of their inhabitants and models of advanced municipal regulations. It was a revisit to the place, for I had lived there for a year several years ago, attached to the single newspaper of the town, which newspaper has in the meantime advanced from a somewhat uncertain weekly publication to the dignity of a daily, with a certain toning down of the pictorial advertising columns, which nothing so much as a half-sheet circus poster, and a corresponding advance in its news and general reading features. I found that change, the epitaph of all the years everywhere, had been busy with the people here as elsewhere, and one of these changes completing a romance which was well advanced when I quitted the town in 1873, enables me to tell the story entire.

During my residence there my most intimate friend, and the one whose house I most frequented, was Doctor Thomas Wood, who had moved to N— from Philadelphia upon the death of his wife, ten years before, bringing with him his little daughter May, who, at the time of which I write, had grown up to be the acknowledged beauty of the town. The house they occupied was an old-fashioned mansion in the center of the town, which Dr. Wood had modernized by the addition of a huge bay window, that was always filled with geraniums, roses and myrtles, that, with a couple of small orange trees, were the admiration of the neighborhood. Not that Dr. Wood had any horticultural tastes. On the contrary, he was very severe on the devotion of minds to such trifles as flowers, fancy work, music and dancing; but then blue-eyed May differed with him, and told him so in the sweetest, sauciest, most lovable manner imaginable.

Upon the opposite side of the street there had just been completed, at the time of which I speak, a row of houses of unusual imposing appearance, and which were dignified by the high-sounding name of "Maple Terrace," that being the kind of tree which was most conspicuous by its absence in the immediate locality. They were all to let, although the last finishing touches had been put on them in the way of paint and paper, and they wanted nothing save furnished and human beings to assume a civilized appearance.

Calling one afternoon at the doctor's house, I saw evidences of life in Maple Terrace, and upon inquiry of May ascertained that two of the houses had been taken.

"Papa is quite pleased," said she, "because you know, he looks upon those twelve houses as twelve new patients."

"But," said she, "have you not read the advertisement, 'healthy and airy situation, imposing neighborhood, and only one physician?'"

"Oh, yes," smiled May; "but sickness, I am sorry to say, is apt to run about as some time or other, even in airy situations."

Two days afterward another bill was taken down, and in my strong interest in the Terrace which I had seen grow up under my eyes, I called to congratulate May.

"Oh, yes!" she exclaimed, with unusual eagerness; "and I think by a family that will prove a valuable addition to the neighborhood, for a very handsome and distinguished-looking young gentleman drove up there this morning and spent an hour in looking over the house, and I suppose he has taken it."

It was several days before I saw her again, and then she caught me by the hand, drew me rapidly to the window, and, with a semi-tragic expression, she pointed to the house over the way. I looked, and, to my astonishment, saw upon the shutters two signs, painted in very large gold letters, "Edmund Rand, M. D."

"A rival, indeed," said I, promising a Montague and Capulet state of things. But perhaps a Romeo and Juliet may be found to terminate it."

"Don't laugh," replied May, gravely; "papa is vexed and indignant. Imagine two physicians in this locality! It's all the fault of that advertisement. Some scheming young man has seen it, and, finding no hope of practice elsewhere, has come here. I suppose he is as poor as a rat."

At this instant three wagons full of new furniture stopped in front of Dr. Rand's door, and May absolutely turned pale upon discovering that it was of the most elegant description.

"The wretch has got a young wife, too!" she exclaimed, as a piano and harp came to view; and then she added, rising, "this will never do; they must be put down at once; they are strangers in the neighborhood; we are well known. I have a plan which I think will effectually dispose of the interlopers. I will give an evening reception and ball, and will immediately prepare a list of all the people I wish to invite."

In fact the greatest of the kind which N— had ever known. Mr. and Miss Rand came, and were received with cold politeness by both father and daughter. The young man was good looking, intelligent, and possessed of that kind of manner which betokens familiarity with refined and cultivated society. Miss Rand, his sister, was a charming girl of twenty, who seemed rather amused at the manner of Dr. Wood and his daughter, but said nothing.

Young Rand's only revenge for the coldness manifested by May was asking her to dance, which was certainly vexatious, for his tone was so pleasing and his manner so courteous that she could not but feel pleased—when she wanted to be irate, distant and stately.

They danced together several times, and, to the astonishment of many friends of the young lady, of myself in particular, they went down to supper the best of friends, laughing and joking like old acquaintances. Next day, however, she resumed her original coldness of manner when the brother and sister called to pay their respects. She was simply polite, and no more, and after two or three words they retired, Miss Rand becoming as stiff and formal as her new acquaintance. From that day May became restless and discontented, seating herself constantly in the bay window and watching the opposite house to see if patients came or if Edmund Rand made any attempt to call about in the neighborhood and introduce himself.

One day Dr. Wood had been called to a distance to see a patient seriously ill, and May sat at the window enjoying her usual occupation, when suddenly she discovered a boy running toward the house. She recognized him as a boy employed by one of the principal families of the town—a family with a host of children, one of whom at least was constantly in bed from fits of indigestion.

The boy rang violently at the bell, and hastily inquired, upon the door being opened by the servant, for Doctor Wood.

"He is not at home."

"He will be home directly," said May, advancing quickly.

"Oh, but we can't wait! There's little Peter been and swallowed a marble!" and away he rushed across the street, evidently under instructions, to the hated rival's house.

May retreated to the sitting-room, and cried with vexation, the enemy had gained an entrance into the camp; for if this family became his patients others would be sure to follow; and she looked out of the window again just in time to see Edmund Rand hurrying down the street.

But more was to come. May belonged to a Thursday evening whist party, where whist was the exception and dancing the rule. On the Thursday evening following Dr. Rand's first call she attended one, when horror of horrors! there was that gentleman and his sister; and worse than that, when a quadrille was being formed, he, of all others, came to invite her to dance. May was a lady, and as such could not refuse, so she took her place in the set.

Despite herself that evening she was very much pleased with him. He was well-informed, had traveled extensively, was full of taste and feeling, and conversed with animation and originality. He sought every opportunity of addressing himself to her, and found these opportunities without much difficulty. For several Thursdays the same thing occurred, for he was getting very popular, and was being invited everywhere.

One morning the father and daughter were alone at breakfast. May began to like her bay window better than ever, and when the young doctor came out she always returned his bow with a heightening color that may have been the reflection of the roses surrounded her. Dr. Wood had been called out at an early hour, and had returned to breakfast in not the best of humors.

"I suppose I shall die in the poor-house," said he, as he buttered his toast with alarming irritability. "This Rand is getting all the practice. He got three of my patients yesterday."

"Oh, papa," replied May gently, "I don't think he has got a dozen altogether."

"A dozen! Well, that is a dozen lost to me, miss. It's proof positive that people think me old—worn out useless."

"Nonsense, papa," said May; "N— is increasing in population every day, and for every one he gets you get two."

"Indeed!" replied the doctor, with considerable animation, "it looks to me as if you rather sided with my rival."

The bell rang at this moment, and the servant announced Dr. Rand.

Dr. Wood had no time to make any remark ere the young man entered the room, bowing most politely to the old gentleman and his daughter, who looked as confused as her father looked surprised. The young doctor looked both handsome and happy—the old doctor thought, triumphant.

"Pardon me, sir, for disturbing you at this early hour, but your numerous calls leave me scant opportunity. My errand will doubtless surprise you, but I will be frank and open. I wish to ask you permission, Dr. Wood, to pay my addresses to your daughter."

"To do what, sir?" thundered the old doctor, in a towering passion. "Are you not satisfied with trying to take from me my practice, but that you must now rob me of my child? I will never consent to give her to you."

"But sir," said Edmund Rand, turning to May, "I have your daughter's permission to make this request. I told her of my intentions last night, and she authorized me to say that she quite approves of them."

"May," exclaimed her father in a stern voice, "is this true?"

"My dear papa, I am in no hurry to be married; and will never marry against your wish; but I will never marry any one else than Edmund."

"Ungrateful girl!" muttered Dr. Wood, and the next moment he sank back in his chair with an attack of disease of the heart, to which he had long been subject.

Open the window," said the young man, preparing with promptitude and earnestness to administer the necessary remedies; "be not alarmed—it is not a dangerous attack."

May obeyed her lover promptly and

quietly, quite aware of the necessity of self-possession and coolness in a case like the present. In half an hour, Dr. Wood was lying in a large, airy bedroom, and the young man had left, at the request of May, to attend a patient of her father's. It was late at night ere he had finished his double rounds and was able to be at the bedside of the father of May, who, with his sister by her side, sat watching.

"He sleeps soundly," said she, in a low tone, as he entered.

"Yes, and is doing well," replied Edmund. "I'll answer for his being up and stirring to-morrow if he desires it."

"But will it not be better for him to rest some days?"

"Better, perhaps; but what will his patients do without him?"

A SNAKE GERANIUM.

Slimy Horror in the Vegetable World as Seen in Georgia.

"A snake geranium?"

"Yes that is what I call it," said the doctor.

I stooped down to examine the flower. Hideous, repulsive, and yet strangely attractive, the snake geranium seemed to hold me under a spell.

To describe this flower one would have to paint life and motion. Mere color is not enough. As I looked the evil thing glared at me with sinister intelligence. There was nothing remarkable about the stalk and the leaves of the plant. The blossom was what riveted my gaze. Black, sinuous and slimy, it looked more like a snake than anything else. As I changed my point of view the thing changed its aspect. Its scales were a purplish black, then a dirty brown. Two little glassy heads in the monster's head glittered with prismatic hues and looked straight into my eyes. Was I mistaken? I could have sworn that this awesome bloom turned and twisted with the uncanny freakishness of a reptile.

"You know something of botany," said the doctor, "how do you classify it?"

"It is not to be classified," I answered. "It is a monstrosity. There is nothing like it. Is it poisonous?"

"I think so," was the reply, "the old African who found it called it a 'pizen plant,' but I renamed it."

I had seen nearly everything worth seeing in the floral world, but this singular plant blooming unnoticed in an obscure corner of a country doctor's garden amazed me beyond expression.

From the first the sickening odor of the flower had been terribly oppressive. In fact, it had prevented a close examination. Suddenly my brain seemed benumbed, a cold chill seized me, and, with a face of deadly pallor, I reeled and would have fallen to the ground but for the doctor's strong arm.

I was half sick, or rather in a dazed, half stupefied state, for days after my return to town. One evening a negro called at my house with a note from my friend, the doctor, and a covered basket. The messenger was gone before I could read the note. I glanced at the paper and then opened the basket. I did not know whether to laugh or be angry. Comfortably fixed in a big jar, the snake geranium gave a dirty twist and snapped its wicked eyes in my face!

To have this floral horror in my house was out of the question, and yet I was proud of the monster. I made a servant carry it to a sunny nook in the back yard. She returned with chattering teeth.

"De laud hab mussy!" she exclaimed, "dat ting's alive. Hit'll bite, sho's yer bawn!"

I did not contradict her. In fact, I agreed with her.

Sometimes I carried my friends to see my pet. I invariably had the satisfaction of hearing them swear, and generally I had to send them home in a carriage. One whiff of the snake geranium was enough to make a tottering wreck of the strongest man.

A little girl next door took a wonderful fancy to the flower. Frequently she came over when I was absent and spent an hour at a time fondling the plant and looking at it. Of all the persons who saw it she was the only one not affected by its peculiar odor. Sometimes I fell into a deep study over the mutual attachment existing between my monster and the girl. I call it mutual because it was impossible to view my snake geranium without giving it credit for life and intelligence. The girl was a queer little creature, with midnight hair and velvety eyes. She had a certain impish beauty that made me shudder. Between the girl and the geranium I came near being deviled to death.

As the weeks passed on the girl continued her visits. She grew thinner and paler, and her eyes grew larger and blacker. More than once I overheard the servants whispering that the snake geranium was killing the child. This alarmed me, and one day I told my young neighbor that the plant was poisonous and that she must not go near it. She rather shrunk from me and with a sorrowful look sped homeward without saying a word.

I came home unexpectedly one day, and found the girl paying a surreptitious visit to the flower. I went to her full of wrath, but was disarmed by what I saw. The poor thing had fainted, and wriggling and squirming over the side of the jar, within a few inches of the child's face, was that diabolical geranium.

FACTS ABOUT SATURN.

Saturnine Observations by Distinguished Modern Astronomers.

Saturn radiates light and heat enough to supply the inhabitants of its satellites with what they need in addition to those energies received from the sun. Its eight moons, one of which, Titan, is nearly as large as Ganymede of Jupiter, and a second, Japetus, about the size of our moon, are filled with intelligent beings whose organisms are exactly adapted to their surroundings.

The primary planet has a mean distance from the sun of about 872,000,000 miles and makes its revolution in about 29 and a half of our years. Its rotation on its axis is accomplished in 10h. 29m. 17s.

Mimas, the nearest of the eight moons to the primary, has a distance of 120,800 miles. It is 1,600 miles in diameter and revolves around Saturn in 22h. 57m. If a railroad extends around the equator of Mimas it is quite possible that trains move fast enough to cause Saturn to appear stationary. Could a train of cars leave New York at noon and move west around the earth on our line of latitude at the rate of about 14 miles per minute the sun would appear to be stationary to the passengers. In other words it would be noon at all points passed by the train.

Saturn is passing through its cosmical career more slowly than are the earth, Mars, Venus and Mercury, a multitude of its own "long centuries" must roll away before its crust will be sufficiently thick to permit the organizations in which its mind, intellect, life are manifested, to be so modified as to approximate the organisms of the smaller planets.

The people of the satellites of Saturn may be a "thousand" or even "10,000 years" ahead of us in inventive genius. They may be quite able to visit the beautiful rings above them and to carry on interplanar commerce.

Revealing Professional Secrets.

The case of James vs. Greatrex, heard at Stafford Assizes recently, is one of much interest, and full of warning to solicitors, both actual and prospective. The defendant is a solicitor at Stafford, being ex-Mayor of that town, and the action was brought against him to recover £1,000 damages for breach of his duty as a solicitor in revealing the secrets of his former client, the plaintiff.

The facts of the case are too lengthy and complicated to set out here; but it may be stated briefly that the plaintiff made a certain communication of a compromising character to the defendant in connection with matters in which the defendant was acting as solicitor for the plaintiff. Subsequently the latter engaged some other solicitor, and in the course of proceedings taken in a will case, the defendant was concerned, alleged to be in duty, in furtherance of the ends of justice, to disclose the communication referred to, did actually reveal it, making use, as the jury found, of words which imputed to the plaintiff the commission of crime, and caused him damage. The jury also found that the disclosures were not made for the furtherance of the ends of justice, or for the prevention of crime, and gave a verdict for the plaintiff for £150 over 40s. paid into court, with costs; and the Judge refused to stay execution in order that a point of law might be raised. Verily a solicitor needs to tread his way through professional life with wary and careful steps.

Killing a Panther.

Recently several farmers in the neighborhood of Big Indian, Ulster county, N. Y., have suffered deprivations upon their stock, calves and sheep being found torn and partially eaten. This was attributed to stray dogs until the recent snow storms, when footprints were found in the snow resembling that of a panther. Recently several of a flock of sheep belonging to Philip Dieckler were found killed and mangled. A party was hastily formed, and accompanied by several dogs, started in quest of this unusual and undesirable visitor.

After a hard tramp of several miles over snow eight or nine inches deep the hunters perceived by the excitement of the dogs that they were close upon their quarry, and in a short time they were engaged in a fierce struggle with a full-grown male panther. The place of encounter—a thick clump of trees on the edge of a cliff—was not accessible to the hunters, and so excited were the dogs that it was impossible to call them off in order to fire at the panther without killing or wounding them. The ferocious beast killed one of his assailants and would probably have escaped, so cowed were the others, but for the tenacity of a bull-dog which clung to him so desperately that it was impossible to shake him off, and they finally both rolled over the cliff, when a well-directed shot instantly killed the panther. The dog had been so seriously injured in the struggle that it was found necessary to despatch it also.

Illegal and Unsportsmanlike.

The Duke of Sutherland, who visited New York a few months ago, appears to have been the innocent victim of an unfortunate occurrence in Norway, while yachting there recently. It appears that during the stay of his yacht Katharina in the port of Molde, and while he was away inland, some of his friends on board—ignorant no doubt that they were acting both illegally and what is worse, in an unsportsmanlike manner—landed on some islands, shot a tame reindeer browsing quietly, and a dozen of elder fowl (also sacred for their deers, and quite tame), and indulged in salmon netting. The party were very well pleased with their day's sport, and the tame reindeer was hoisted on board amid hurrahs and rejoicing. But the next day the sheriff paid a visit to the yacht and invited the whole party to appear before the Norwegian magistrates, who, after due cautioning, mulcted the duke in a fine of £100 for trespassing and illegal shooting and fishing, which fine was paid. The Norwegian press acquits the duke of all personal responsibility, throwing the whole blame on his sporting companions.

The Horse Shoe and Good Luck.

What is the origin of the popular superstition connecting a horse shoe with good luck? Priapus was worshipped as a protector of gardens, villas, etc. Beside the peculiar image of him is a common symbol of a Phallus. The nailing of a horse shoe above the door is a remnant of this idolatry. It was the common practice of the Arabs or Bedouins of Northern Africa to nail such symbols above the door of their tents to keep off witches and avert the evil eye. When it was impossible to obtain the Phallus or Yoni, a rude drawing was substituted instead. In this manner the latter finally approached the figure of a horse shoe, and when the meaning was forgotten, the horse shoe became the talisman and is found all over the world.

A Ghostly Story.

Several years ago I was employed as train dispatcher on a Southwestern American railroad. As usual, there were three of us in the office. I had what is called the "second trick," my hours of duty being from 4 p. m. to 12 p. m. The third man, Charles Burns, who came on at midnight and worked till 8 a. m., was a particular friend of mine. He was a young man of high character, a fine dispatcher and very popular; and when, during the burning days of July, it became known among the men that he was confined to his room by a severe attack of malignant