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Miscellaneous.

A Case with a Lady In It.

I had just taken possession of the worst room in Diggs' tavern—I was a young lawyer on my first circuit, and Diggs kept his best accommodations for the jold stagers—when the words, "I say, Bill," and Tom Mansfield burst upon me at the same instant.

Tom and I had been cronies from the time we had committed our first juvenile trespass on Deacon Roxley's watermelon patch, till we afterwards studied the action of that name together in Judge Thompson's office.

"I say, Bill, I've got a case and want your assistance in it."

"Ah!" said I, in a consulting tone.

"A will case," he continued, "full of the nicest kind of points, and the prettiest woman in the world for a client."

"What about fees?" I inquired, by way of keeping up professional appearances.

"Hear the mercenary wretch!" he exclaimed. "If we succeed, there'll be plenty of money; if we don't, it will be a noble cause to fail in."

"That's what they said of the dashing young chap that broke his neck trying to make two-forty time with the chariot of the sun, but it didn't mend his neck."

"Confound your mythology; business is business. Let me state the case."

"Well, state away."

This was it:

John Andrews had settled in the country when he was young. He had grown with its growth, and was the proprietor of half a dozen farms, and "one fair daughter, the which he loved passing well."

His wife, the partner of the earliest and severest portion of his struggles, had died many years before, and his daughter had become mistress of his house while yet a child.

As Ellie increased in years, her father prospered; and when at length he found himself the possessor of wealth, the ambition, so common under such circumstances, of elevating his daughter to a station in life above that in which she had been reared became a ruling passion. The first thing was to buy her a splendid education; and like other not over good judges of the article, he was governed in his choice more by the gaudiness of the coloring than by any quality of the texture.

At the end of the usual period, Ellie was sent home "finished"—that is, in every respect in which she could be, totally spoiled. In one thing only she remained the same—her love for her father had deified even the power of fashionable education.

A house was purchased in town, of which Ellie was made the mistress, and at which Mr. Bolton, a young gentleman of city antecedents, and far too nice to have anything so vulgar as a visible calling, became a frequent and not unwelcome visitor. He had just brains enough to think of providing for the future by a scheme of which Miss Andrews, and her appartenances, constituted the central feature. Accordingly, he sighed and lied, and fawned and flattered till Ellie's foolish little heart relented.

But one difficulty remained to be encountered. How to conciliate the rough old backwoodsman—there was the rub. He had permitted his daughter to amuse herself with the young dandy, much as he would have allowed her to play with a monkey or a parrot. But could he have brought himself to tolerate the idea of her marrying any body, yet awhile—for the possibility of such a remote future contingency may have occasionally suggested itself—Horace Beldon was about the last person on earth, in connection with whom it would have been entertained.

When that gentleman, therefore, reported at his apartments, and implored the paternal sanction of his suit, he received no such thing; "on the contrary, quite the reverse." Indeed, he only escaped being kicked out of doors by a speedy voluntary departure.

When Ellie tried to talk her father over, for the first time in his life, he flew in a passion with her, and she dared not renew the subject.

But Love, the little pagan, pays no respect to the fifth commandment. The officious interference of friends and guardians only rides him the more impatient and unruly; and the present instance was no exception. Clandestine interviews were arranged; accidental meetings took place at the houses of mutual friends, till the whole ended in the gentleman proposing an elopement.

Ellie, after protesting that she couldn't possibly think of such a thing, and after many vain attempts to conjecture what people would say, at last with graceful hesitancy consented.

Rage, frenzy, despair, are weak words to describe the emotions of John Andrews, when he found that his house had been robbed of its chiefest treasure. His first impulse was pursuit. It was night when he set out, accompanied by a trusty Scotchman, long in his employ and confidence. As the two galloped along, Mr. Andrews' horse stumbled, precipitating his rider into the ground, and fatally injuring himself. He was taken up insensible, and carried to the nearest house. A physician was summoned, who pronounced the injuries of a most serious, but not necessarily fatal character.

As soon as consciousness returned, he dispatched a messenger for a nephew of his, a lawyer of not very good repute, residing in a neighboring town.

When Mr. Jackson, the nephew, arrived, he was left alone with his uncle, at the latter's request. At the end of an hour the doctor was summoned, and requested by Mr. Andrews to note his signature to a paper, to which he then affixed his name, delivering it to his will, and asking the doctor to subscribe it as a witness, which was done.

On his nephew's suggestion that another witness was requisite, Mr. Andrews named MacPherson, the Scotchman, and requested the doctor to send him in.

MacPherson, it seems, had been sent on some errand; but as soon as he returned, the doctor communicated Mr. Andrews' message, and went himself to attend a sick call in the neighborhood, not deeming his presence there immediately necessary.

When he came back, he was astonished to find his patient dead. Such a result had not, indeed, been unanticipated, but its suddenness took him by surprise.

By Mr. Andrews' will, which was published some days after his death, the entire of his property was devised to his nephew, who had attended him in his last moments. Everything was in due form. True, MacPherson, one of the witnesses, pursuant to a previous intention, had called to Scotland shortly after the funeral, and was not present before the Judge of Probate. But his handwriting was proved, and the evidence of the remaining witnesses was quite satisfactory. He had seen the testator append his signature, and heard him declare the paper was his will, and was positive that, at the time, he was of sound mind and memory.

Under all the circumstances, one would have thought that the young husband would have been unremitting in tenderness and sympathy towards his sorrowing bride, who had sacrificed so much for his sake. And so he would, had he devotedly loved her, but he did not.

The fact is, his whole heart and soul and mind were occupied with a previous attachment—not from another; the farthest possible from that—its object was himself. This affection, which was of the most ardent description, had met with a blighting disappointment in his wife's loss of fortune; and with her unceasing grief and continual self-accusation—she offered no reproaches to him—he had but little patience, and soon gave her to understand as much. The man who, a month before would have been ready to put on mourning had she lost her favorite canary, turned his back upon her in the hour of real affliction.

When at length he was found dead in his bed, one morning, after a night of carousal, the coroner's jury said it was the "act of God,"—his blessing you will call it.

Ellie's cousin, instead of making any provision for her whose rights he had so unrighteously supplanted, left her wholly dependent on others, and had she not found a home in the house of an old and tried friend of her father, she might have gone forth a shelterless wanderer.

Tom Mansfield, who had casually made the acquaintance of the young widow, became warmly interested in her cause, and guided probably more by sympathy than judgment, had commenced an action to contest the will made under the circumstances just related.

And this was the case in which he wished my assistance.

We sat up nearly all night in consultation. There was a point which we both thought a "beautiful" one, and we devoted our principal efforts to strengthening it.

Ours was the first case on in the morning. Arrayed against us were three of the oldest and ablest practioners of the circuit. Jackson had plenty of money now, and was himself no fool in "putting up" a case.

I felt a little nervous. It was my first case of any importance. I too, as well as John Andrews' will, was about to be placed on trial.

My courage revived a little when our client came in, escorted by Tom, who introduced me as his associate, and handed her to a seat near our table. Pretty as a pink, as she sat facing the jury, where Tom had placed her, I felt that our case had another "beautiful point" in it.

Almost immediately the trial began.

The evidence varied but little from that already detailed. The attending physician was very decided in his opinion that the testator, at the time of signing the paper in question, was in the full possession of his mental faculties.

The signature of the absent witness was sworn to by Mr. Jackson himself, who further testified that the deceased had requested MacPherson to witness the instrument, at the same time declaring it to be his will.

At Tom's instance, I subjected this witness to a searching cross-examination; but he stood fire like a salamander fly. He swore that the testator had not only dictated every line of the will, but had heard it read, and had twice read it over himself, before executing it. I gave him up in despair.

At length the evidence closed, and I rose to present our point.

It was put in the shape of a motion to direct a verdict for the contestant, on the ground that the witnesses had not subscribed in the presence of each other.

I was about to adduce arguments and authorities, when the judge interposed:

"The rule you claim undoubtedly was the law, but a recent statute has changed it. The witnesses need not now sign in each other's presence."

A hasty examination proved His Honor was right and our main point was done for.

To our great relief, the court adjourned for dinner. We were to sum up in the afternoon. That task, on our side, was assigned to me, but I felt it was hopeless. I was determined, however, to take what satisfaction I could out of Jackson by abusing him as soundly as the rules of the court would allow. And, after all, who could tell? The jury might take the bit in their mouth, and give a verdict in spite of the law and the evidence. Responsibility becomes amazingly light when divided by twelve.

On the reassembling of the court, I was a little surprised as well as annoyed at Tom's absence. Could it be he was leaving me in the lurch, and staying away to avoid the mortification of our final defeat?

I had just risen to address the jury, when somebody plucked me by the coat.

It was Tom, his eyes fairly gleaming, and his whole frame in a tremor of excitement.

"What's the matter?" I whispered.

"MacPherson's here."

"What! the other witness?"

"Yes, just arrived, not an hour ago?"

"But will it help us to call him?"

"Trust me for that. Put him on the stand at once."

"What shall I ask him?"

"No matter; you can't go far wrong; if you miss anything, I'll prompt you."

Tom was evidently full of some mystery with which he was bent on taking everybody by surprise, including myself.

In a few words I explained to the court our reasons for wishing to reopen the testimony. Jackson turned pale, and whispered nervously to his counsel, but they shook their head; our application was one that would be granted, of course.

"Call your witness," said the Judge.

"Donald MacPherson!" shouted Tom.

The witness, a brawny, honest faced Scot, and advanced to the stand, and was sworn.

"Go ahead," Tom whispered.

"Mr. MacPherson, look at the signature, and tell us if that is yours."

"It is."

"Do you know the signature to the right of it?"

"Yes; that's the signature of Mr. Andrews."

"Did you see him write it?"

"No; but I am weel acquent with his hand."

"Were you requested to witness that paper?"

"Yes."

"By whom?"

"By Mr. Jackson."

"Did Mr. Andrews say anything about it?"

"No; *he was dead when I came in.*"

There was no cross-examination.

"I submit the case without argument," I said, resuming my seat.

Our senior opponent was one of those lawyers with whom it is a matter of conscience to show fight to the last. In a brief speech he admitted it to be essential that both witnesses should have signed their names before the testator's death, but claimed that, inasmuch as the testimony of Jackson and MacPherson was in direct conflict on this question, it must be left to the jury.

"Certainly," answered His Honor. But when he had concluded his charge, there wasn't much of Mr. Jackson or his testimony left.

The jury gave us a verdict without leaving the box.

Tom, I am sorry to say, behaved very unhandsomely in the division of the spoils.

Although I was liberally paid, he took the widow and her whole fortune for his share.

As for Jackson, not being quite as Judas, he didn't go out and hang himself. But at the rate he is going, it will take more law than he knows to keep him much longer out of the penitentiary.

Death of a Colored Woman Over One Hundred Years Old.

A Nashville (Tenn.) paper says:

"Fanny Ferris, familiarly known as 'Old Aunt Fanny,' departed this life Wednesday night at the ripe age of 107 years. She died at the residence of Mr. Josiah Ferris, two miles from the city, on the Charlotte pike. She was born in Virginia in 1762, and witnessed the struggles of our forefathers in the revolutionary war for the achievement of liberty and independence. She was captured by the army of Lord Cornwallis, and retained until after the siege of Yorktown, when she came back to the home of Mr. Ferris' father, in Henry county, Virginia, with whom she continued to live until his death, which occurred twenty-nine years ago. She was then set free by his will on account of her faithful attendance upon himself and family.

"Although at liberty to go wherever she chose, she was so much attached to the family, that she asked and was granted permission to live with Mr. Josiah Ferris, Jr., during the remainder of her days. In her lifetime she had nursed and cared for three generations of children. Such was the amiability of her temper, politeness of manners, and exemplary spirit in every respect, that she never was whipped in her life. In her old age she has been looked upon with great reverence, and so highly esteemed by Mr. Ferris and family that she has never wanted for anything which might add to her welfare, comfort or happiness.

"She was a devout member of the Baptist Church for the period of seventy-five years, and has often during the past year visited Rev. Nelson Merry's church, and listened attentively to his sermons. The colored people regarded her with a kind of reverential awe.

"During the closing years of her long career it was her custom to gather around her swarms of little children, and tell them tales of the old times. The events of the revolution were as fresh in her memory as though they had occurred the day previous. She was doubtless as well acquainted with the Bible, which she had almost memorized throughout, as any one who might be possessed of a thorough biblical education.—She had gradually faded into a mere skeleton, and was kept alive in a great measure by the use of stimulants. She was small in stature, and weighed at the time of her death only about eighty pounds. Time had worn deep furrows in her face, and her wonted activity grew less with her declining years. Her sight was good until two or three months since. A few weeks ago she lost her mind, and went back completely to second childhood.

A young man, respectably connected, has got into trouble in Pittsburg by sending indecent circulars to a young lady.

Under A Cloud.

A Mercantile Sketch.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

The following simple narrative, transcribed from the letter of a friend, may afford a lesson to those who are inclined to judge hastily from suspicious appearances. The circumstances transpired in a city not very far from Boston, and many of our readers will recognize the characters whom we choose to conceal under the cover of assumed names.

Mr. Richards, of the firm of Richards, Randolph & Co., was returning homeward, late at night, from a meeting of Directors. Upon approaching his store, which he was obliged to pass, he was surprised by the gleaming of light through the chinks of the counting-room shutters. Who could be in the office at that hour?—midnight! He crept cautiously up, and after a long search he found a crack through which he could obtain a partial view of the interior; and he saw a man sitting at one of the desks. Upon closer examination he made out the man to be the head book-keeper and confidential clerk of the firm, named George Clarkson. He seemed to be engaged in balancing accounts in a ledger, and occasionally he made minutes upon a piece of paper close at hand.

Mr. Richards gazed a long time, and when he finally turned away he had made up his mind that his clerk was engaged in a plot of dishonesty.

On the following morning Mr. Richards asked the porter if any one besides himself was ever allowed in the store after the doors were closed at night. The man replied that no body was ever there except Mr. Clarkson. He very often worked in the office until after midnight.

Mr. Richards' next move was to call his partners together; and to them he told his story.

"Mr. Clarkson has ever appeared honest and faithful; but we know not what temptations may be in his way."

"I fear," said Mr. Randolph, sadly shaking his head, "that I have light upon a painful subject." And then he told how, a few days before, he had been near when a man, whom he knew to be a notorious gambler and sport, stopped Clarkson in the street. There was a short conversation between the two, and in the end the gambler tapped the book-keeper upon the shoulder, remarking, with a laugh, "Ah, Clarkson, I ought to have bled you more freely while I had you in my clutches!"

"Ah!" groaned Richards, "how many have fallen into that terrible pit! It is dreadful!"

Mr. Saunders, the junior member, knew that Clarkson always finished his legitimate work before night. There was no one in their employ who could turn off work more rapidly, and he seldom had his books open after four o'clock. That there was some deeply laid scheme was evident.

And they concluded that they would send Clarkson away for a time; and, while he was gone, examine his books and papers. So they made upon errand for him to a western city where he was to effect a settlement of an old debt of business, and also to establish, if possible, business relations with one or two new houses. A detective was instructed to proceed westward in the same train with him, and to keep him in sight, and note all his movements.

As soon as the clerk was off, the three partners took in a books and papers in hand, and commenced a thorough search. *First*—they found, among his papers a sight draft, for five hundred dollars, on a party in a neighboring town. The Cash Account showed this draft to have been paid; and why had it not been delivered to the proper owner? There was something wrong about this. *Second*—they found in Clarkson's private desk the Cash Book and the Order and Delivery Book, of the shipping clerk. This latter clerk was Frank Richards, son of the senior partner, who was then away on a week's vacation; and upon examination they found several important alterations, in entries and footings, made by Clarkson's hand. A more critical investigation revealed the fact that these same alterations—or the results thereof—had been transferred to the final business record in the ledger kept by Clarkson. This was astonishing! But, while they were discussing this matter a gentleman came in with a bill for collection—amount, twelve hundred dollars. Mr. Randolph was sure the bill had been paid. At all events, their bookkeeper had rendered such an item. A reference to Clarkson's cash account settled the matter. The item had been entered as paid. But the gentleman declared that he had not received it. Of course the bookkeeper had drawn and appropriated it.

This was enough; and a telegram was sent to Mr. Keener, the Detective, instructing him to take measures for Clarkson's arrest at once, and to bring him back in custody.

Meantime George Clarkson had proceeded to the western city, where he went at work in earnest for his employers. Mr. Keener was as his shadow all the while, but he suspected nothing of it. The detective marked every movement, by day and by night, even to the going to bed, and the getting up. The telegram came, and Mr. Keener read it, and put it into his pocket, saying to himself, as he did so:

"Not yet. There is a mistake somewhere. I've had the watching of a good many rogues, and have studied 'em pretty thoroughly. If this young man is a rogue, he beats me. But I don't believe it. If he starts back honest, he shall go unfettered. I won't put a black stamp on him if he don't deserve it. But I'll keep him in sight."

At the expiration of two weeks Mr. Keener appeared to report.

"Mr. Clarkson is in the city, and will be here very soon," he said.

"Is he under arrest?" asked Richards.

"Not yet, sir," replied the officer. "I think you'd better give the young man a chance before you put the prison-stamp on him."

Mr. Keener had not more than time to get out of the way before Clarkson entered. He came in happy and radiant, and cordially greeted Richards and Randolph, whom he found in the office.

"What luck?" asked the senior partner, cheerily; for his suspicion was shaken.

"Good!" answered Clarkson; and he stated the results of his trip in a style and tone that made Mr. Richards and Mr. Randolph exchange glances; and they seemed to say to each other, "Surely, this man is not dishonest!"

At length, after several vain attempts, Mr. Richards put on a bold front, and told Mr. Clarkson that they had been overhauling his books and papers during his absence, and had found several things which seemed to demand explanation. First—how came that sight draft for five hundred dollars to be retained? George Clarkson could not, even then, believe that he had been suspected of dishonesty. He answered promptly:

"Mr. Adams, the maker of the paper, left it with me as a model, or copy, for an engraver who was to get him up some blank forms for checks and receipts. You observed, of course, that both the signature and the acceptance had been cancelled."

"There is another thing," pursued Richards, hurrying on with the unpleasant business: "Mr. Ransom, of Ransom & Swett, was in during your absence to collect a bill of twelve hundred dollars. Your cashbook shows that the amount had been drawn and appropriated."

Clarkson shook his head, smiled, and asked:

"Did you look over my file of receipts?"

"No," stammered Richards. "Mr. Ransom declared that the money had not been received; so I thought—"

The merchant hesitated; and Clarkson turned to his desk, and took therefrom a file of neatly folded papers.

"Here is the receipt," he said drawing forth a paper and handing it over. "Mr. Swett, when ready to start for Washington, came in with a minute of their account against us, and said if I could let him have the money it would be a great accommodation. I paid him as that bit of paper shows."

There was only one thing more: "How about the alterations in the books of the shipping clerk? They are made by your hand, Clarkson."

George's face flushed, and he hesitated.

"Concerning that, Mr. Richards," he at length said, with much reluctance, "you must ask your son. He is the keeper of the books, and can best explain the matter."

"Would you have him called at once?"

"Certainly, sir. Since things have come to this pass, he cannot blame me."

So Frank Richards was called, and the books were laid open before him, and the business explained.

"Mercy!" he cried. "And have you been suspecting Mr. Clarkson of wrong in this matter?"

"What should we think?" returned his father.

Frank gave a great gulp, as though swallowing a bitter draught, and then said:

"I suppose the truth must out. You know, father, that I have always told you I was not cut out for an accountant; but you have declared that only through that channel could I ever hope to become a member of the firm. So I have held on to the books and Mr. Clarkson has kept them straight for me. It has been a work of pure love and friendship for me, and devotion to you, on his part."

"And to do this he has worked here nights?"

Mr. Richard arose, and grasped his confidential clerk by the hand.

"Dear Clarkson, forgive me. We have suspected you; and it has made us miserable. But, thank God; not a whisper of exposure has been made.—All is right here; and now, if you will explain a little outside matter—"

"You mean the street interview with the gambler," interrupted Frank.

"Yes," said Randolph.

"Let me explain that, father; for I was at the bottom of it. A near and dear friend of mine was in trouble. He had allowed himself to drink too much wine at a fashionable party, and under the influence thereof was led away from the party to a gambling-house, where he lost his money; and put up his watch and breastpin, and lost those. The pin was a diamond, and a present from his sister. In his great agony of sober reflection he came to me. I could lend him money enough to redeem the watch, but not the pin, which he said he had promised for five hundred dollars. I appealed to Clarkson; and he told me if I would let him have the money for the watch he would try and get the pin with it. He went, and I accompanied him. He met the keeper of the house with a bold, stern front, and told him just what he would do. The man might deliver up the watch and pin for the amount offered, or he might settle the matter in Court. The gambler blustered a little; but he soon knew his man and came to terms. So much for the '*clutch*' which the blackleg had upon our book keeper."

Messrs. Richards, Randolph & Co were happy. On the following morning they paid Mr. Clarkson double what he would have received had he carried out their full instructions; and on the first of the succeeding week George Clarkson's salary was raised five hundred dollars per annum, with a promise of something still better in the time to come.—*N. Y. Ledger.*

My Presumption and Its Punishment.

BY CAROLINE CONRAD.

My mother died when I was only a few days old in the midst of penury and privation.

My father, Justin Dare, was a very proud man, but he humbled himself to write to the stern mistress of Lichenwold and ask for help when he saw his wife would die without it; but no answer ever came. Judith Ramsay, as he taught me to call her, had said she would not forgive her daughter, if she married Justin Dare, and she kept her word.

From that hour my father, who had never loved her, hated her, and made me hold up my little hand and promise to love her for the sake of my mother's wrongs, if it ever came in my power. When I was fifteen, my father died, and with his last breath he bade me remember my vow.

One day when my father had been dead about a year, there fell in my way a newspaper notice which set every nerve in my body tingling, and then turned me cold as ice. The grand lady at Lichenwold wanted a companion.

My resolution was taken at once, to apply for this situation under an assumed name. I in due time presented myself, with my credentials, to my master, at the doors of Lichenwold.

Its mistress received me graciously. I called myself to her, Honora Pomfret. My rear name—I had been named for my mother—was Edith Ramsay Dare.

She engaged me at once, and displayed from the first moment an extraordinary pleasure in me, calling me Nora, and talking to me much in a soft and gentle voice, that I could not by any stretch of fancy imagine stern.

I had not been without some fear that my likeness to my mother might betray my indentity, but it remained apparently quite unsuspected.

I had come to be a companion, and very pleasant my companionship it was made to me, in spite of those gloomy reflections with which I persisted in making myself morbid. Mrs. Ramsay, as I had now learned to call her, would have me read to her sometimes, though she could see well enough to read herself with glasses; and when she walked, she liked to have my arm to lean on, steady her steps by, for she was slightly lame. She made of me quite the companion rather than the paid subordinate, and being a most interesting person in herself, besides possessing at least the outward semblance of a good and kindly heart, the fascination she exerted over an eager, impulsive girl like me, and one of so few opportunities, was scarcely to be wondered at.

When Mrs. Ramsay kissed me—at first occasionally, afterward every night at parting—and sometimes held me to her lingeringly, or said softly with a caress: "I have no child of my own, dear; you must let the old woman pet you sometimes, won't you?" I could not withdraw myself from her embrace. I was indeed so unlike that stern model I had set myself, that I used to long to clasp my arms about the neck of this gentle, sweet-spoken lady, and cry out my love and my pain upon her bosom. I was frightened when I found how I was loving her, and wept and bemoaned myself when alone, as unfaithful to the memory of that fair young mother who had died under the condemnation of those lips which kissed me nightly.

I began to think there was nothing for it but to go away from Lichenwold. I should never be able to work any wrong to this woman, with her kind smile and loving voice ever so near. While I was there, I could not do it. But when I told Mrs. Ramsay I was going, she testified such extraordinary emotion, that a wicked thought suddenly smote me.

"I will stay a little longer," I said to myself. "I will make her love me yet more, and then I will tell her I am her grand-daughter, and why I came here, and go. That will sting her."

Let me do myself the justice here, to say that the forfeiture or possession of Lichenwold had never entered my calculations. I was not insensible to the delight of the thought of being the possible mistress of great wealth some day, but I never dreamed of stealing into Judith Ramsay's heart for the sake of it. I was not selfish or mean, if I was deceitful and mistaken.

One day I said, "To-morrow must end it. I will tell her and go." But when to-morrow came, I was a coward and shrank from her loving looks with lips too tremulous to utter the cruel words. When she kissed me that night I cried. Then I lay awake all night, nerving myself; and in the morning, dressed as I had been when I came there, (I had only packed, to take away, those clothes I had brought with me,) I went and knocked at her door a little before her hour for rising, resolved to speak, if I fainted at her feet before I had done.

I shrank like one fearing a blow, while I waited for the kind voice to bid me enter. But no such bidding came; and growing bold with fright when still to repeated knocking no answer came, I opened the door, which was never locked, and entered.

Ah me! can you guess? She would never speak to me again. I should never stab her with my wicked, wicked vengeance, poor impotent worm of the dust that I was, for she had passed from my reach while she slumbered. She was dead!

"Grandmother!" I cried, for the first time in my life, "come back to me!" and fell down beside her.

They found me there when they came to wake her.

She was in her peaceful grave weeks before I knew enough to miss her, I was ill so long. When I recovered at last to the same world, I found myself watched by Mrs. Heath, my mother's companion; and early in the days of my convalescence, she told me how I had been the subject of a loving conspiracy on the part of my grandmother and herself. It had all been artfully contrived to get me to Lichenwold and win my heart, whose love Mrs. Ramsay craved with a longing that would not be denied.

Thus I learned that my grandmother had never received their last appeal which my father had made to her, and that she had never ceased to reproach herself for the manner of my mother's death, had indeed reproached herself too bitterly to wonder at my absurd and wicked vindictiveness, and had scarcely dared to hope that she might be able ever so far to overcome my aversion as to win my love. Mrs. Heath added, that she had not however guessed at the extremity of my parents; they had been too proud to tell her till the last, when the letter had not reached her except when it was too late.

My grandmother had loved me faithfully, and waited with a sweetness that was heroism for the development of that affection on my part for which she never ceased to labor and to pray.

She left me her journal with its record of her love and her remorse, and she left me Lichenwold. But ah! to have had her know how I loved her—to have had her forgiveness before she died, for my wickedness and presumption, I would willingly have sacrificed all the wealth she left me.—*N. Y. Ledger.*

Performing Fleas.

It is with a grim satisfaction that we hear that vengeance has lighted upon the disturbers of our midnight slumbers, and that those little tyrants of the night, the fleas, have at last been punished for their numerous misdeeds.

Mr. Kitchingham is now to be found at 221 Regent street, corner of Maddox street, with his troupe of performing fleas, or as his handbills have it, "Trained Apterous Insects, the only specimens of the Articulata in the world ever taught to perform."

Mr. Kitchingham is a young Englishman of good address with the neatest fingers and the most ingenious turn of mind I ever came across, and I suppose there is no man in the world who knows more about fleas and their habits than he does, and he can tell their history with a great deal of quaint fun.

I entered the room when it was blowing and raining hard, and very cold; I found Kitchingham warming his fleas. There was a bright fire burning, a bit of wood was placed on the mantlepiece. On one side of the wood were the carriages, ships, etc., drawn by the fleas themselves suspended by their harness in mid air and as quiet as mice. Poor things! possibly they were taking a nap, or they might have been frightened by the thunder. Certain it is, as Mr. K. informs me that cold weather shuts them up, and they do not perform so well as when it is bright, shining, and warm.

On a miniature billiard table, the surface of which is white paper, so that the fleas can easily be seen, the performance of the learned insects take place. All the apparatus used has been most beautifully carved out of ivory by Mr. Kitchingham, and exhibits great neatness and design on the part of this trainer. I was first shown an ivory box with glass at each end; in this were several fleas being broken into harness. Wild fleas are put in here, and if they jump and kick they cause the wheel to revolve, and at the same time knock their heads on the top of the wheel. They are days and days in the "training wheel" with no food save brings the fleas to their senses, and then, like young troop horses in a cavalry-riding school, the trainer "bits" them, and begins to "handle" them. But the flea has to be "bitted" (or harnessed) if you please. Mr. Kitchingham tells me this operation is exceedingly difficult, for the flea must not be pinched, crushed, or his legs broken, or he is good for nothing; and, at the same time, care must be taken not to let the wild colt escape, which event is very likely to happen in the hands of a clumsy trainer. The flea must be taken between the finger and thumb of the right hand, and then, by dexterous manipulation, transferred to a position between the finger and thumb of the left hand, an operation requiring some six distinct quick but careful movements. The flea must be so arranged that he is held tight, while his head only is visible; his head must be placed in a favorable position for receiving the noose. This noose is made of exceedingly fine hair, joined with a peculiar knot; it is slipped over the flea's head, and made fast, but not too fast, or the flea will be throttled. I suggested that the hair might be fastened to the flea with gum, but Mr. K. tells me he has tried it, and there is no gum which the flea will not break when it becomes dry. The flea having been halted, he is at once fastened on to the end of a long loose chain, of exceedingly fine gold wire; tethered in this manner he is allowed to kick and plunge and hop (and possibly swear), as much as he likes till he is tired. After two or three tetherings he becomes tractable, and can be put into regular single or double harness. It is most curious to remark how that the elephants of the forests of Ceylon and the fleas of our bedrooms are alike subjugated to the service of man by the process of starving and tethering; only, indeed, the tackle required differs considerably in strength and form, but the principle is the same.

When the flea become tractable he is fed by being placed on a bit of raw beef, at which he sucks greedily. (Query, could we not utilize raw beef as a bait for a "flea trap" to carry about with us on continental tours, etc.; by selling the fleas to Mr. Kitchingham we might help to pay our hotel bill. The regular fleas are fed every night upon the back of their master's hand; he feeds as many as eight or nine at a time. They put their proboscies deep into the skin, and when sucking turn their tails up into the air like a duck turns his tail skyward when hunting for worms in the mud. They would, if allowed so to do, feed for four hours. Mr. K. has observed that they act like pumps, that the blood will run out from them when their stomachs are full. He therefore keeps them on less than a meal, knowing by this sign that they are as full as they can hold, and then he takes them off his hand. But this must be done carefully, or the proboscis, thrust into the skin, like the boring tube of an artesian well, is liable to be injured. Sometimes the fleas will feed freely, sometimes they won't eat at all. Mr. K. thinks they have their tempers like ourselves; sometimes they feel hungry and up to work, and sometimes dull at their tasks and off their feed. A performing flea, if well looked after will live eight or nine months. A great many live four months. Some fleas are chicken-hearted, or have bad constitutions, and die in harness in a few days.

Every night each flea is put into a separate sleeping room; flannel is cut into squares and one flea placed between two of these miniature blankets. The blankets are piled one over the other, a flea between each, till they are all stowed away in their berths. The pile of flea-containing blankets is then stowed away in a box for the night.

There are eleven or twelve kinds of fleas. The dog flea, the cat flea, the pigeon, mole, hedgehog, marten, etc, fleas. The fleas of different nations also differ. The Belgian fleas are good, the Russian fleas are strong, powerful, hard working (tough skinned fleas. Mr. F. has Russian fleas sent over to him by post from Russia. A good Russian flea is worth fourpence or sixpence. Think of that ye navigators about to make a trip with timber ships to St. Petersburg, what a paying cargo you might bring home, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not as yet fixed any import duty on fleas. I wish he would. The best fleas of all are the English fleas; they live longest, eat least, and work the most. Bravo, old England! beat the world again even in the matter of fleas; but stop! of course the English fleas are good, for do not these fleas live upon true English blood, and thereby literally imbibe the national characteristics. Mr. K. keeps his stock of untrained fleas in a stoppered bottle in flannel wool; cotton will not do; he has sometimes two or three hundred fleas on hand, and he very seldom lets one escape.

A good half hour may be spent watching the fleas in their exercising. An unfortunate insect is made to fire off an "Armstrong gun." The mechanism by which this is done is very ingenious, and the flea must fire the gun even though he seems terribly frightened at the noise. The "Insect Hercules" draws along for a sharp pace an ivory "line-of-battle ship" over 500 times its own weight. It is most amusing to see the little wretch pulling at this load like a miniature dray horse. The "Flea Blondin" performs on the tight rope; the "Flea Sibyl" tells fortunes and answers questions through the medium of a revolving card; the "Insect Leotard" (this is a clever trick) swings backward and forwards on the trapeze; two fleas play at "see-saw," they are made to take their spring from strips of glass, for they would hold on with their prong-like claws on to paper, and would not perform at all. A grave old flea draws up a miniature bucket and lets it go again with a run. The "Royal Mail" is drawn by a team of fleas, and the "Derby Tandem" trots smartly round the arena. There are other performers beside the above; but I must not forget to mention the "punishment wheel," an ingenious contrivance upon which are placed idle and refractory fleas who misbehave themselves in their performance. Nor must I forget to mention an instrument which Mr. Kitchingman has nearly brought to perfection; it consists of a most delicate spring like a watch-spring, so fine that no one can hardly see it. This spring is intended to measure the actual strength of fleas, and it is called a "pulexometer."

In my "Curiosities of Natural History" I have a chapter on performing fleas. The education of the day has advanced in the matter of fleas as it has in the matter of children, and Kitchingman's fleas are much more learned—competitive examinations may have something to do with this remarkable fact—and they are much better performers, than the fleas of ten years ago.

I cordially recommend my friends and all interested in seeing what an ingenious and persevering young Englishman can do in training such minute creatures, to patronize Mr. Kitchingman and his learned specimens of *Pulex irritans*

FRANK BUCKLAND.

How Smith Asked the Old Man.

Smith had just asked Mr. Thompson's daughter if she would give him a lift out of bachelordom, and she had said "Yes."

It therefore became absolutely necessary to get the old gentleman's permission, so, as Smith said, the arrangements might be made to hop the conjugal twig.

Smith said he'd rather pop the interrogatory to all of old Thompson's daughters, and his sisters, and his lady cousins, and his aunt Hannah, in the country, and the whole of his female relations, than asked old Thompson. But he had to be done, and so he sat down and studied out a speech which he was to disgorge at old Thompson the very first time he got a shy at him. So Smith dropped in on him one Sunday evening, when all the family had meandered around to meeting, and found him doing a sum in beer measure.

"How are you, Smith?" said old Thompson, as the former walked in, white as a piece of chalk, and trembling as if he had swallowed a condensed earthquake. Smith was afraid to answer, 'cause he wan't sure about that speech. He knew he had to keep his grip on it while he had it there, or it would slip from him quicker than an eclipse of the moon. So he blurted out—

"Mr. Thompson, sir: Perhaps it may not be unknown to you, that during an extended period of some five years, I have been busily engaged in the prosecution of a commercial enterprise—"

"Is that so, and keepin' it a secret all this time, while I thought you were tendin' bar for me? Well, I'm orange, you're one of them now, ain't you?"

Smith had begun to think it all over again, to get the run of it.

"Mr. Thompson, sir: Perhaps it may not be unknown to you, that during an extended period of some five years, I have been busily engaged in the prosecution of a commercial enterprise, with the determination to secure a sufficient maintenance—"

"Sit down, Smith, and help yourself to beer. Don't standere holdin' your hat, like a blind beggar, with paralysis. I never have seen you behave yourself so queer in all my born days."

Smith had been knocked out again, and so he had to wander back again and take a fresh start.

"Mr. Thompson, sir: It may not be unknown to you, that during an extended period of five years, I have been engaged in the prosecution of a commercial enterprise, with the determination to procure a sufficient maintenance—"

"A whichance?" asked old Thompson; but Smith held on to the last word as if it was his only chance, and went on:

"In the hope that some day I might enter wedlock, and bestow my earthly possessions upon one whom I could call my own. I have been a lonely man, sir, and have felt that it is not good for man to be alone; therefore I would—"

"Neither is it, Smith; I'm glad you dropped in to talk it over with me."

"Mr. Thompson, sir," said Smith, in despairing confusion, raising his voice to a yell, "it may not be unknown to you that, during an extended period of a lonely man, I have been engaged to enter wedlock, and bestowed all my enterprise on one whom I could determine to be good for certain possessions—no, I mean—that—that—Mr. Thompson, sir; it may not be unknown—"

"And then, again, it may. Look here, Smith; you'd better lay down and take something warm—you ain't well."

Smith swearing like a four-year-old colt, went in again.

"Mr. Thompson, sir: It may not be long before I prosecute one whom you a friend, for a commercial maintenance, but—but—eh—dang it—Mr. Thompson, sir: It—"

"Oh, Smith, you talk like a fool. I never seen a first-class idiot in the course of my whole life. What's the matter with you, anyhow?"

"Mr. Thompson, sir," said Smith, in an agony of bewilderment, "it may not be known that you prosecuted a lonely man who is not good for a commercial period of wedlock for some five years, but—"

"See here, Mr. Smith, you're drunk, and if you can't behave better than that, you'd better leave; if you don't, I'll chuck you out, or I'm a Dutchman."

"Mr. Thompson, sir," said Smith, frantic with despair, "it may not be unknown to you that my earthly possessions are engaged to enter wedlock five years with a sufficiently lonely man,