

A BAG OF RAGS

The keen autumn air blew sharply into the room, as pretty Agatha Forsythe threw up the sash and leaned out. A deep voice below coming from a form almost hidden by the syringa bushes, said, softly:

"Is that you, 'Gatha?"
"Yes," was the reply, given softly.
"Can't you come down?" said Dick Reynolds, rather impatiently, looking up at the smiling face.

"In a little while, Dick, just as soon as Grannie is asleep. She has just gone to her room. You must be patient, Dick, dear," and the window closed.

"Dick, dear," was not very patient, however, and paced the walk for fifteen minutes before Agatha's blue dress appeared at the door, with Agatha in it. After a very ardent greeting, Dick said:

"I declare it's too bad I can't come and see you like other fellows come to see their sweethearts. I wonder what makes your grandmother dislike me so. I've never done her any harm, only I want her one grandchild. I am not a bad character, have a good position, and why she will not let you marry me, and yet is willing to give you to that Dalford fellow, is a mystery.

"O, Grannie is getting old, you know, Dick, and she fancies you are exactly like your grandfather was, who was her lover, and who almost broke her out.

"And she's afraid I'll break yours, darling? Well, we'll see," and then a long and very interesting conversation followed. At last Agatha declared she must go in.

"Don't fail, me 'Gatha," Dick said, as he gave her his farewell kiss.

"Never fear," said 'Gatha, blushing in the darkness, and she quickly disappeared in the house.

The next day Grannie seemed to be particularly provoking, and tried Agatha's patience sorely.

"What makes you look so happy," she asked sternly, as 'Gatha sang, and blushed and smiled to herself as she went about the big drawing-room, dusting and arranging the many knick knacks.

"Nothing," said Agatha.
"I know better," replied her grandmother sharply. "It's that Dick Reynolds. Have you been writing to him?"

"No."
"Has he written to you?"
"No."

"Well, you've seen each other then?"
'Gatha blushed guiltily, and then lost her temper, which was such an unusual thing for her to do, that her grandmother was quite startled.

"I should think, Grannie, you'd be ashamed of yourself. I love Dick Reynolds, and I always shall. If you could give me just reason why I should not marry him. I would never disobey you. But you cannot. You say he will surely prove treacherous like his grandfather. Am I like you because I am your granddaughter? No. Therefore I intend, as soon as opportunity offers, to run off with Dick, since there is no other way. I tell you, frankly, I am sorry to be rude. But I do not see why I should allow you to break my heart, and Dick's too!"

'Gatha stopped. Two red spots burned on her cheeks, her clear gray eyes blazed with anger and love.

Grannie recovered herself.
"So this is the respect I get, after twenty years of toil for you. Go to your room instantly. You shall never marry Dick Reynolds. Do you hear, never!"

This did not strike terror to the girl's heart, for she possessed much of the obstinate will of her grandmother, and, as Betsy often said, "When her mind was set, it was set, and 'twere no use to ag in her." So when she was ordered to her room she went quietly, and already her pretty, curly head was scheming for escape.

Agatha was not a bad or a willful girl. She possessed good, common sense. As she said, if there were just cause why she would never have disobeyed her grandmother. She had met Dick at one of the few parties given in the neighboring town. Their acquaintance had ripened into love, and Dick, after obtaining Agatha's consent asked her grandmother for her in many words. He received a decided and cold "No," and was told never to show himself at the farm again. Dick did, however, manage to occasionally see Agatha, who openly rebelled at such treatment. And both had devised a plan, which had cost weeks in concealing, their interviews being held generally in the manner described above.

A week passed after their last interview. 'Gatha was kept under strict surveillance by her grandmother.

It was twelve o'clock at night. 'Gatha, who slept with her grand-

mother now, the better to be watched, rose softly from her bed, very softly, for fear of waking the old lady, who was a very light sleeper. A stone had been thrown at the window. With noiseless hand she let a white note, taken from about her neck, down into the garden beneath.

"What are you up for, 'Gatha," said her grandmother suddenly, sitting up in bed. 'Gatha stared.

"O, nothing," she said, pouring out a glass of water, and, after drinking it, going back to bed.

Dick, below in the garden, caught the note, opened it and read:

"DARLING DICK—

"Grandma has made me sleep with her. Our plan, of course, falls through, but I have thought of another. Tomorrow morning, at six o'clock, Mr. Tiddle is coming for the large bag of sewed rags Grannie has made for a rag carpet. Betsy will substitute me for the rolls of rags, and I can be carried out into the wagon, placed on my back and driven to town, and Grannie be none the wiser, for I am (?) to spend all morning until noon shucking corn in the barn. The only thing for you to do is to let Mr. Tiddle into the secret and get his assistance. Don't fail, or my heart will break.

"Yours in haste,
"GATHA."

Dick paged down to Mr. Tiddle's weaving shop, roused the old gentleman, and unfolded his plans.

"Rather pesky business Dick, rather pesky; and the old lady's powerful sharp but I'll do my best for you lad," he said, when Dick concluded. And so they arranged for the next morning!

Dick was to be at the turnstile with a fast team, and 'Gatha was to be unbagged and given into his care at that point.

Six o'clock came. 'Gatha had been up for two hours, and had breakfasted, and betaken herself presmably to the barn, but was in reality in the upper hall, attired in a neat, gray traveling dress, with a most bewitching bonnet, on the side of which drooped two dainty pink roses.

"There comes Mr. Tiddle Betsy," said the old lady, from the kitchen window. You go to let him in, and be sure he takes the right weight of them ba's, and don't break the balustrade bringing the bag down. I'll stand at the window and see it safe in the wagon. There's no telling where these men folk will bring up too."

"All right 'um," said Betsy, her heart in her mouth, for fear the old lady would take it into her head to come up stairs. Coming down, not an hour ago, she had pounded and felt every ball in the bag, and 'Gatha thanked fortune she was not in it.

Betsy went up stairs, and let Mr. Tiddle in. The bag was quickly emptied. The balls were thrown helter-skelter into Betsy's room, and 'Gatha, smiling, trembling and blushing, was sent swiftly and deftly in to take their place, gray dress, pink roses, and all."

"La sakes!" exclaimed Betsy, "she don't no way fill the thing up. Hold the top, Mr. Tiddle, while I get a ball or two to give it a lumpy look."

Three or four balls were placed about 'Gatha.

"That's enuf," said Betsy, the bunnet'll look like another," and soon 'Gatha, shaking with suppressed laughter, was torn down stairs by the faithful 'etsy and Mr. Tiddle. On the way out to the wagon, Grandma's voice from the raised kitchen window called out:

"Mr. Tiddle!"

"Well, ma'm?"

"Wait a moment. I want to tell you about the weaving."

"All right, 'um, 'soon's I get this pesky bag inter the waggin'."

'Gatha's heart beat again, as she felt herself lifted from Mr. Tiddle's shoulder and laid safely on her back in the bottom of the wagon. Mr. Tiddle took his penknife and cut a small breathing place and then hurried back. His conversation lasted ten minutes, and then he was off at a steady trot down the road, his precious burden safe.

"Betsy," said old Mrs. Forsythe, returning to the kitchen, "sure's you live, I heard rats jumping about overhead while you were up stairs. Don't forget to let the cat in to night."

"No, 'um," answered Betsy. "Rats is a great trouble, an' the cat 'll soon clear them out."

Late that night Betsy gathered up the poor offending balls, whose rolling about as they were quickly thrown into the room that morning, had caused the old lady to think them rats, and putting them into a sheet, placed them into the hand of Mr. Tiddle who was waiting at the turnstile for them.

"Pesky business that, pesky business, Miss Betsy," he said. "But, la sakes! didn't they get off nice. She came out o' that bag as spink an' span as she went in, and would you believe it, the pink roses in her bunnet weren't crushed at all. I guess they're merried by this time. I wonder," softly

"if we'd have such a time, Miss Betsy, if we jined hands? And what do you think—I saw a bunnet like Miss 'Gatha's down to Jake Prall's, an' I'd git it for you if you'll agree."

Betsy agreed, got the "bunnet," and was happy ever after.

Old Mrs. Forsythe never could find out how 'Gatha got away. In time she partly forgave her, but for years she would not design to notice her. 'Gatha was very happy, and never had cause to rue the day she substituted herself for a bag of rags.

CLIPPINGS FOR THE CURIOUS.

A scientific writer asserts the long current belief that the concentric rings of a tree are a record of its age, each ring representing a year's growth, is a mistake. A series of experiments have shown its falsity.

In the United States there are only three venomous snakes, the rattle, the copper-head and the moccasin. The East Indies are full of venomous snakes, and in British India nearly twenty thousand persons are killed every year by snake bites.

The Parthenon Athens' famous temple is so built that there is not a rectangular form in the whole building. The sides and the front curve very slightly, the columns do not stand quite upright, and all the horizontals curve upward slightly.

An opera house on wheels is the latest dramatic novelty, and a company with headquarters at Kansas City has been organized to build and manage it. It is to consist of eight railway cars, which can be expanded by ingenious mechanism into a capacious structure, with auditorium and stage complete, and is designed for the benefit of communities which do not possess facilities for the production of plays. It will run from place to place on the railroads and carry a portable track, upon which it can be switched off and transformed into a theatre.

Strength and Health.

It is quite a common idea that health keeps pace with strength. I know intelligent persons who really think that you may determine the comparative health of a company of men by measuring their arms—that he whose arm measures twelve inches is twice as healthy as he whose arm measures but six. This strange and thoughtless misapprehension has given rise to nearly all the mistakes thus far made in the physical-culture movement. I have a friend who can lift 900 pounds, and yet is an habitual sufferer from torpid liver, rheumatism, and low spirits.

There are many similar cases. The cartmen of our cities, who are our strongest men, are far from the healthiest class, as physicians will testify. On the contrary I have many friends who would stagger under 300 pounds that are in capital trim. But I need not elaborate a matter so familiar with physicians and other observing people. No rest of health would prove more faulty than a tape-line or a lift at the scale-beam.

Suppose two brothers—bank clerks—in bad health. They are measured round the arm. Each marks exactly ten inches. They try the scale-beam. The bar rises at exactly 300 pounds with each. Both seek health. John goes to the gymnasium, lifts heavy dumb-bells and kegs of nails until he can put up 125 pounds, and lift 900, and his arm reaches fifteen inches.

Thomas goes to the mountains, fishes, hunts, spends delightful hours with the young ladies and plays cricket.

Upon measuring his arm we find it scarcely larger than when he left town, while he can't put up sixty pounds nor lift 500. But who doubts Thomas will return to the counter the better man of the two? John should be the better man, if strength is the principal or most essential condition of health.—*Health.*

To give an idea of the dairy industry in France, M. Herve Mahon recently stated at an agricultural gathering that the milk produced in the country would if collected, form a stream 3 feet 4 inches in width and 1 foot 1 inch in depth, flowing night and day all the year with a mean velocity of 3 feet 4 inches per second. Young animals drink a part of this enormous volume of milk, man takes a good part of it, and the rest is transformed into cheese and butter.

"Have you seen the new style of sleeping cars?" inquired a drummer of the conductor. "No, I think not," he replied, "what are they like?" "Well, they differ from any I have yet seen, and I don't they will be very popular." "What are they called?" "Prohibition cars." "That's a somewhat singular name," thoughtfully mused the ticket-taker. "Why are they so-called?" "Because," said the cute commercial traveler they won't have any porter aboard."

LADIES' DEPARTMENT.

Fashion Notes.

Dancing dresses are short all around. The rage for yellow has not yet run its course.

High colors are much in vogue for evening wear.

The favorite corsage flower is the small yellow aster.

White tulle is used in the place of an invisible hair net to keep the front hair in good shape.

Cashmere and merino hose in the popular electric blue and burning red colors are much worn.

Some New York ladies wear violets for corsage bouquets all the year round, regardless of the cost.

Colored nuns' cloths and fine cashmires are used now for evening dresses and they are most charming.

Fine black cashmere costumes are trimmed with terra cotta or ruby red satin or velvet, covered with black lace.

Many Fanchon and capote bonnets are trimmed with ruffles of lace and tiny flowers or loops of ribbon inside the brim.

There is a fancy at present for house dresses composed of a solid-colored jacket and a bright plaid or novelty fabric skirt.

To mingle two kinds of lace on one costume, bonnet, or piece of neck lingerie is good form and correct taste at present.

The latest caprice is to fasten up the front of flannel and cloth suits with straps of leather passing through buckles of the same.

Plain velvet costumes of dark, red colors are richly trimmed with fur; the furs most in favor for these suits are otter, beaver, hare and seal. The bonnets and muffs that accompany them are also finished off with the same kind of fur used as the trimming of the dress.

A flaring poke, and sort of "mob" crowned cap bonnet are among the headresses of the season for girls between the ages of two and ten; and the Red Ridinghood cloak of red flannel, braided with black, and made with a cape, or gathered at the neck, and finished with gathered sleeves and sash, accompanies them.

A superb evening dress worn at a reception in New York was of pale pink Ottoman silk made with a short skirt with two narrow knife-plaitings around the edge of the skirt, and a plain Jersey basque of the silk. The overskirt was of pink China crepe, the graceful drapery being held by small birds of bright plumage.

Pretty house dresses for young girls are made of electric blue cashmere, with short draped apron of burning red, and red collar and cuffs, over which are worn others of hemstitched white muslin, which leaves only the red edge visible. The blue basque is cut up on the edge, and forms what is known as the polka basque.

In London felt hats are generally adopted. Some are small, trimmed with gossamer, caught together with a bird's plumage, sometimes tying underneath the chin; or else large, turned up one side, with an ostrich feather curling gracefully over the brim at the back and showing at one side. Folded bands of plush or velvet, fastened with a handsome buckle, trim the hat on the other side. Ladies who cannot afford many hats wear black felt, and alter the color of the folded band of plush or velvet to match that of the dress to be worn.

Aprons made of brown linen of the proper width so that the salvage needs no hemming at the sides may be made very pretty by winging out the bottom to the depth of two inches; overcast the edge where the raveling ceases, then about two inches above that draw out threads for an inch and a half, and then run a blue or scarlet ribbon through the threads that are left, making blocks of ribbon and thread alternately. Above and below this row of feather stitching is added, and a row on the band and sides also; the pocket trimmed to match is put on the right side.

Wives of the Bedouins.

The Bedouin, like the Persian, says an English magazine, dyes his beard red, an operation which is performed by the wives in turn, and one which they consider a great honor to engage in. Bedouins, in speaking of a wife who is not on good terms with her husband, say, "She cannot dye his beard." It must not be supposed from the above that the women are too delicate to be of any service. On the contrary, in war they always fight by the sides of their husbands, and headlong charges are repeatedly led by some courageous maiden of high blood, who, mounted on a pure Nejd steed, dashes among the enemy, singing songs insulting them for their cowardice and encouraging her own followers. The Bedouin Amazons have always been noted for their courage, and are often

mentioned in history. It is generally admitted that had it not been for the bravery of the young and beautiful Ayesha, Mohammed would have lost the battle of the Camel. Her people were already retreating before the enemy, when she halted them by shouting, "Scum of the desert sand, fleeing like chickens from falcons; rein your horses, if 'tis but to see a woman defend Islam," and, rushing on the enemy, so encouraged the deserters that they followed her and won the day.

A French Feminine Philanthropy.

Much interest is expressed in Paris with regard to the bestowal of the Cross of the Legion of Honor upon Mme. Hess, who has acquired stupendous wealth as vendor of the hair wash which bears her name, Eau de Hess. By the sale of the wash she has become one of the greatest capitalists of the city, and the manner in which she disposes of the wealth thus acquired forms the subject of universal admiration. When asked by the municipality "for a little assistance" for the poor, she sends vast sums, even to the amount of one hundred thousand francs. She provided for an immense number of starving workmen and their wives during the siege, and took upon herself the payment of all necessities for the wounded brought in from the fortifications. In recognition of these services the municipality of Paris had a gold medal struck off in her honor, and this, with her nomination, as officer of the Academy and other testimonials, reposes beneath a glass case upon the same rickety wooden table upon which she prepared the hair wash. The table stands in the middle of the room now filled with the most costly artistic furniture, and surrounded with the finest collection of pictures by the old masters at present existing in Paris. Mme. Hess possesses the most extraordinary instinct of artistic beauty, and has formed the most wondrous gallery of pictures and bronzes of art ever beheld. So great was the natural ambition of self-improvement evinced by her, that although long past youth when this great good fortune fell upon her, and she had never learned even to read and write, she immediately set about acquiring instruction in literature and art, and is now regarded as a high authority in both. And while thus she indulges her taste for the beautiful, she neglects not the charitable duties imposed upon her by her position, and distributes large sums daily to the deserving poor.

Cured of Intemperance.

Men are cured of intemperance at an institution in New York, known as the Christian Home for Intemperate Men, by a peculiar method. It seems that cures are effected by treating drunkenness as a sin, no intemperate man being received unless he expresses a desire to become a Christian. None is received for less than four weeks, and some stay as long as three months. No liquor is ever allowed for "tapering-off," as it is called, and yet, contrary to the generally-received opinion, no cases of delirium tremens, arising from a sudden deprivation of the accustomed stimulant, are reported. Warm milk with a little salt in it, beef tea, and, in exceptionally bad cases, bromide of potassium, are administered. Victims of the opium habit have been also cured, some of whom had taken as much as 200 grains per day. Tobacco is excluded as rigorously as liquor. The patients have the use of a library and reading-room, are expected to attend upon the large number of religious exercises which take place daily, and to sign a promise pledging themselves upon their honor not to use while in the house, or have in their possession liquor, opium or tobacco. Amusements are not encouraged; inmates are expected to read, write, meditate and pray. There is no physician, the idea being that if a man desires to be saved he can be. There is a good deal in this belief, as all reformed men know. The institution has had 925 inmates in five years, of which number it claims to have reclaimed sixty per cent.

Raining Cats and Dogs.

Among the many queer sayings which one often hears none is more peculiar than "It's raining cats and dogs." Some say that the expression came from the French word *catadoupe* a waterfall; but there is a more pleasing explanation of how the phrase came into use. In some parts of England the blossoms of the willow tree are called "cats and dogs." These blossoms increase in size very quickly after a few warm showers in April, and it was believed once that the rain brought them. Hence the saying, "It's raining cats and dogs."

The capitalists of the world have sunk \$202,000,000 in ocean cables.

Dear Hands.

The touches of her hands are like the fall Of velvet snow flakes; like the touch of down

The peach just brushes 'gainst the garden wall;

The flossy fondlings of the thistle wisp Caught in the crinkle of a leaf of brown The blighting frost has turned from green to crisp.

Soft as the falling dusk at night,

The touches of her hands, and the delight— The touches of her hand!

The touches of her hands are like the dew That falls so softly down no one e'er knew The touch thereon save lovers like to one A stray in lights where ranged Endymion.

Oh, rarely soft, the touches of her hands,

As drowsy zephyrs in enchanted lands;

Or pulse of dying day; or fairy sighs;

Or—in between the midnight and the dawn,

When long unrest and tears and fears are gone—

Sleep, smoothing down the lids of weary eyes.

—J. W. Riley.

PUNGENT PARAGRAPHS.

Hackmen—Butchers.

Hanging fire—The chandelier.

Man advertises, then realizes.

The best press—A press of business.

"Come down," said the young man, stroking his upper lip.

The use of iron cannot increase the running qualities of a dog, but tin can.

Men who have money to loan take the greatest possible interest in their business.

A Michigan horse ate ten pounds of starch without feeling very much stuck up.

Freckles are not so bad. It is said that one girl does not object to seeing them on another girl's face.

A marine disaster: "Yes," said the captain of the ocean steamship, "we had a very expensive trip this time. Very little seasickness; passengers ate frightfully."

Women are such queer creatures that no man can understand them. Indeed, it has been generally conceded that the only way to find a woman out is to call when she is not in.

The papers very kindly tell the poor man how to make a nourishing soup out of a small piece of meat. If they would only tell him how to get the meat his wife would be much more obliged.

A Vermont lawyer has printed a book to prove that the earth is 50,000,000 years old, and that there is no reason why people shouldn't live a thousand years. Probably they don't just out of sheer laziness.

"Julia, my little cherub, when does your sister Emma return?" Julia—"I don't know." "Didn't she say anything before she went away?" Julia—"She said, if you came to see her, that she'd gone till doomsday."

Some of the Asiatics are now cooking their meals on American stoves. This is preferable to the old style of serving up Americans on Asiatic stoves.

A matter of multiplication: Teacher—"Why, how stupid you are, to be sure! Can't multiply eight-eight by twenty-five? I'll wager that Charles can do it in less than no time." Pupil—"I shouldn't be surprised. They say that fools multiply very rapidly nowadays."

The reason that an express train always proceeds a milk train is not because its speed is greater. It is because the cow-catcher on the engine is used to catch the cows in time to be milked before dark. After they are caught they are run on the side track, the cows, we understand, doing the switching themselves.

A medical journal says that when a man wants to sneeze and cannot, if he goes into the sunlight he will find the exact equal to that of snuff. The information must prove a great comfort to a man when an elusive sneeze seizes his nasal organ about 9 o'clock P. M. He can make a trip to some country where the sun is shining, or defer the sneeze until next morning.

THAT THIEVISH DAME.

In childhood days, ere yet she knew The words of gifts, she'd freely take The presents—sweetmeats, toys and such— He offered for her friendship's sake.

In later years, when older grown, Quite different things she took like this: His arm at parties—hat and stick When'er he called,—perhaps a kiss.

In turn, she took his purse, his time, His love, this thievish dame, Not then, it seems, was she content: For last of all she took—his name.

The number of higher arithmetics required in the public schools of the United States is 1,750,000; arithmetics, lower, 3,750,000, algebras, 500,000; astronomy, 750,000; book-keeping, 500,000; copy-books, 15,000,000; composition-books, 1,000,000; etymologies, 500,000; geographies, 5,000,000; grammars, 2,000,000; histories, 1,000,000; natural philosophies, 5,000,000; readers, 5,000,000; spellers and definers, 2,500,000. The annual cost of school books to the users is estimated at \$5,000,000.