

THE CRAZY QUILT.

Dear me! there is baby waking again, and I have just the most difficult pattern for my quilt. Jakey will you please quiet the child?

Mr. Jacob Axworth laid down his comb and brush, and turned impatiently away from the dressing case.

Dot is sleeping soundly, he crossly announced as he bent over a dainty bassinet.

But I am sure she will wake directly, chirruped the apprehensive voice from an adjoining room, where a pretty young lady was sitting with a gorgeous crazy quilt beneath her busy hands. And I do so want to finish my quilt. I do wish Jakey, that you would stay at home and mind the baby a bit.

It strikes me I shall be compelled to stay at home altogether unless I buy an entire new outfit, the young husband suddenly vociferated, as he made a bewildering litter of the dusty and bottomless contents of wardrobe and drawers. My best coat is nearly without buttons and my shirt ditto. And will you be good enough to inform me, Mrs. Axworth, in what uncomfortable place you have deposited my blue cravat and canary silk handkerchief?

Dear me, why, Jakey the girlish wife blithely responded, the blue satin was a bit spoiled, you know, and I used the cravat for the anchor figure in my quilt; and the frayed canary handkerchiefs made an exquisite fan pattern with feather-stitched in silver thread. When I shall have finished the lovely centre star, my crazy quilt will have ninety thousand—

It strikes me, Mrs. Axworth, he savagely interrupt, that your quilt will not be the only crazy thing about this establishment; I am already afraid to guarantee my sanity. Mrs. Axworth—which may not seem wonderful if you will condescend to my ninety thousand miseries since you have begun that detectable monument of feminine absurdity. Since that quintessence of the preposterous was begun, Mrs. Axworth, there has been nothing in the house but disorder, cold meat, and excuses. And here's my diamond pin actually decorating Dot's bib; upon my word madam, I am inclined to change my residence.

Pretty Mrs. Axworth dropped her crazy quilt, and her dimple face slightly whitened; she was startled and amazed by the unfamiliar vehemence of a husband who had ever been forbearing and almost weakly indulgent.

Dear me! she ejaculated in dismay. I am sure I don't know how baby Dot ever managed to get your diamond pin; and really, I did not mean to be so careless about your buttons; but I have been so busy—about—the quilt, she faltered, with an uncomfortable sensation that her only apology would see ridiculously; malapropos at this crisis.

You need not remind me of that, Letitia, he answered, with more serious infection in his sarcastic tones. I am profoundly aware that you have been quite too occupied to care for your uninteresting domestic duties, or any such insignificant matter as my comfort. But finish your quilt, my dear; by all means, finish your precious crazy quilt. I should be afraid to guarantee my return until the thing is done and stowed from sight.

And with that not particularly cordial assurance he adjusted an ancient black cravat, picked up his rumpled gloves and stalking out of the house, leaving pretty Mrs. Letitia feeling more astonished than she had ever felt before in her brief wedded life.

I should never have believed that he could be so angry, and he never before went away without kissing baby Dot, she sighed, as two big rueful tears dropped on the gorgeous quilt, that miracle of her decorative ingenuities which her aggrieved spouse had declined to appreciate.

"And I was so proud of it," she presently said to a caller, an elderly lady, with merry dark eyes, tiny iron-gray curls, and a severely plain dark dress.

"It is a rather showy thing," the lady said; "but yet the coarsest blanket would be just as comfortable."

"That is the opinion Jakey has I suppose," the girlish wife plaintively returned.

"O, I dare say, you have allowed him to feel rather neglected," the other

remarked in her amiable and cheery tones.

He was never grumbling and cross before about anything," Mrs. Axworth said, piteously, and I am sure I did not mean to be neglectful—he ought to know that."

We—none of us like to feel that our comfort is a secondary consideration to them we love best," the lady said; and when we are too much slighted, Letitia, we are apt to become remiss ourselves," she added, so soberly and significantly, that the dimpled pretty face before her blushed crimson.

Jakey is not becoming remiss; you do not think that?" Mrs. Axworth queried, the crimson on her cheeks growing hotter, a resentful flash beneath her misty eyes.

I am certain he does not wish to be remiss," the other said, with a curiously roguish twinkle in her kindly, merry eyes: And I dare say you have been too much occupied with the showy quilt to notice anything that may be construed as a slight. And, of course, you are aware that Mr. Axworth devotes a great deal of his time to Laura Doane."

I am not aware of anything of the kind," Mrs. Axworth said, with paling lips and kindling eyes. I have no knowledge whatever of any such person."

Indeed!" the other commented. And he takes her driving often and visits her every evening; and he has presented her with quite a magnificent birthday gift."

Mrs. Axworth tossed aside her crazy quilt and arose from her low rocker. You might have spared yourself, Aunt Virginia, the repetition of such doubtful gossip," she said, with dignity. I refuse to listen to any insinuations against my husband; and I shall never believe any wrong of him.

But you will permit me to explain," with a smile of mischief and of unqualified approval.

I want no palliative explanations from any body who would intrude my husband," interrupted the disturbed wife, nobly loyal, despite the untidy house, the cold meats, the neglected buttons, and all the small folly of the luckless crazy quilt. And they who credit ill of him can no longer remain my friends."

And then, before her companion could utter a syllable, she turned and indignantly left the room.

Despite her noble indignation her heart was sore and weak, and once she flung herself on her knees beside the dainty bassinet and wept bitterly.

In vain baby Dot cooed and whined and clung her chubby fingers in the loose dark locks about the bowed head; the pretty wife was conscious of nothing but the unfamiliar trouble that seemed so keen and cruel.

When at length she had controlled her tears, she glanced wistfully toward the dusty clock on the untidy mantel.

How late is it, she murmured. Perhaps because he felt neglected he has indeed become remiss himself; or, perhaps he may never come. Perhaps, he no longer loves us—poor baby Dot and me—and he may really be with her—that strange woman whom he has favored with magnificent gifts and frequent drives and daily visits.

Her compunctions or misgivings, embittered by a vague and half incredulous jealousy, came well-nigh maddening her, as the swift moments elapsed, and yet he did not come. She could only wander in a vigil of unrest from room to room, now wildly peering out into the black night, or again turning with a shudder from the dust and litter that everywhere vexed her quickened sight, and ever listening to the dreary, dreary ticking of the clock.

And so the hours wore on. And just as the dawn began to lighten against the windows, there was the click of a latchkey, the sound of cautious footsteps, and then her husband almost noiselessly entered the room.

He started as he beheld her—a disconsolate vision, in the familiar torn and smirched wrapper, her bright eyes swollen and dimmed by many tears; her dark locks in disorder about her pretty face that was pitifully white and haggard.

They wanted me to stay, her hurriedly said, in deprecatory accents

and with the old gentle tenderness. Laura is ill—

Who is Laura? she sharply demanded, as a fierce pang wrenched her sore heart.

For an instant he started a little, and then an exceedingly comprehensive look succeeded the honest surprise of his countenance.

Why, she is my niece, he smiled, little Laura Doane Axworth. Possibly I may not have mentioned that my brother and his family are in the city; but lately my love, you have been so busy with your crazy quilt that you have had no time to listen to anything.

And you have been driving with her, you have given her a magnificent birthday gift; she questioned, with an indication of unutterable relief in her choking voice.

Why, yes, he declared, cheerfully; I knew you wouldn't mind; you were so eager to finish your quilt, you know, Letitia, that I had a notion you were glad to have me away. A fellow dislikes to dally about a house where he is only a bother and a hindrance. But, bless me, about what are you crying?

I am so sorry about it all—about the buttons and all that, Mrs. Letitia sobbed, her arms about his neck, her head against his heart. And I was beginning to fear that I had neglected you and everything until you might not wish to come home again. And I thought Laura Doane was some strange woman for whom you cared.

And I, he returned in playful consternation—I shall begin to fear that your crazy quilt has unsettled your senses. And it strikes me that somebody has willfully misrepresented my niece, who is still a little miss in pinafores. And I could never care for any other woman but you, although, my love, you were rather trying when you were occupied with that decorative abomination of ninety thousand discomforts.

It will be the cause of no more discomforts to you, Jakey, the pretty wife avowed with her most wifely smile.

She was likely never to ignore the lesson she had learned in that bitter vigil when she had waited and watched for the coming of one whose love she feared she had alienated by her inattention to the homelier duties of her household.

Dear, sagacious Aunt Virginia knew I needed a stern lesson, she used to think, and that is why she fabricated the clever comedy about little Laura Doane.

SIMPLE, BUT INTERESTING.

To suspend a bottle from a match laid on the edge of a table may seem an impossible feat but, says St. Nicholas, experiment will prove how easy it may be accomplished.

HELD IN A MATCH.

Tie a piece of twine securely around the neck of a bottle; then lay a match on the cork, held it firmly, bring the ends of the twine over it, and tie a tight knot, forming a loop. You may remove the match to show that you have simply tied a loop. Then insert the match through the loop, rest one end on the cork, and lay the other on the projecting edge of a table where the bottle will swing clear of any obstruction. If the match is but an inch in length it will support the bottle quite as readily and make the feat appear all the more surprising.

Young lady's dress of plaid velvet and surah. Lower skirt of velvet plainly made. Back drapery of surah jabot effect at the right side, and pointed in front; collar, cuffs and vest of plaid velvet. A very pretty arrangement of trimming is seen in this waist. Pointed pieces of velvet embroidered with beads are set in the yoke effect, with folds of silk above, the waist is shirred into three pieces, one side crossing over in surplice style, a yoke belt and tab ends finish the waist.

The act passed by the Illinois Legislature and approved by the Governor forbids the recording or registering of bets or wagers, or the selling of pools in contests of any kind, except on the "actual inclosure of Fair or race track associations that are incorporated under the laws of the State, during the actual time of the meeting of said association, or within twenty-four hours before such meeting."

THE PRIMA DONNA.

The first time I saw them they were both in the window.

Clarissima was leaning her arms upon the sill and gazing upward at a flock of sparrows quarrelling and chattering on the opposite house-tops. She looked like one of Raphael's cherubs, with her thatch of hair and Italian eyes, a finger on her lip. Her dress, which was white and flowing, with a scarlet band about it, was clasped at the throat with a gleaming clasp. There were tiny ornaments in her ears which twinkled and danced as she turned her head.

Antonia stood behind her with eyes turned above and beyond the sprays. His expression, as I made it out, was that of a man who had forever settled the most vital question of his life, and henceforth deals in no secondary ones. A pale face, cut clear as a cameo, with proud, acquiescent mouth.

I was long in making their acquaintance, for they seemed content to live apart, although Clarissima had nodded to me in a friendly manner more than once.

One afternoon when she appeared at her favorite haunt in the window and I had seen Antonio, whom I somewhat feared, go down the street with his sketch book under his arm, I seized a pot of primroses from my balcony, as a propitiation, and ran across.

She had seen me coming and admitted me herself with a half shy, half happy courtesy, a beautiful fan of scarlet plumes in her hand.

The room which I entered was one of three in direct communication, but separated by hangings of antique silk pushed far along the rods. To utter a cry of admiration was inevitable—all was so beautiful so full of individual life. I had known that Antonia was an artist and a successful one, but the work that surrounded me exceeded my wildest surmises.

The face of an angel confronted me, hung against a velvet panel of some oriental blue. Never, heaven knows could such a countenance have found its home on earth. A copy of Dante and a few violets lay on the couch beneath it, from the rumpled cushions of which Antonio had lately arisen.

Between the windows hung a painting in oils. It seemed to me at first merely a roseate sky ruffling in little waves toward the west. But suddenly I discovered a river rushing through a desert country, and the river took the color of the sky. There was not a tree nor shrub, nor living creature in the scene—only that marvelous glow in wave and cloud. On either side of it were water-colors of pink flowers, one azalea, the other a foreign plant unknown to me. I became suddenly aware indeed that this same pale flush prevailed all the room changing in effect, for it was not a monotone.

On a table at my hand lay a half-finished sketch of pansies, soft, perfect things, with a little purple dust upon them. Involuntarily I turned from them to the angelic face upon the wall, and Clarissima said, simply Those are the Lady Rose's eyes. When Antonia has finished them he will hang them there beside the arbutus in the corner, which is her smile. She was fond of pink—it was her favorite color—and Antonio has mastered all the shades. My brother loved in vain, she continued, dramatically, pressing her palms together, while the plummy fan slipped to the floor and lay at her feet. She is there, pointing to the angelic face, and there, in all the flowers. That rosy sky—it is the Lady Rose; and the river, that is Antonio's life, tinged with the color of the sky. It is a pity that he cannot better do her hair. Clarissima, he sometimes says, look! the streak of light that sometimes comes through the shutter yonder! Pick it up—bring it to me if thou canst. And by that he means that it is as hard to gather the sunlight up into the two hands as it is to mix the colors for her hair. You have been in Rome? You have been in the galleries? Ah, but there is nothing there like the Lady Rose's hair.

Clarissima paused for a moment, looked at me questioningly, and then went on: She was a great singer, but it was a humiliation to see Antonio follow in her footsteps, from Italy to France,

from St. Petersburg to the Nile, like a patient slave, and Antonio of so noble a family! He suffered the anguish of a purgatory for her. And she—ah, some women are inquisitors! Sometimes she sang for weeks in the same city, and then he was in paradise. He sent her flowers, such lovely flowers! Not great bouquets, or vulgar baskets, but some rare blossoms such as devoted love alone could procure. And while she still sang on, smiling upon him like a spirit from the heavenly world, she held them in her hand. She pressed them lightly to her breast; she buried her lips in their bloom.

It is curious what lives people can live together who never meet. Antonio in his box, the Lady Rose on the stage—they experienced all that human hearts can. I mean Antonio did. The Lady Rose had neither heart nor experience. She was a beautiful creation, a vision, Antonio said, of love and song.

At last she came to America, and for a time we lost her. It is hard to pursue in a country so vast as this. She allured us, and then eluded us; had gone, or failed to keep her engagements. I was very weary of the interminable fight, but the look in my brother's eyes never permitted me to rebel.

We were in a city of the west. I had been ill, and Antonio had lingered faithfully beside me, although the hindrance must have cost him much. We were driven through the open country, and as we passed a frame, created for the purpose, I saw the name of the Lady Rose. It was the bills announcing her to sing that night; and as we drove along they multiplied, and there were rude portraits of her in the windows of the shops.

Imbeciles! muttered Antonio, who could not bear these outrages upon art; but nevertheless, there was a note of joy in his voice. I was too tired to go with him to the opera, and anyway it was best that he should go alone. He was very handsome that night. You have remarked that he is so? His eyes were brilliant and restless as stars. He had a bracelet to send to the Lady Rose between the acts, and as he wrote the note that accompanied it, his man's hand trembled. Has it ever occurred to you that the love of an artist is really a terrible thing—half divine, half diabolical?

He kissed me when he went away, and I could feel the rapid beating of his heart as it rested for a moment next to mine.

When he had gone I lowered the lights and tried to sleep; but I was tortured by a terrible dream. I saw a soft, white arm arise upon a sea of light and wave a moment in the air. There was nothing but light and the waving arm, as far as I could see, until at last Antonio appeared and came across the sea to where the arm was beckoning. It softly curved about his neck and the hand lay on his breast. But suddenly it changed and turned a hideous bronze, and seemed to slip and lose its hold; and the hand had turned into a head with burning eyes. Antonio struggled to be free, but while I looked something darted from his mouth and plunged into its heart.

I awoke, cold with fright, to find Antonio in reality beside me. I sprang to his arms and turned his white face to the light. It is nothing, my child, he said. It is only an artist's dream. Hast thou, too, been dreaming? And I knew by the icy smile, the frigid lip, that Antonio's dream was the verification of my own.

Clarissima stooped for her fan and leaned back languidly in her chair. Perhaps you think Antonio is mad. Many people do. They do not know what it is to suffer and to have a great imagination.

I was in this apartment often in later days, and frequently met Antonio. Clarissima's suggestion that I might think him mad was a vain one. A person more self-contained and urbane I never saw. The old conceits of pansies and arbutus, which Clarissima was pleased to term Lady Rose's eyes and smile, took nothing from my estimate of his sanity. May not art wander into bypaths on its way to the great goal? The angelic face upon the wall was the divine fruition of his dreams. I was subsequently led to believe that he regarded it as the climax of his technique.

This was on a certain evening when

he turned to me under the Moorish lamp above it and uttered these words:

A man never touches the hem of the garment of art until he has broken his heart. He should do this as quickly as possible if he wishes to paint or compose a sonata.

MR. ARSON SERENADED.

One evening a few weeks ago Mr. and Mrs. Arson, who live in Sioux Falls, on Dakota avenue, were at supper, a band of six or seven pieces began to play on the sidewalk in front of the house.

Ah! said Mr. Arson, what's that? Mrs. Arson looked out of a front window and reported.

That's it, that's it, said Mr. Arson, smiling and pushing back from the table; I expected it.

Expected what? inquired Mrs. Arson.

Why to be serenaded, of course. I've been looking for something of that kind right along. My friends have sent a band around to serenade me.

What for, pray?

What for? can't you see anything? Did not I tell you when I was appointed on that board that I was a public man now? Didn't I try to explain to you that I was now in public life and likely to be serenaded, and interviewed, and called on for a speech like all other public men? But you couldn't see it, and went around acting as if you thought I was a private citizen just like I was when you married me. What do you think about it now?

I think just the same as I always did. You may be in public life, as you call it, but you're just as big a fool as you ever were.

Well, I don't care what you think any how—my public services are appreciated, even if you don't recognize 'em. I am going down town and perhaps I'll be called on for a speech, I will thank the band in a few well-chosen words and then go down and see my constituents. Ah, I guess the band is coming in, and he went to the door in response to a knock.

Money for ze musicians? asked the man as he held out his hand. Mr. Arson slid out and closed the door, giving him a dollar, and then walked down town by a back street, and Mrs. Arson said:

If that man isn't growing worse and worse! He'll hear about this when he gets home and he can't turn the subject, either.

Children, look in those eyes, listen to that dear voice, notice the feeling of even a single touch that is bestowed upon you by that hand! Make much of it while yet you have that most precious of all good gifts a loving mother. Read the unfathomed love of those eyes; the kind anxiety of that tone and look, however slight your pain. In after life you may have friends; but never again will you have the inexpressible love and gentleness lavished upon you which none but a mother bestows. Often do I sigh in the struggle with the hard unkind world for the sweet, deep security I felt when of an evening nestling in her bosom I listened to some quiet tale suitable for my age, read in her untiring voice. Never can I forget her sweet glances cast upon me when I appeared to be asleep; never her kiss at night. Years have passed away since we have laid her beside my father in the old yard; yet still her voice whispers from the grave and her eye watches over me, as I visit spots long since hallowed to the memory of my mother.

There is a charming white crepe de Chine with small flowers over the surface. One of these was made with the under part of white surah, with one deep puff of white lace covering it to the foot. The flowered crepe fell over this puff in a long, pointed apron, finished with a flounce of lace, and a second flounce carried across higher up. The crepe de Chine bodice was gathered in surplice folds in front, and a deep edging of lace came from under the folds and formed a sort of plastron. This was finished off by a belt of red velvet ribbon coming from the side seams. The lace sleeves had two puffs divided by red velvet bands. The basque had a red velvet collar.

Zellers has the largest, cheapest and best stock of fishing tackle in town