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Poetry.

The Parting of Ulysses.

AN HOMERIC REMINISCENCE.

I dare not live, thy loving thrall;
Dread queen, I quit thy wondrous hall;
Soft, dreamy days, time's perfumed fall,
Farewell, for aye, farewell!
Yon trembling star, that gems the west,
Shakes o'er the land where I must rest;
The great gods beckon, their behest
Is "onward e'en through hell!"

Stay me not, raise, dread queen, thine eyes;
Lo! crimson floods eve's amber skies!
Pearl dropped, thy soft-fringed eyelash lies
In shade upon thy face.
Call me not cruel! curse my fate,
'Tis that which leaves thee desolate;
The gods are stern; the galleys wait,
Good rowers, take your place!

Oh, loose thy clinging arms! their sheath
Rusts the bold heart—and yet, thy breath
Ambrosial soothes my neck—oh, death!
Dost thou not spare too long?
Is life a boon, if I must part
From love like Circe's? Faithless heart,
Better death's pang than life's long smart!
True wife, I do thee wrong!

Yield me my mates, my frolic crew;
The palm-leaves cloud with glistening dew;
'Tis late! Bright-haired one, ah! too few
The working hours of life!
Dear Ithaca, my rocky home,
Remembered more, the more I roam,
I hold thee e'en through leagues of foam,
Loved isle, sweet son, true wife!

Lo! glittering Circe! wedded love
Burns stronger than yon orbs which move
To greet their crescent queen above,
Fair stars that blind the day!
By magic wiles made once thine own,
Uncharmed, my weakness stands like stone,
The gods draw back their lingering loan,
Farewell! my crew, give way!

—*Once a Week*

Finding a Relic.

A relic strange from my bachelor hoards,
You show me with crimsoning face,
A little thimble of silver fine—
Art thou not wondering, bride of mine,
Whose finger it used to grace?

Hath it a history? Yes, ah! yes,
For she who that relic wore,
Every pulse of my soul could stir
With a look or a touch, while I, to her
Was a cousin—a boy—no more.

She wedded. And I, a frequent guest,—
Flung on a couch with my books,—
With jealous pangs I could scarcely hide,
Have watched *his* gestures of love and pride,
And the answering joy of *her* looks.

And better I liked to see her sit
Alone in her easy-chair,
Her mien more pensive, her cheek more pale,
Busied with work that was telling a tale
Of new-known pleasures and care.

Or work forgotten—her dark eyes closed—
Her fancy with sweet dreams rife,
Of a tiny form by her arm caressed,
A baby face to her bosom pressed—
The mother, as well as the wife.

'Twas thus I saw them—mother and babe—
But shrouded with flowrets fair;
Unconcious both, as they calmly slept,
Of the bitter tear that he and I wept—
Of the long long vigils, we sadly kept—
Kept in our love ad despair.

From the work her fingers would touch no more
I took that relic alone:
But your cheek is wet, and your lip is pale—
I should not have told this sorrowful tale—
Go, hide the relic, my own.

Selections.

One Night in a Gaming House.

BY AN EX-POLICE OFFICER.

A little more than a year after the period when adverse circumstances—chiefly the result of my reckless follies—compelled me to enter the ranks of the Metropolitan Police, as the sole means left me of procuring food and raiment, the attention of one of the principal chiefs of the force was attracted toward me by the ingenuity and boldness, which I was supposed to have manifested in hitting upon and unraveling a clue, which ultimately led to the detection and punishment of the perpetrators of an artistically contrived fraud upon an eminent tradesman of the West end of London. The chief sent for me—and after a somewhat lengthened conversation, not only expressed admiration of my conduct in the particular matter under discussion, but hinted that he might shortly need my service in some other affair requiring intelligence and resolution.

"I think I have met you before," he remarked with a meaning smile, on dismissing me, "when you occupied a different position from your present one. Do not alarm yourself—I have no wish to pry unnecessarily into other men's secrets. Waters is a name common enough in all ranks of society, and I may, you know," here the cold smile deepened into an ironical expression, "be mistaken. At all events, the testimony of the gentleman who obtained your admission to the force—I have looked into the matter since I heard of your behavior in the late business—is a sufficient guarantee that nothing more serious than imprudence and folly can be laid to your charge. I have neither right nor inclination to inquire further. To-morrow, in all probability, I shall send for you."

I came to the conclusion, as I walked homeward, that the chief's intimation of having previously met me in another sphere of life was a random and unfortunate one, as I had seldom visited London in my prosperous days, and still more rarely mingled in its society. My wife, however, to whom I, of course, related the substance of the conversation, reminded me that he had once been at Doncaster during the races—and suggested that he might possibly have seen me there. This was a sufficiently probable explanation of the hint—but whether the correct one or not, I can not decide, as he never afterward alluded to the subject, and I had not the slightest wish to renew it.

Three days elapsed before I received the expected summons. On waiting on him, I was agreeably startled to find that I was to be at once employed on a mission which the most sanguine and experienced detective officers would have felt honored to undertake.

"Here is a written description of the persons of this gang of blacklegs, swindlers and forgers," concluded the Commissioner, summing up his instruction. "It will be your object to discover their private haunts, and secure legal evidence of their notorious practices. We have been hitherto baffled, principally, I think, through the too hasty zeal of the officers employed—you must especially avoid that error. They are practiced scoundrels; and it requires considerable practice, as well as acumen to unkennel and bring them to justice. One of their more recent victims is a young Mr. Merton, son by a former marriage, of the Dowager Lady Everton. Her ladyship has applied to us to extricate him from the toils in which he is meshed. You will call on her at five o'clock this afternoon—in plain clothes of course—and obtain whatever information on the subject she may be able to afford. Remember to communicate directly with me—and any assistance you may require shall be promptly rendered."

With these, and a few other minor directions, needless to recapitulate, I was dismissed to a task which, difficult and possibly perilous as it might prove, I hailed as a delightful relief from the weary monotony and dull routine of ordinary duty.

I hastened home, and after dressing with great care—the best part of my wardrobe had been fortunately saved by Emily from the wreck of my fortune—I proceeded to Lady Everton's mansion. I was immediately marshaled to the drawing-room, where I found her ladyship and her daughter—a beautiful fair looking girl—awaiting my arrival. Lady Everton appeared surprised at my appearance, differing, as I dare say it altogether did, from her abstract idea of a policeman, however attired or disguised—and it was not until she had perused the note of which I was the bearer, that her haughty and incredulous stare became mitigated to a glance of lofty condescendent civility.

"Be seated, Mr. Waters," said her ladyship, waving me a chair. "This note informs me that you have been selected for the duty of extricating my son from the perilous entanglements in which he has unhappily involved himself."

I was about to reply—for I was silly enough to be somewhat nettled at the noble lady's haughtiness of manner—that I was engaged in the public service of extirpating a gang of swindlers with whom her son had involved himself, and was there to procure from her ladyship any information she might be possessed of likely to forward so desirable a result, but, fortunately, the remembrance of my actual position, spite of my gentleman's attire, flashed vividly upon my mind; and instead of permitting my glib tongue to wag irreverently in the presence of a right honorable, I bowed with deferential acquiescence.

Her ladyship proceeded, and I, in substance, received the following information:

Mr. Charles Merton, during the few months which had elapsed, had very literally fallen "among thieves." A passion for gambling seemed to have possession of his being; and almost every day, as well as night of his haggard, feverish life, was spent at play. A run of ill-luck, according to his own belief—but in very truth of downright robbery—had set in against him, and he had, not only dissipated all the ready money which he had inherited and the large sums which the foolish indulgence of his mother had supplied him with, but had involved himself in bonds, bill and other obligations, to a frightful amount. The principal agent in effecting this ruin was one Sanford—a man of dashing exterior, and the presiding spirit of the desperadoes whom I was commissioned to hunt out. Strange to say Mr. Merton had the blindest reliance upon this man of honor; and even now—tricked, despoiled as he had been by him and his gang—relied on his counsel and assistance for his escape from the desperate position in which he was involved.

The Everton estate had passed, in default of male issue, to a distant relative of the late lord; so that ruin, absolute and irredeemable, stared both the wretched dupe and his relatives in the face. Lady Everton's jointure was not a very large one, and her son had been permitted to squander sums which should have been devoted to the discharge of some claims which were now pressed harshly against her.

I listened with the deepest interest to Lady Everton's narrative. Repeatedly during the course of it, as she incidentally alluded to the manner and appearance of Sanford, who had been introduced by Mr. Merton to his mother and sister, a suspicion, which the police papers had first awakened, that the gentleman in question was an old acquaintance of mine, and one, moreover, whose favors I was extremely desirous to return in kind, flashed with increasing conviction across my mind. This surmise I, of course, kept to myself—and after emphatically cautioning the ladies to keep our proceedings a profound secret from Mr. Merton, I took my leave, amply provided with the resources requisite for carrying into effect the scheme I had resolved upon. I also arranged that instead of waiting personally on her ladyship, which might excite observation and suspicion. I should report my progress by letter through the post.

"If it should be he!" thought I, as I emerged into the street. The bare supposition had sent the blood whirling through my veins with furious violence. "If this Sanford be, as I suspect, that villain Cardon, it will indeed be a triumph—victory! Lady Everton need not, in that case, seek to animate my zeal by any promise of money recompense. A blighted existence, a young and gentle wife by his means cast down from opulence to sordid beggary, would stimulate the dullest craven that ever crawled the earth, to energy and action. Pray heaven my suspicions prove correct—and then, oh my enemy, look well to yourself, for the avenger is at your heels!"

Sanford, I had been instructed, was usually present at the Italian opera during the ballet; the box he generally occupied was designated in the memoranda of the police; and I saw by the bills that a very successful piece was to be performed that evening, and determined on being present.

I entered the house at 10 o'clock, just after the commencement of the ballet, and I looked around. The momentary disappointment was soon repaid. Five minutes had not elapsed, when Cardon, looking more insolently triumphant than ever, entered arm in arm with a pale aristocratic looking young man, whom I had no difficulty from his striking resemblance to a portrait in Lady Everton's drawing-rooms, in deciding to be Merton.

My course of action was at once determined upon. Pausing only to master the emotion which the sight of the glittering reptile in whose poisonous folds I had been involved and crushed, inspired, I passed to the opposite side of the house, and boldly entered the box. Cardon's back was toward me, and I tapped him on the shoulder. He turned quickly round—and if a basilisk had confronted him, he could scarcely have exhibited greater surprise. My aspect, nevertheless, studiously bland and conciliatory, and my outstretched hand seemed to invite a renewal of our friendship.

"Waters!" he at last stammered, feebly accepting my proffered grasp—"who would have thought of meeting you here?"

"Not you, certainly, since you stare at an old friend as if he were some frightful goblin, about to swallow you, really."

"Hush! let us speak together in the lobby. An old friend," he added, in answer to Mr. Merton's surprised stare, "we will return in an instant."

"Well, what is all this, Waters?" said Cardon, recovering his wonted sang froid the instant we were alone. "I understood you had retired from among us; were in fact—what shall I say?"

"Ruined—done up! Nobody should know that better than you."

"My good fellow you do not imagine—"

"I imagine nothing, my dear Cardon. I was very thoroughly done—done brown, as is written in the vulgar tongue. But fortunately my kind old uncle"—

"Passgrove is dead!" interrupted my old acquaintance, eagerly jumping to a conclusion, "and you are his heir. I congratulate you, my dear fellow. This indeed is a charming reverse of circumstances."

"Yes; but mind, I have given up the old game. No more dice-deviltry for me. I have promised Emily never to touch a card again."

The cold eye of the incarnate fiend—he was little else—gleamed mockingly as these "good intentions" of a practical gamester fell upon his ear—but he replied, "very good, quite right, my dear boy. But come, let me introduce you to Mr. Merton, highly connected personage, I assure you. By the way, Waters," he added, in a caressing and very confidential tone, "my name, for family and other reasons, which I will hereafter explain to you, is for the present Sanford."

"Sanford!"

"Yes; do not forget. But allons, or the ballet will be over."

I was introduced as an old and esteemed friend hom he (Sanford) had not seen for many months. At the conclusion of the ballet, Sanford proposed that we should adjourn to the European Coffee House, nearly opposite, and out we sallied. At the top of the staircase we jostled against the Commissioner who, like us, was leaving the house. He bowed slightly to Mr. Merton's apology, and his eye wandered coldly and briefly over our persons; not the slightest sign or recognition escaped him. I thought it possible he did not know me in my changed apparel—but looking back, after descending a few steps, I was quickly undeceived. A sharp quick glance, expressive both of encouragement and surprise, shot out from under his pent-house brows, and as swiftly vanished. He did not know how little I needed spurring to gain the goal he had in view.

We discussed two or three bottles of wine with gayety and relish, Sanford, especially was in exuberant spirits—brimming over with brilliant anecdotes and sparkling badinage.

He saw in me a fresh rich prey, and his eager spirit reveled, by anticipation, in the victory which he doubted not to obtain over my "excellent intentions and wife-pledged virtue." About half-past 12 he proposed to adjourn, eagerly assented to by Mr. Merton, who had for some time exhibited unmistakable symptoms of impatience and unrest.

"You will accompany us Waters?" said Sanford, as we rose to depart. "There is, I suppose, no vow registered in the matrimonial archives against looking on a game played by others?"

"Oh no! but do not ask me to play!"

"Certainly not;" and a devilish sneer curled his lip. "Your virtue shall suffer no temptation, be assured."

We soon arrived before the door of a quiet, respectable looking house, in one of the streets leading to the Strand; a low peculiar knock, given by Sanford, was promptly answered; then a password, which I did not catch, was whispered by him through the keyhole, as we passed in.

We proceeded up stairs to the first floor, the shutters of which were carefully closed, so no intimation of what was going on could possibly reach the street. The apartment was brilliantly lighted, a roulette table and cards were in full activity; wines and liquors of all varieties were paraded. There were about half a dozen persons present, I soon discovered, beside the gang, and that comprised eleven or twelve well-dressed desperadoes, whose sinister aspects induced a momentary qualm lest one or more of the pleasant party might suspect or recognize my vocation. This, however, I reflected, was scarcely possible. My beat, during the short period I had been in the force, was far distant from the usual haunts of such gentry, and I was otherwise unknown in London. Still, questioning glances were eagerly directed toward my introducer and one big burly fellow, a foreigner—the rascals were the scum of various countries—was unpleasantly inquisitorial, "J'en responde!" I heard Sanford say, in answer to his reiterated queries: and he added something in a whisper which brought a sardonic smile to the fellow's lips, inducing a total change in his demeanor towards myself. This was reassuring; for though provided with pistols, I should, I felt, have little chance with such utterly reckless ruffians as those by whom I was surround. Play was proposed; and though at first stoutly refused, I feigned to be overcome by irresistable temptation and sat down to blind hazard with my foreign friend for moderate stakes. I was graciously allowed to win, and in the end found myself richer in money by about ten pounds. Mr. Merton was soon absorbed in the chance of dice, and lost large sums, for which, when the money he brought with him was exhausted, he gave written acknowledgements. The cheating practiced upon him was really audacious, and any one but a tyro must have repeatedly detected it. He, however, appeared not to entertain the slightest suspicion of the "fair play" of his opponents, guiding himself entirely by the advice of his friend and counsellor, who did not himself play. The amible assemblage broke up about six in the morning, each person retiring singly, by the back way, receiving as he departed, a new password for the next evening.

A few hours afterward I waited on the Commissioner to report the state of affairs. He was delighted with the fortunate debut I had made, but still strictly enjoined patience and caution. It would have been easy, as I was in possession of the password, to have surprised the confederacy in gaming that very evening; but this would only have accomplished a part of the object aimed at. Several of the fraternity—Sanford among the number—was suspected of uttering forged foreign notes, and it was essential to watch narrowly for legal evidence to restore, if possible, the property and securities of which Mr. Merton had been pillaged.

Nothing of especial importance occurred for seven or eight days. Gaming went on as usual every evening, and Mr. Merton became, of course more and more involved; even his sister's jewels—which he surreptitiously obtained, to such a degradation will this vice plunge men otherwise honorable—had been staked and lost, and he was, by the advice of Sanford, about to conclude a heavy mortgage on his estate, in order not only to be clear of his enormous "debt of honor," but acquire fresh means of "winning back"—that ignis fatuus of all gamblers—his tremendous losses! A new preliminary "dodge," I observed, was now brought into action. Mr. Merton esteemed himself a knowing hand at *ecarte*. It was produced, and he was permitted to win every game, much to the apparent annoyance and discomfiture of the losers. All this was precisely the snare into which I had myself fallen, I of course the more readily detected it, and felt certain that the grand coup was meditated! In the meantime I had not been idle. Sanford was confidentially informed that I was only waiting in London to receive between four and five thousand pounds—part of Uncle Passgrove's legacy—and then intended to immediately hasten to back to canny Yorkshire. To have seen the villain's eyes as I accidentally, as it were announced my errand and intention! They fairly flashed with glee! Ah, Sanford! Sanford! you were, with all you cunning, but a sad blind idot to believe the man you had wronged and ruined could so easily forget the debt he owed you!

The crisis came swiftly on. Mr. Merton's mortgage money was to be paid on the morrow; and on that day, too, I announced the fabulous thousands received by me were to be handed over. Mr. Merton, elated with his repeated triumphs at *ecarte*, and prompted by his friend Sanford, resolved instead of cancelling the bonds and obligations held by the conspirators, to redeem his losses by staking on that his ready money against those liabilities. This was at first demurred to with much apparent earnestness by the winners, but Mr. Merton, warmly seconded by Sanford, insisting upon the concession, as he deemed it, it was finally agreed that *ecarte* should be the game by which he might hope to regain the fortune and the peace of mind he had so rashly squandered; the last time should be be successful—and was he not sure of success!—he assured Sanford, that he would never never handle cards or dice. He should have heard the mocking merriment with which the gang heard Sanford repeat this resolution to amend his ways *when* he had recovered back his wealth!

The day so eagerly longed for by Merton and his confederates—by the spoilers and their prey—arrived, and I waited with feverish anxiety, the coming night. Only the chief conspirators eight in number, were to be present, and no stranger but myself—a privilege I owed to the moonshine legacy I had just received—was to be admitted to the crowning triumph of successive fraud. One only hint I had ventured to give Mr. Merton and that under a promise, "on his honor as a gentleman" of inviolable secrecy. This was it.

"Be sure before commencing play to-morrow night, that the bonds and obligations you have signed, the jewels you have lost, with a sum in notes or gold to make up an equal amount to that which you make the risk, is actually deposited on the table." He promised to insist on this condition. It involved much more than he dreamed of then.

My arrangements were at length throughly complete, and a few minutes past twelve o'clock the whispered password admitted me into the house. An angry altercation was going on. Mr. Merton was insisting, as I had advised, upon the exhibition of a sum equal to that which he had brought with him, for, confident of winning, he was determined to recover his losses to the last farthing; and although his bonds, bills, obligations, his sister's jewels, and a large amount in gold and genuine notes, were produced there was still a heavy sum deficient. "Ah, by the by," exclaimed Sanford, as I entered, "Waters can lend you the sum for an hour or two—for a consideration," he added in a whisper. "It will soon be returned."

"No, thank you," I answered very coldly, "I never part with my money till I have lost it."

An indignant scowl passed over the scoundrel's features, but he made no reply. Ultimately it was decided that one of the fraternity should be despatched in search of the required sum. He was gone about half an hour and returned with a bundle of notes. They were, as I hoped and expected, forgeries on foreign banks. Mr. Merton looked at and counted them over, and then the play commenced.

As it went on, so vividly did the scene recall the evening that had sealed my own ruin, that I grew dizzy with excitement, and drained tumbler after tumbler of water to allay the fevered throbbing of my veins.—The gamblers were certainly too much absorbed to heed my agitation. Merton lost continuously—without pause or intermission. The stakes were doubled, trebled quadrupled! His brain was on fire; and he played, or rather lost, with the recklessness of a mad-man.

"Hark! what's that?" suddenly exclaimed Sanford, from whose Satanic features the mask he had so long worn before Merton had been gradually slipping. "Did you hear a noise below?"

My ear had caught the sound, and I could better interpret than he. It ceased.

"Touch the signal bell, Adolphe," added Sanford.

Not only the play, but the very breathing of the villians was suspended as they listened for the reply.

It came. The answering tinkle sounded once—twice—thrice. "All right!" shouted Sanford. "Proceed! The farce is nearly played out."

I had instructed the officers that two of them in plain clothes should present themselves at the front door, obtain admission by means of the password I had given them, and immeadiately seize and gag the door-keeper. I had also acquainted them with the proper answer to the signal bell—three pulls at the handle communicating with the first floor. Their comrades were then to be admitted, and they were all silently to ascend the stairs, and waiting on the landing till summoned by me to enter and sieze the gamesters. The back entrance was also securely but unobtrusively watched.

One only fear desturbed me; it was lest the scoundrels should take alarm in sufficient time to extinguish the fight, destroy all the forged papers, and possibly escape by some private passage which might, unknown to me, exist.

Rousing myself, as soon as the play was resumed, from the trance of memory by which I had been in some sort absorbed, and first ascertining that my pistols were within easy reach—for I knew I was playing a desperate game—I rose, stepped carelessly to the door, partially opened it, and bent forward, as if listening for a repetition of the sound which had so alarmed the company. To my great delight the landing and stairs were filled with police officers—silent and stern as death. I drew back and walked toward the table at which Mr. Merton was seated. The last stake—an enormous one—was being played for.—Merton lost. He sprang upon his feet, deathly pale, despairing, overwhelmed, and a hoarse execration surged from his clenched teeth. Sanford and his associates cooly raked the plunder together, their features lighted up with fiendish glee.

"Villian—traitor—miscrant!"——shrieked Mr. Merton, as if smitten with a sudden frenzy, and dashing at Sanford's throat; "you devil, that you are, have undone, destroyed me!"

"No doubt of it," calmly shaking off his victim's grasp; "and I think it has been very artistpally and effectively done, too.—Sniveling my fine follow, will scarcely help you much."

Mr. Merton glared upon the taunting villian in speechless agony and rage.

"Not quite so fast, Cardon if you please!" I exclaimed, at the ssme time taking up a bundle of forged notes. "It does not appear to me that Merton has played against equal stakes, for unquestionably this paper is not genuine!"

"Dog!" roared Sanford, "do you value your life so cheap?" and he rushed toward me as if to seize the forged notes.

I was as quick as he, and the levelled tube of a pistol sharply arrested his eager onslaught. The entire gang gathered near us flaming with excitement. Mr. Merton looked bewilderedly from one to another, apparently scarcely conscious of what was passing around him.

"Wrench the paper from him!" screamed Sanford, recovering his energy. "Seize him—stab him, strangle him!"

"Look to yourself scoundrel!" I shouted with equal vehemence. "Your hour is come! Officers enter and do your duty!"

In an instant the room was filled with police; and surprised, panic stricken, paralyzed by the suddenness of the catastrophe, the gang were all secured without the slightett resistance, though most of them were armed, and marched off in custody.

Three—Sanford, or Cordon (but he had half a dozen aliases) one of them——were transported for life; the rest were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. My task was effectually accomplished. My superiors were pleased to express very warm commendation of the manner in which I had acquitted myself, and the first step in the promotion which ultimately led to my present position in another branch of public service, was soon afterward conferred upon me. Mr. Merton had his bonds, obligations, jewels, and money restored to him; and, taught wisdom by terrible experience, never again entered a gaming house.

Neither he nor his lady mother were ungrateful for this service I had been fortunate enough to render them.

English Women.

BY NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

I have heard a good deal of the tenacity with which English ladies retain their personal beauty to a late period of life; but (not to suggest that an American eye needs use and cultivation before it can quite appreciate the charm of English beauty at any age) it strikes me that an English lady of fifty is apt to become a creature less refined and delicate, so far as her physique goes, than anything that we Western people class under the name of woman. She has an awful ponderosity of frame, not pulpy, like the looser development of our few fat women, but massive with solid beef and streaky tallow; so that (though struggling manfully against the idea) you inevitably think of her as made up of steaks and sirloins. When she walks, her advance is elephantine. When she sits down, it is on a great round space of her Maker's footstool, where she looks as if nothing could ever move her. She imposes awe and respect by the muchness of her personality, to such a degree that you probably credit her with far greater moral and intellectual force than she can fairly claim. Her visage is usually grim and stern, not always positively forbidding, yet calmly terrible, not merely by its breadth and weight of feature, but because it seems to express so much well-founded self-reliance, such acquaintance with the world, its toils, troubles, and dangers, and such sturdy capacity for trampling down a foe. Without anything positively salient, or actively offensive, or, indeed, unjustly formidable to her neighbors, she has the effect of a seventy-four gun ship in time of peace; for, while you assure yourself that there is no real danger, you cannot help thinking how tremendous would be her onset, if pugnaciously inclined, and how futile the effort to inflict any counter-injury. She certainly looks tenfold—nay, a hundred fold—better able to take care of herself than our slender-framed and haggard womankind; but I have not found any reason to suppose that the English dowager of fifty has actually greater courage, fortitude and strength of character than our women of similar age, or even tougher physical endurance than they. Morally, she is strong, I suspect, only in society, and in the common routine of social affairs, and would be found powerless and timid in any exceptional strait that might call for energy outside of the conventionalities amid which she has grown up.

You can meet this figure in the street, and live, and even smile at the recollection.—But conceive of her in a ball-room, with the bare, brawny arms that she invariably displays there, and all the other corresponding development, such as is beautiful in the maiden blossom, but a spectacle to howl at in such an over-blown cabbage-rose as this.

Yet, somewhere in this enormous bulk there must be hidden the modest, slender, violet-nature of a girl, whom an alien mass of earthliness has unkindly overgrown; for an English maiden in her teens, though very seldom so pretty as our own damsels, does possesses, to say the truth, a certain charm of half-blossom, and delicately-folded leaves, and tender womanhood shielded by maidenly reserves, with which, somehow or other, our American girls often fail to adorn themselves during an appreciable moment. It is a pity that the English violet should grow into such an outrageously developed pony as I have attempted to describe. I wonder whether a middle-aged husband ought to be considered as legally married to all the accretions that have overgrown the slenderness of his bride, since he led her to the altar, and which make her so much more of him than he ever bargained for! Is it not a sounder view of the case, that the matrimonial bond cannot be held to include the three-fourths of the wife that had no existence when the ceremony was performed? And as a matter of conscience and good morals, ought not an English married pair to insist upon the celebration of a Silver Wedding at the end of twenty-five years, in order to legalize and mutually appropriate that corporeal growth of which both parties have individually come into possession since they were pronounced one flesh?

METHUSELEH ONLY A YOUNGSTER.—Most people have been accustomed to regard Methuseleh as rather an old man, as the good book says he lived to be nine hundred and sixty-nine years old when he died. But as compared with the people of whom accounts are given in the sacred writings of India he was only a green-stripling. Mr. Buckle, referring to the statements in the Sancrit books on the subject says: "The imagination of Hindus distanced all competition. Among an immense number of similar facts, we find it recorded that in ancient times the duration of life of common men was 80,000 years, and that holy men lived to be upwards of 100,000. Some died a little sooner, others a little later; but in the most flourishing period of antiquity, if we take all classes together, 100,000 is the average. Of the King, whose name was Yuoisobir, it is casually mentioned that he reigned 27,000 years; while another, Alarks, reigned 66,000. They were cut off in their prime, since there were several instances of the poets living to be half a million. But the most remarkable case is that of a very shining character in Indian history, who united the functions of a King and a Saint. This eminent man lived in a pure and virtuous age, and his days were indeed long in the land, since he was made King when he was 2,000,000 years old; he reigned 6,300,000 years; having done which he resigned his empire, and lingered on for 100,000 years more, when he died. Who will say, after this, that Methusaleh was anything more than an exceedingly juvenile individual? The Sancrit writings, it will be remembered, are regarded as sacredly by the East Indians as the Bible is by our people.

HUMMING-BIRDS.—A writer on the subject says:—"It is a most pugnacious bird. Many a time have I thought to secure a fine male, which I had, perhaps, been following from tree to tree, and at last seen quietly perched on a leafless twig, when my deadly intention has been anticipated by one less so in fact, but, to all appearances, equally so in will. Another humming-bird rushes in, knocks the one I court off his perch, and the two go fighting and screaming away at a pace hardly to be followed by the eye. Another time this flying fight is sustained in mid-air, the belligerents mounting higher and higher, till the one worsted in battle darts away seeking shelter, followed by the victor, who never relinquishes the pursuit till the vanquished, by doubling and hiding, succeeds in making his escape. These fierce raids are not waged alone between members of the same species. The exquisite frill-neck coquettes and royal blue myrtle-suckers are greatly addicted to fighting. The pugnacity of this species, is very remarkable. It is very seldom that two males meet without an aerial battle. The contest commences with a sharp, shrill, angrier shriek; after which, with dilated throats, the feathers of the whole of their bodies erected on end, and their tails out-spread, they begin to fight with their bills and wings, and the least powerful soon falls to the ground or flies away. I have never known one of these battles to last longer than about ten seconds; and, in the specimens I have had under my notice in cages, their fighting has mostly ended in the splitting of the tongue of one of the two, which then surely dies from being unable to feed."