

The Countersign.

Alas! the wear, hours pass slow,
The night is very dark and still,
And in the marshes far below
I hear the bearded whip-poor-will;
I scarce can see a yard ahead,
My ears are strained to catch each sound;
I hear the leaves about me shed,
And the springs bubbling through the ground.

Along the beaten path I pace,
Where white rays mark my sense
In formless shrubs I seem to trace
The foeman form with bending back.
I think I saw him crouching low,
I stop and list, I stoop and peer,
Until the neighboring hillocks grow
To groups of warriors far and near.

With ready pace I wait and watch,
Until my eyes, familiar grown,
Detect each harmless earthen notch,
And turn guerrillas into stone;
And then, among the lonely gloom,
Beneath the weird old tulip trees,
My silent marches, I resume,
And think on other times than these.

Sweet visions through the silent night,
The deep bay window fringed with vine;
The room within in softened light,
The tender milk-white hand in mine,
The tender pressure and the pangs
That ofttimes overcame our speech—
That time when, by mysterious laws,
We each felt all in all to each.

And then that bitter, bitter day
When came the final hour to part,
When, clad in soldier's honest gray,
I pressed her weeping to my heart;
Too proud of me to bid me stay,
Too fond of me to let me go,
I had to tear myself away,
And left her stunted in her woe.

So rose the dream, so passed the night,
When, distant in the darkness glen,
Approaching up the awful height,
I heard the solid march of men,
Till over stubble, over sward,
And fields where law the golden sheaf,
I saw the lantern of the guard
Advancing with the night relief.

"Halt! Who goes there?" my challenge cry.
It rings along the watchful line.
"Relief!" I hear a voice reply.
"Advance, and give the countersign!"
With bayonet at the charge, I wait;
The corporal gives the mystic spell;
With arms at port I charge my mate,
And onward pass, and all is well.

But in the tent that night, awake,
I think, if in the fray I fall,
Can I the mystic answer make
Where the angelic sentries call?
And pray that Heaven may so ordain
That when I near the camp divine,
Whether in travail or in pain,
I too may have the countersign.

Fritz-James O'Brien.

THE SILENT PARTNER.

"You have a sad and strange expression to-day, Edgar, which troubles me," said Clara Benton, addressing her affianced lover. "In fact, you have not seemed like yourself, since the death of your father, four months ago."

The young man's only answer was a sigh, the meaning of which, however, his fair companion understood, although the subject had never been referred to between them. They had been engaged about a year, and their wedding day, although not definitely decided upon, was looked upon as not far distant. In the meantime, however, Mr. Alison, Edgar's father, had become seriously embarrassed in his business affairs; and matters had grown continually worse, until the climax was reached, rendered still more severe, as well as unavoidable, by the general prevalence, at the time, of business failures. While still working with every nerve of brain and body, in one of those desperate struggles which so often end in either success or death, a fever, induced by the intense excitement, had terminated his life, leaving his affairs in almost hopeless confusion, while his wife's health was so shattered by the terrible shock that she was reduced to the condition of a confirmed invalid.

Edgar, who had graduated a year before, and was then at a law school, dropped his books and came home at once, to see what he could do in the way of saving something from the wreck of his father's estate.

Clara Benton, his affianced, was an orphan, and possessed of a fortune amounting to about seventy thousand dollars, which was under the charge of a prudent and careful lawyer, her guardian, while she was not to be permitted to have control of it until she would be twenty-three years of age.

"Well, Clara," said Edgar, breaking a painful silence, "at our engagement, I supposed my fortune would be about equal to yours. Now, I scarcely dare to feel certain of being able to save anything. The only part of my father's once large fortune which is in any measure available is his factory, still at work, earning a little money. It may possibly be saved from the wreck, but it will doubtless require some years to bring out that result. There are many large claims against the estate; and, working as I must single-handed and alone, the out-look seems almost desperate."

"Do not let these troubles make you despondent, Edgar," said Clara, affectionately. "At the time of our engagement we were expecting to be married within a year. Of course I do not desire to hasten that event in any way that does not seem to you best. But

my life is shut up in yours. If you were absolutely penniless, it would not make a shadow of difference with me. I have enough for both of us."

"I know that is what your generous heart would suggest, my darling!" replied her lover, with deep emotion. "But the prevailing sentiment of this world is of a very different character. Already sly intimations have come to me to the effect that the loss of my fortune would not be a very serious affair to me, since I have a rich wife in prospect, which I was shrewd enough to secure in time."

"Let these ungenerous insinuations pass for nothing, Edgar," said Clara, with quiet dignity. "You know they have no power to touch my mind for an instant."

"I have been thinking this matter over a great deal lately, Clara," said Edgar, pressing the little hand he was holding. "And while I have not the remotest thought of ever disregarding my engagement, I believe it is better for us to wait a few years and let me endeavor to repair my fortune, without anticipating any portion of yours. You are now only nineteen and I twenty-three; we will be young yet for some years. I will direct my energies to this work. I will take hold of the manufacturing business my father left, adapt myself to it and make that the use of my life instead of the profession to which I had been expecting to devote it. I must be a business man, and I will try to be a useful and successful one."

More conversation followed, which we have not space to detail here, during which, however, Clara questioned her lover with much interest in regard to the condition and character of the property he was endeavoring to save; and they parted at last, more firmly bound, so far as related to their future hopes and expectations, than ever. It had been agreed that their marriage should not be deferred beyond Clara's twenty-third birthday, unless by her own desire, which she felt certain would not be entertained or expressed. She stood looking after her lover until he had passed from view, then waited a kiss after him from the tips of her pretty fingers, and returning to her room opened her writing-desk and began to indite a letter, with an expression upon her bright face of mingled archness and resolution.

Two days later, while Edgar was seated in the private office at the factory with a pile of books and papers before him, which he was endeavoring to bring into some order, a visitor was announced, and the next moment he was clasping the hand of Mr. Blanchard, an old and well-known friend of his father.

After a few preliminary remarks, expressive of his deep regret at the sudden death of Mr. Alison, the visitor said: "I have been talking a little in regard to your affairs, Edgar, with the lawyers who have the management of your business, not, of course, learning anything from them except what I felt certain you would be perfectly willing to have me know. They tell me that the business is by no means in a hopeless condition. There is a considerable amount of real estate that can be saved, I understand, by paying off encumbrances on it, and I believe you also hold some two or three patents, supposed to be available and valuable in the manufacture of articles to which the factory is adapted, and for which, with a little capital to bring them out, there would probably be an extensive demand."

"All that is so!" said the young man, who had been listening to his visitor with peculiar interest. "But, single-handed, I am virtually powerless; and the wide prevalence of business failures has rendered it impossible for me to procure aid that I might otherwise have obtained."

"I have no capital," continued Mr. Blanchard, "that it would be right for me to put in jeopardy. The most of my property is in real estate, on which, however, I could borrow, I suppose, for a term of years, and at a moderate interest, so much as you would be likely to need. The question simply is this, can I put the money thus borrowed into this business in a perfectly safe way?"

The suggestion thus made was like a godsend to the struggling and embarrassed young man, and he at once applied himself to the task of making it available. The result was that within a few days an arrangement was made, by which Mr. Blanchard became a silent partner in the business, with a half interest in everything.

"What a noble old man Blanchard is!" said Edgar to himself, after the arrangement had been completed, and the first installment of ten thousand dollars, by which his affairs were brought into working order, had been paid in. And with the view of supplying the large and rapidly increasing demand for those patented articles,

further sums were added, until by the end of a year, the whole sum thus advanced had amounted to twenty thousand dollars, and the business was moving on prosperously.

Stimulated and sustained by the assistance thus opportunely afforded, and devoting all his energies to swell the tide of returning fortune, Edgar found the time passing swiftly. On several occasions he reminded his partner that he was at liberty to draw out a few thousand dollars of his part of the proceeds of the business if he desired to do so; but Mr. Blanchard always replied that he had no present need for anything except what was necessary to pay the interest on the money he had borrowed.

When the day agreed upon for the wedding at length arrived there was no need for further delay. And as Edgar held in his own hand the fair girl who had just been made his bride, it was with the proud and happy consciousness that he had vindicated his honor, and that no one could charge him with having seized the opportunity to save himself from pecuniary ruin by marrying an heiress.

About a week after the return of the young couple from their wedding tour as they were at tea one evening, Clara said, looking up at the same time, with a bright and happy smile:

"I had a call to-day, Edgar, from your old friend and silent partner, and here is a little document he left with me, which may perhaps interest you."

Taking the paper, Edgar read an assignment, for value received, conveying his partner's half interest in the factory to his young wife.

"This, my dear, is a very extraordinary affair!" he said, as he laid down the paper and looked inquiringly at his vis-a-vis. "The purchase of Mr. Blanchard's interest in the business must have taken a large part of your fortune."

"Perhaps not quite so much as you imagine," replied Clara, gayly. "What do you consider the value of the interest he has now assigned to me?"

"I know," said Edgar, "that it is worth forty thousand dollars to him from the fact that he has been offered that sum for it within the last two months by a wealthy business man, who urged me to use my influence with him to part with it."

"He would have had a falling out with me if he had done anything of that sort," said Clara, with an arch look.

"With you?" repeated Edgar, with an expression of such utter bewilderment that his young wife could not refrain from a merry peal of laughter. "Pray tell me, my dear," he continued, "how much this assignment has cost you?"

"Twenty thousand dollars, with a little more," was the reply. "I loaned Mr. Blanchard that sum through my guardian."

"And that was the money I received from him!" exclaimed Edgar, while a light broke over his face. "I now see why he was willing to accept enough from the business to pay the interest on the borrowed money, but had no occasion to draw anything more. And now tell me the whole story my dear."

"Well, Edgar," said his young bride, turning her radiant face upon him, "the conspiracy was simply this. Mr. Blanchard has been an old friend of our family as well as of yours, and has always been deeply interested in my welfare. On that day when you so perversely refused to anticipate any of my fortune, and I made myself so inquisitive, as you doubtless remember, in regard to the exact state of your business affairs, a bright thought came into my mind. As soon as you were gone I sent for Mr. Blanchard, and after telling him the whole story, requested him to find some way by which my money could aid you. The only way, he said, would be to have my money loaned to him through my guardian, and he would then, if the securities could be made satisfactory, invest it in the business. After looking into the matter carefully, he decided that an investment of ten thousand dollars in the way it was made, and afterward ten thousand more, would be entirely safe; as perfect in every way as the security he had given me for the money, and for the payment of which, to my estate, he was making himself responsible, even in the event of his investment in your business proving unfortunate."

"A noble and generous course on his part, certainly!" said Edgar, warmly. "But had you any security that would have been binding on his heirs in the event of his death?"

"Yes; although, of course, I had determined that any possible loss that might result from the investment should be mine, not his. I had his written obligation to transfer his whole interest in the business to me on the cancellation of the mortgage; he, at the same time, leaving it entirely to me to give him whatever I thought

best for his services. He was not disposed to take anything, saying that he would rather think of what he had done as being prompted by a regard for our mutual welfare, and without any hope of reward. But I thrust a thousand dollar check into his hand, and placed a ring on his finger, which he will wear, I am sure, as long as he lives. And now, my dear," she added, with a gay laugh, "after this display of my conversational powers you will no longer regard me as a silent partner."

"Perhaps not," said Edgar, rising from his seat, and bending over Clara's chair, while at the same time he took her face between his hands and imprinted a fond kiss upon the upturned lips. "But a most acceptable one in either respect, since I shall have her for life. And how can I thank you, my darling, for having so nicely and generously given me the benefit of a part of the fortune I was not willing to share, until I could bring it to, as I can now, a full equivalent; while, at the same time, I have the delightful realization that your act of kindness has not only been the means of ensuring my fortune, but has largely added to your own."

A Man Without Fear.

"Bravery" an old British officer of marines said lately, when talking over the newspaper reports of the daring of some of our soldiers in Egypt; "very often bravery only means Satan getting into you, for the time. You lose your head—and your fears. Now, the bravest man I ever knew was a convicted thief. He had smuggled himself into the marines somehow, without letting it be known that he was a ticket-of-leave man. My lieutenant had once to take my men on shore to garrison temporarily a small fort near Girgenti, near Sicily; among them was the ex-thief. Hardly were our men landed and in command of the guns than two of the enemy's ships hove in sight, and soon they were launching a landing party under cover of the ship's guns. We were but a handful and no match for the boatfuls attacking us. Our fire was kept up steadily, but so was the fire from the ships. The men in the forts were dropping fast. The thief had a leg smashed. At last—I am forced to confess it—the two or three marines who still had whole skins took to their heels into the scrub-wood behind. Poor chaps, there was some excuse. Certain death was crawling up the hill upon them in that landing party, which neared the rampart with rounds of cheers. 'Shame!' cried the thief after his running comrades; and up he got, loaded a gun, and fired it right in the enemy's face, just two seconds before a sword thrust put him forever out of pain from his broken leg. The man had always been a sneaking fellow on board, and we were surprised enough at the heroism of his end. When his loss was reported home, it came out through some relative, that he was a convict. Poor wretch! he made a plucky ending, at any rate!"

West India Superstitions.

It is considered very unlucky to tell the name of a boat before it is launched. A calabash turned upside down in a boat is a sure fore-runner of ill-luck, either in weather or fishing. The oil obtained from a shark's liver rubbed over the skin is a protection against the attack of a shark. Fish brought into a place where arrowroot or other starch is being prepared prevents a separation of the starch sediment from the impurities suspended in the water used. To turn your boots upside down brings loss of money, and to open an umbrella in a house prevents your ever marrying. Never wash your hands in water which another person has used, unless you first make the sign of the cross over it. When a glass cracks suddenly in a house it foretells a death, and a horse stopping before a house and neighing is also a sign of death. If a cock crows in a house a stranger may be expected.

A mining superintendent in the West says that by the use of the chronograph he ascertained the fact that the long pump bobs in his mine moved down at the top before they stopped coming up at the bottom—that is, they went both ways at once. This seems absurd, but it is rational, for the pump bob being 3,000 feet long, and made of wood, some time elapses before motion at one end is transmitted through to the other. It would be interesting to know exactly where the neutral point is.—*Mechanical Engineer.*

A new nursemaid has been engaged for the family of John Leech. On her appearing in the nursery she was thus addressed by Master Leech: "Nurse, papa says I am one of those children that can only be managed by kindness, and I'll trouble you to fetch some sponge cake and oranges at once."

In the Argentine republic many Irishmen have made great fortunes as sheep farmers.

The French Wrestlers at the Fair.

The owner of the booth or circus has usually two or three professional wrestlers, a heavy, medium and light weight. As soon as lifting weights, throwing weights, balancing weights, and other such like performances are got through with, the wrestlers stand forth and challenge each individual in the crowd to an encounter with which ever of their number he shall himself choose. There is usually some one among the audience bold or foolish enough to try his skill, for which daring feat he usually gets a rough mauling and a heavy fall on the sawdust thrown down in the middle of the ring. But on this occasion it seemed the height of folly for a lad of some nineteen years to accept the challenge, as his appearance was slight and his form wholly devoid of muscular development. That, however, was his affair, not ours. Retiring behind a little knot of his companions he stripped himself completely naked, and remained so, with the exception of a pair of bathing-drawers, throughout the encounter. When he appeared on the sawdust he looked like a lath. Never had we seen a form so utterly devoid of those bunches of protuberances on any legs or chest which are usually held to indicate strength. His color was that of a red Indian, his appearance that of a lad of seventeen. His professional opponent, on the contrary, was a very mass of muscles, which hung about him like knots, reminding one of the cartoons of Raphael or the paintings of Rubens. To it they went with a will, at first warily stretching out hands to lay hold of hands, then striking arms or feeling for a grip at the waist. Presently the professional had his man round the body, and lifted him about like a straw, but somehow he could never throw him fairly down. The youth's feet seemed to feel the ground, even when dangling in the air; he turned himself about like a snake, he fell on his hands or feet, or laid himself on the ground flat upon his stomach, while the athlete danced round him, pulling, tugging, twisting in vain—for to gain the battle it is necessary to make both the shoulder blades of the fallen foe touch the ground. For a good quarter of an hour the youngster butted like a bull with his head down, slipped out of the most deadly grips, and sometimes threw his adversary with great violence, yet without making his shoulders touch the earth. The professional got wary; he was evidently a little afraid, yet never doubted the final issue of the fray. At last they joined and wrestled furiously, struggled, fell—the youth under the giant; one more turn and it would be over with the poor boy, when suddenly he caught the athlete round the neck, squeezed, as if a vise, his jugular, lifted him clean up into the air, planted him as flat as a pancake upon his broad back, and rose the victor of as fine a struggle as ever mortal eyes beheld. We pitied the poor professional, for he looked so very downcast; but the amateur we admired so much that we offered him money, which he refused, showing that he belonged to the better class, and was no confederate.

Letter Writing.

Some one who has been looking into the subject declares that prompt attention to friendly correspondence requires considerable nobility of feeling. It is undoubtedly the case that friendship which cannot be doubted often seems to fail when letters should be written. In importance the friendly letter scarcely equals the fashionable call. If it rains the visit is simply postponed. But if the mental horizon is only cloudy—and it generally is when letter writing begins—the letter is also postponed. But generally for a much longer period and with scarcely a thought of the breach of good manners. But after all, the main root of our negligence is at the bottom of the heart. Love letters are always written quickly and well. Why? Love is a passion finding a natural outlet in eloquence. Friendship is a sentiment lying still in the deep recess of our heart easily ignored among the more vital claims for our interest. The passion of love needs restraint because it is the all-absorbing, consequently harmful, element of our nature. The sentiment of friendship needs cultivation because it is one of the spiritual elements which act as a restraint upon the former in directing love from one to more. Now, we all know ourselves prone to indulge in what needs restraint, and neglect what needs cultivation. The writing a love-letter is only indulging the passion which needs restraint, and the neglect to write a friendly letter is neglecting the sentiments which need cultivation. We see now why it is easier to write a love, business, or any other letter which concerns our immediate feelings or interest, but nobler to write a friendly letter which has nothing in itself to gratify. It is only with the noblest attributes of the soul that we can carry on a friendly correspondence with credit and pleasure.

Sweet Evenings Come and Go.

Sweet evenings come and go, love,
They came and went of yore;
This evening of our life, love,
Shall go and come no more.
When we have passed away, love,
All things will keep their names;
But yet no life on earth, love,
With ours will be the same.
The daisies will be there, love,
The stars in heaven will shine;
I shall not feel thy wish, love,
Nor thou my hand in thine.
A better time will come, love,
And better souls be born;
I would not be the best, love,
To leave thee now forlorn.
—George Elliot.

FUNGENT PARAGRAPHS.

A tale of the sea—The sea serpent's tail.

The latest thing in cradles—The new baby.

A movement on foot—a walking match.

There is no doubt but a lean man can enjoy a fat legacy.

The man with a wheel-barrow carries everything before him.

When a powder magazine blows up, it can, we suppose, be called flash literature.

New Orleans has tried a John Chinaman on the jury, and he was a success. He agreed with the other eleven.

Hindoo girls are taught to think of marriage as soon as they can talk. American girls are not. They don't require teaching.

An Indian boy 14 years old was held up and kissed by seven school girls, and he was so broken up over it that he tried to hang himself.

The Long Branch hotel-keeper who charged a typhoid fever patient \$1,300 for three weeks' board is now in court to answer to the charge of robbery.

George Francis Train lives in New York at an average expense of \$3.80 per week for food. Ten years ago his cigars cost more than that per day.

A Pacific coast exchange doubts if any man lives in San Francisco for any other purpose than to make enough money to get away and live somewhere else.

It is said that a woman was the first one to discover the blotting pad. Don't believe it. If she had been in a hurry she'd have blotted the letter on her apron.

It is said that the Governor of Missouri is jealous because ten persons call upon Frank James to one upon him. Hasn't the Governor sand enough to rob a train.

It has been fifty years since the papers commenced to advise people not to blow the gas out, and yet it is still practiced enough to keep the grave-diggers' business lively.

The advance agent of a bad show has the best time. He can get out of town before his company performs. It is the manager who must stay and pay salaries and hear the compliments.

There isn't any written testimony to prove that William Tell was ever called upon to shoot an apple off his son's head. Indeed, at the time of Tell apples were rarely seen in Switzerland.

A man fishing around in his pockets for a nickel to secure his admission to a five-cent lunch house, can hardly realize that the amount of coin in circulation in this country is over \$700,000,000.

My boy, when a man, any man, tells you he wouldn't have your horse or gun, or your dog as a gift, don't offer to give it to him. That kind of a man always takes everything he can get for nothing, and never pays a cent for anything.

"Gentleman, you may not think it, but I have stood on the top round of the ladder," said an inebriated individual who was haranguing the crowd. "Troth; thin," exclaimed one of his hearers, "that same ladder must a' been lyin' flat on the ground."

"You don't appear to catch on," remarked the post to the gate; "I like to see a gate well posted."—"I feel hinged by your remark," replied the gate; "your rallery seems barren of wit."—"That's your staple remark when you are shut up," answered the post; "you never like to see a post holed his own."

Notice the Quiet Girls.

Noisy girls are often very lovable and have their uses, and all quiet girls are not endowed with genius and virtues, for some are simply fools who would be noisy enough if they could find anything to say. But we protest against the habit which prevails of slighting quiet girls and speaking ill of them before they have been fairly tried, and of paying sickening homage to the conceited chatterboxes of little moral sense and principle. While noisy damsels will often turn out to be gaudy impostors, many quiet ones will amply repay the time, trouble and love which any one may bestow upon them.