

CLOSE TO SPRINGTIME.

Gettin' close to springtime—know it by the way The sun is streamin' in the middle of the day;

ROMANCE OF A HELMET.

"But uncle, I love my cousin!" "Get out!" "Give her to me."

My uncle, whose back had been toward me, whirled round, his face red to bursting, and brought his closed fist down upon the counter with a heavy thump.

This memorable conversation took place, in fact, in the shop of my maternal uncle, a well-known dealer in antiquities and objects d'art, 53 Rue des Clauettes, at the sign of the "Maltese Cross"—a perfect museum of curiosities.

The walls were hung with Marseilles and old Rouen china, facing ancient cuirasses, sabres and muskets and picture frames; below these were ranged old cabinets, coffers of all sorts and statues of saints, one-armed or one-legged for the most part, and dilapidated as to their gilding;

Time out of mind the shop had belonged to the Cornuberts. It passed regularly from father to son, and my uncle—his neighbor's said—could not but be the possessor of a nice little fortune. Held in esteem by all, a municipal councillor, impressed by the importance and gravity of his office, short, fat, highly choleric and headstrong, but at bottom not in the least degree an unkind sort of man—such was my uncle Cornubert, my only living male relative, who as soon as I left school elevated me to the dignity of chief and only clerk and shop man of the "Maltese Cross."

But my uncle was not only a dealer in antiquities and a municipal councillor—he was yet more, and above all, the father of my cousin Rose, with whom I was naturally in love.

I went on scouring my double-handed sword. Rose came quietly toward me. "What is the matter with my father?" she asked; "he seems to be angry with you."

I looked at her—her eyes were so black, her look so kind, her mouth so rosy, her teeth so white that I told her all—my love, my suit to her father, and his rough refusal. I could not help it—after all, it was his fault! He was not there; I determined to brave his anger. Besides, there is nobody like timid persons for displaying courage under certain circumstances.

My cousin said nothing; she only held down her eyes, while her cheeks were as red as those of cherries in May. I checked myself. "Are you angry with me?" I asked, tremblingly. "Are you angry with me, Rose?"

She held out to me her hand. On that, my heart seething with audacity, my head on fire, I cried: "Rose, I swear it! I will be your husband!"

And as she shook her head and looked at me sadly I added: "Oh! I will know that my uncle is self-willed still, and he will be forced to say 'yes.' I will force him to say it!"

At that moment a heavy step resounded in the street. Instinctively we moved away from each other; I returned to my double-handed sword, and Rose, to keep herself in countenance, set to dusting with a corner of her apron a little statuette in its faded red velvet case.

My uncle entered. Surprised at finding us together, he stopped short and looked sharply at us, from one to the other. We each went on rubbing without raising our heads.

"Here, take this," said my uncle, handing me a bulky parcel from under his arm. "A splendid purchase, you'll see."

"When you have done laughing, idiot!" he cried. But the helmet swayed so oddly on his shoulders, his voice came from it in such strange tones, that the more he gesticulated, the more he yelled and threatened me, the louder I laughed.

At that moment the clock of the Hotel de Ville striking 5, was heard. "The Municipal Council!" murmured my uncle, in a stifled voice. "Quick! help me off with this beast of a machine! We'll settle our business afterward!"

But suddenly, likewise, an idea—a wild, extraordinary idea—came into my head; but, then, whoever is madder than a lover? Besides, I had no choice of means. "No!" I replied. My uncle fell back two paces in terror—and again the enormous helmet wobbled on his shoulders.

"No," I repeated, firmly, "I'll not help you out unless you give me the hand of my cousin Rose!"

From the depths of the strangely elongated visor came not an angry exclamation, but a veritable roar. I had "done it!"—I had burned my ships!

"Decide at once," I cried, "something is coming!" "Well, then—yes!" murmured my uncle. "But make haste!"

"On your word of honor?" "On your word of honor!" the visor gave way, the gorget-piece also, and my uncle's head issued from durand, red as a poppy.

"Just in time. The chemist at the corner, a colleague in the Municipal Council, entered his shop. "Are you coming?" he asked; "they will be beginning the business without us."

"I'm coming," replied my uncle. And without looking at me he took up his hat and cane and walked out. The next moment all my hopes had vanished. My uncle would surely not forgive me.

THE JOKER'S BUDGET.

JESTS AND YARNS BY FUNNY MEN OF THE PRESS.

Statistics--Consoling News--Henry Explains--Her First Dinner, Etc., Etc.

STATISTICS. The man who takes pleasure in discussing labor questions got on the subject of pauper labor. "I find by recent statistics," he said, "that a weaver in Germany gets 60 cents a day; farm hands in Belgium 40 cents; a thrasher in Turkey 40 cents."

CONSOLING NEWS. "Have you any tidings yet of my lost son?" asked the distracted mother of the chief of police. "We have discovered, madam, that he enlisted for the Brazilian war."

HENRY EXPLAINS. She was waiting for him, Gathering her brows like gathering storm, Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

HER FIRST DINNER. Young Husband--Say, darling, what a peculiar flavor this stewed steak has. Young Wife (diffidently)--I really cannot account for it. Indeed, in order to take away the bad taste of the onions I scalded them myself in eau de cologne.

NOT SO SIMPLE. Fred--My dear Miss Clementina, you have no idea how exquisitely beautiful you are. Clementina--You must take me for a fool.--(Town Topics).

COMPLIMENT. Mrs. Hyammy--"I have had my house elegantly refurbished." Mrs. Jeallus--"And you did it so quickly, too. All since that auction sale at the Goldfeds' mansion."--(Chicago Record).

OPPRESSION AGAIN. Dusty Rhodes--Did you hear of that scheme in de new tariff bill to prevent a feller from bringin' in over \$250 worth of clothing free? Wandering Willy--Yes; it's schemes like dat which makes me disgusted wid dis country. De idea of not permittin' us to bring over all de clothes we needs from London--excuse me, cull, till I touch dis bloke for de price.--(Raymond's Monthly).

TWO POINTS OF VIEW. Mabel--Terribly disagreeable weather we have been having. Madge--I thought it rather pleasant. Mabel--But I have a perfect dream of a suit for wet and sloppy days, and I have no chance to wear it.--(Puck).

NOT ENOUGH. Pike--These tests of the new battle ships are all right so far as they go; but they don't go far enough. Dyke--What would you like to have done? Pike--Well; if they'd fire at the latest ships with the latest guns, we'd have some idea what they could stand.--(Puck).

RENEWING OLD ACQUAINTANCE. "By the way, you remember Miss Krellinger, whom so many of the boys went wild over, don't you?" "Yes, and I used to think she was a girl who deserved a good husband." "Well, I married her." "You? You astonish me."--(Chicago Tribune).

KNEW HOW IT OUGHT TO TASTE. Mrs. Gilfoyle--This can't be genuine mineral water. Mrs. Gilfoyle--Why? Mrs. Gilfoyle--It doesn't taste horribly enough.--(Truth).

NEEDED ASSISTANCE. Billy Baredues--I've made a bet of a hundred dollars with Jack Chammlies that if I propose to you, you'll refuse me. Now, if you do refuse me, I'll divide with you. Miss Bondstock--And supposing I should accept you? Billy Baredues--Then I'm afraid I shall have to call on you to help me pay the bet.--(Harper's Bazar).

THE HORRID MAN!

Young Woman--Now, Mr. Fewords, don't you think my picture deserves a hanging?

Young Man--I think electrocution is preferable.--(Judge).

ENGAGING. She--I consider Mr. Carter a very engaging man. He--Yes, that was said of him last summer, when he was engaged to four girls at once.--(Raymond's Monthly).

NOTHING TO CROW ABOUT. "The sun never sets on England's dominions," remarked the boasting Britisher. "England reminds me of an old hen," responded the Yankee. "Why?" demanded the Britisher, angrily. "A hen's sun never sets, either."--(Life).

HAD SUFFICIENT. Host (to native of Hawaii he has been entertaining at dinner)--May I offer you a toothpick? Hawaiian--Thanks; I have already eaten two.--(Hallow).

THE USUAL DIFFICULTY. "How are you getting along learning to write shorthand?" "First rate. I can take down a speech with perfect ease. All I have to learn now is to read my notes."--(Chicago Tribune).

IN FOR A GOOD TIME. Vegetarian--Where are the blue goggles? His Wife--Here they are. What do you want of them? "I want to wear them. Now tie this scarf about my neck, clear up to my ears. Pull my hat down over my eyes. That's right. Now help me on with this old overcoat I dug out of the attic. I'm going to the butcher's to buy a porterhouse steak."--(Chicago Tribune).

A HORRIBLE THOUGHT. Weary Wiggins--I am glad I was not born a society man. Tired Traddles--Why? Weary Wiggins--Because if I were I'd be in de swim.--(Truth).

HE GOT HIS REWARD. It was in a large department store that a gilded youth drifted up to the candy counter. "Do you know," he said, to the pretty young woman in charge, "if I were the proprietor of this establishment, I should dismiss you." "Why?" she asked indignantly. "In order to give the candy a chance," he answered. And she gave him a pound and a quarter of seventy-five-cent-candy for fifty cents.--(Detroit Free Press).

GRATIFIED. I cannot sing the old songs. They heard the maiden say, And then the guests with one accord Arose and said "Hooryay!"--(Washington Star).

THE ONLY WAY. Watts--It is the easiest thing in the world for a man to convince his wife that she has the wrong side of an argument. Potts--What? Watts--Fact. I can make my wife take back everything she has said by giving her \$10.--(Indianapolis Journal).

HER MIND UNCHANGED. She--This is so sudden! He--How firm you women are in your convictions. That's just what you said when I proposed two years ago.--(Chicago Record).

MINDFUL OF THE RUSH. Jess--I wish the football player would ask me for the next dance. Bess--Why? Jess--I have a premonition that the call for supper is about due.--(Puck).

HE WANTED TO KNOW. "Are you the proprietor of this restaurant?" said the man who had waited for his order until he became sleepy. "Yes, sir. What can I do for you?" "You can give me some information. I want to know whether you have told the waiter to stay away so that you can bring in a bill for lodging against me."--(Washington Star).

NO INTERRUPTIONS LIKELY. Tired Housekeeper--There! The house is as neat as a new pin at last. I am going to take a nap. Try not to disturb me with your play, my pets. Little Brother--What shall I do if any one calls? Little Sister--No need to bother about that. No one ever calls when things are clean!--(Good News).

A CURIOUS INQUIRY.

Do Men's Faces Grow to Resemble Those of Other Animals.

There is a very curious point connected with the more pronounced animal faces—namely, those in charge of animals grow to be like them. Thus, a hostler in charge of tramway horses has himself a fine Roman-nosed horse type of head, growing day by day more like his horses. Men in charge of cattle on the farm become essentially bovine, and in Shropshire it has often been remarked that the sheep-breeders resemble their own rams. I cannot explain these singularities, which, however, are wholly or partly true.

The sheep type of man is not indicative of great intelligence, and it is usually found in remote agricultural districts. The bulldog characters in man denote courage without refinement, but in the case of a lady—ridiculously like her favorite pug dog—with nez retrousse, the refinement was not wanting. The Esquimaux, or Lapps, in the water, are so like seals that a man has been shot in error, the wistful expression of countenance being common to both, as the head only appears at the surface of the water. I have seen a comfortable looking bear man in the train, and a wizened, bat-faced old woman once in Brittany.

These are examples that might easily be multiplied a hundredfold were it not for the monotony of reiteration. It is not without interest to remark that there is a work extant, dating a couple of hundred years back, which deals with this very subject. The writer was a Professor at Padua; the treatise is in Italian, or possibly Latin, and many curious woodcuts illustrate the work, giving the various facial angles of man and beast, according to strict measurement.

For my part, I do not profess to explain the strange resemblance between man and the inferior brute creation; it is enough to note the fact. Were it a Buddhist priest commenting on these things, he might explain the tenets of transmigration of souls. At Colombo I once observed a yellow-robed priest leave the footpath in order to avoid crushing the life out of some venomous ants crossing the road. It would have been a sin for him to kill any living thing, for "who knows," he would say, "what immortal spirits might be imprisoned in each lowly body?"

Such a one might build a pretty theory upon the subject of these casual resemblances between man and beast, fish and bird. Each existence might be the foreshadowing of the one to come, or the reflection of one which had passed away. The series of lives, he would argue, exhibit the evolution of the spirit working out a certain destiny through untold ages, gradually approaching that refinement of spiritual existence when the contemplation of the Nirvana should be assured to each spirit entity in the realms of eternal bliss. Retrogression in this scheme, I presume, would mean extinction when the atoms of matter are lost in the whirl of astral dust.--(Fall Mall Gazette).

Microbes Carried by Bullets.

Some interesting experiments were lately made by Dr. Mesmer, says the London News, by way of solving the question whether or not rifle bullets are liable to carry infection with them in their course of entry into the body. He made his trial with bullets which had been infected with germs of a particular kind, and the infected bullets were shot into tin boxes from distances varying from 225 to 250 metres—a metre being nearly 3 feet 3 3/4 inches. Inside the boxes were placed gelatine peptone in sterilized or germless condition, so that whatever germ developments were found in the peptone (which is a great growing medium for microbes) would be presumed to have come from the bullets. The tracks of the bullets through the gelatine were duly scrutinized, with the result that in each case germ growth took place corresponding to the particular microbes with which the bullets had been respectively infected. In another series of investigations the bullets were made to pass through infected flannel before penetrating the gelatine, the bullets being of the ordinary kind. Here, again, microbial growths appeared in the gelatine, showing that the flannel had yielded up its microbes to the bullets as they traversed it. If non-infected and ordinary bullets were used, the gelatine developed only the ordinary germ life, such as the air contains. The bullet is, therefore, a germ carrier of very decided kind, and it is also clear that if clothing is penetrated by a bullet prior to its entrance into the tissues, the missile will be liable to carry into the wound it makes the bacteria resident on the clothes.

Profit in Muskrats.

A new means of earning a livelihood has been opened up to the citizens of Buffalo, N. Y. The Buffalo Enquirer says: "During the recent South Buffalo flood two young men in that part of the city caught not less than fifty good-sized muskrats. The pelts of the animals are worth about twenty-five or thirty cents each, and the boys reaped quite a harvest."

THE Hartford Journal protests that men who pay no attention to "shut the door" signs in winter invariably close the door in hot weather. THE Hummel family, of Brooklyn, are still advertising in the New York Herald for their sisters, who disappeared twenty-two years ago. There is nothing so perennial as hope.