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TOWANDA:

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Selected Poetry.

THE LAST GOOD NIGHT.

Close her eyelids—press them gently
O'er the dead and leaden eyes,
For the soul that made them lively,
Hath returned into the skies;
Wipe the death-drops from her forehead,
Sever one dear golden tress,
Fold her icy hands all meekly,
Smooth the little snowy dress;
Scatter flowers o'er her pillow—
Gentle flowers, so pure and white—
Lay the bed upon her bosom,
There—now softly say, Good-night,
Though our tears flow fast and faster,
Yet we would not call her back,
We are glad her feet no longer
Tread life's rough and thorny track;
We are glad our Heavenly Father
Took her while her heart was pure,
We are glad he did not leave her
All life's trials to endure;
We are glad—and yet the tear-drops
Falleth; for alas we know
That our bedside will be lonely,
We shall miss our darling so,
While the twilight shadows gather,
We shall wait in vain to feel
Little arms, all white and dimpled,
Round our neck so softly steal;
Our wet cheek will miss the pressure
Of sweet lips so warm and red,
And our bosom sadly, sadly,
Miss that darling little head
Which was wont to rest here sweetly;
And those golden eyes so bright,
We shall miss their loving glances,
We shall miss their soft Good-night
When the morrow's sun is shining,
They will take this cherished form,
They will bear it to the church-yard,
And consign it to the worm;
Well—what matter! It is only
The clay dress our darling wore;
God hath robes for her as an angel,
She hath needs of this no more;
Fold her hands, and o'er her pillow
Scatter flowers all pure and white,
Kiss the marble brow, and whisper,
Once again, a last Good-night.

Selected Tale.

[From the Atlantic Monthly.]

MY LAST LOVE.

I had counted many more in my girlhood, in the first flush of blossoming, and a few, good men and true, whom I never met even now without an added color; for, at one time or another, I thought I loved each of them. "Why didn't I marry them, then?" For the same reason that many another woman does not. We are afraid to trust our own likings. Too many of them are but sunrise vapors, very rosy to begin with, but by mid-day as dingy as any old dead cloud with the rain all shed out of it. I never see any of those old swains of mine, without feeling profoundly thankful that I don't belong to him. I shouldn't want to look over my husband's head in any sense. So they all get wives and children, and I lived an old maid, although I was scarcely conscious of the state; for, if my own eyes or other people's testimony were to be trusted, I don't look old, and I'm quite sure I don't feel so. But I came to myself on my thirty-second birthday, an old maid most truly, without benefit of clergy. And thereby hangs this tale; for on that birthday I first made acquaintance with my last love. Something like a month before, there had come to Huntsville two gentlemen in search of game and quiet quarters for the summer. They soon found that a hotel in a country village afforded little seclusion; but the woods were full of game, the mountain-brooks swarmed with trout too fine to be given up, and they decided to take a house of their own. After some search, they fixed on an old house, (I've forgotten whose "folly" it was called,) full a mile and a half from town, standing upon a mossy hill that bounded my fields, square and stiff and weather-beaten, and without any protection except a ragged pine-tree that thrust its huge limbs beneath the empty windows, as though it were running away with a stolen horse under its arm. The place was musty, rat-eaten, and tenanted by a couple of ghosts, who thought a fever, once quite fatal within the walls, no suitable discharge from the property, and made themselves perfectly free of the quarters in properly weird seasons. But money and labor cleared out all the cob-webs, (for ghosts are but spiritual cob-webs, you know,) and the old house soon wore a charming air of rustic comfort. I used to look over sometimes, for it was full in the sportsmen going off by sunrise and see the view from my chamber windows, and their guns or fishing-rods, or lying after their late dinner, stretched upon the grass in front of the house, smoking and reading. Sometimes a fragment of a song would be dropped down from the lazy wings of the south wind, sometimes a long laugh filled all the summer air and frightened the pine-wood into echoes, and, altogether, the new neighbors seemed to live an enviable life. They were very civil people, too; for, though their nearest path out lay across my fields, and close by the doorway, and they often stopped to buy fruit or cream or butter, we were never annoyed by an impertinent question or look. Once only I overheard a remark not altogether civil, and that was on the evening before my birthday. One of them, the elder, said, as he went away from my house with a basket of cherries, that he should like to get speech with that polyglot old maid, who read, and wrote, and made her own butter-pats. The other answered, that the butter was excellent at any rate, and perhaps she had a classical cow; and they went down the lane laughingly disputing about the

matter, not knowing that I was behind the current bushes. "Polyglot old maid!" I thought, very indignantly, as I went into the house. "I've a mind not to sell them another cake of my butter. But I wonder if people call me an old maid. I wonder if I am one." I thought of it all the evening, and dreamed of it all night, waking the next morning with a new realization of the subject. That first sense of a lost youth! How sharp and strong it comes! That suddenly opened north door of middle life, through which the winter winds rush in, sweeping out the southern windows all the splendors of the earlier time; it is like a sea-tide in late summer. It has seemed to be June all along, and we thought it was June, until the wind went round to the east, and the first red leaf admonished us. By-and-by we close, as well as we may, that open door, and look out again from the windows upon blooms, beautiful in their way, to which some birds yet sing; but, alas! the wind is still from the east, and blows as though, far away, it had lain among icebergs. So I mused all the morning, watering the sentiment with a bit of a shadow out of my cloud; and when the shadows turned themselves, I went out to see how old age would look to me in the fields and woods. It was a delicious afternoon, more like a warm dream of hay-making, odorless, misty, sleepily musical, than a waking reality, on which the sun shone. Tremulous blue clouds lay down all around upon the mountains, and lazy white ones lost themselves in the waters; and through the dozing air, the faint chirp of robin or cricket, and ding of bells in the woods, and mellow out of scythe, melted into one song, as though the heart-beat of the luscious midsummer time had set itself to tune. I walked on to loiter through the woods. No dust-brush for brain or heart like the boughs of trees! There dwells a truth, and pure, strong health within them, an ever-returning youth, promising us a glorious leafage in some strange spring-time, and a symmetry and sweetness that possess us until our thoughts grow skyward like them, and wave and sing in some sunnier strata of soul air. In the woods I was a girl again, and forgot the flow of the hours in their pleasant companionship. I must have grown tired and sat down by a thicket of pines to rest, though I have forgotten, and perhaps I had fallen asleep; for suddenly I became conscious of a sharp report, and a sharper pain in my shoulder, and, tearing off my cape, I found the blood was flowing from a wound just below the joint. I remember little more, for a sudden faintness came over me; but I have an indistinct remembrance of people coming up, of voices, of being carried home, and of the consternation there, and long delay in obtaining the surgeon. The pain of an operation brought me fully to my senses; and when that was over, I was left alone to sleep, or to think over my situation at leisure. I'm afraid I had but little of a Christian spirit then. All my plans of labor and pleasure spoiled by this one piece of carelessness! to call it by the mildest term. All those nice little fancies that should have grown into real flesh-and-blood articles for my publisher, hang up to dry and shrivel without shape or comeliness! The garden, the dairy, the new bit of carriage-way through the beeches,—my pet scheme,—the new music, the sewing, all laid upon the shelf for an indefinite time, and I with no better employment than to watch the wall paper, and to wonder if it wasn't almost dinner or supper-time, or nearly daylight! To be sure, I knew and thought of all the improving reflections of a sick-room; but it was much like a mild-spoken person making peace among twenty quarrelsome ones. You can see him making mouths, but you don't hear a word he says. A sick mind breeds fever fast in a sick body, and by night I was in a high fever, and for a day or two knew but little of what went on about me. One of the first things I heard when I grew easier, was, that my neighbor, the sportsman, was waiting below to hear how I was. It was the younger one whose gun had wounded me; and he had shown great solicitude, they said, coming several times each day to inquire for me. He brought some birds to be cooked for me, too,—and came again to bring some lilies he had gone a mile to fetch, he told the girl. Every day became to inquire, or to bring some delicacy, or a few flowers, or a new magazine for me, until the report of his visit came to be an expected excitement, and varied the dull days wonderfully. Sickness and seclusion are a new birth to our senses, oftentimes. Not only do we get a real glimpse of ourselves, unclerked and unclothed, but the commonest habits of life, and the things that have helped to shape them day by day, put on a sort of strangeness, and come to shake hands with us again, and make us wonder that they should be just exactly what they are. We get at the primitive meaning of them, as if we rub off the nap of life, and looked to see how the threads were woven; and they come and go before us with a sort of old newness that affects us much as if we should meet our own ghost some time, and wonder if we are really our own or some other person's housekeeper. I went through all this, and came out with a stock of small facts besides,—as, that the paper hanger had patched the hangings in my chamber very badly in certain dark spots, (I had got several headaches, making it out,—that the chimney was a little too much on one side,—that certain boards in the entry creaked of their own accord in the night,—that Neighbor Brown had tucked a few new shingles into the roof of his barn, so that it seemed to have broken out with them,—and any number of other things equally important. At length I got down-stairs, and was allowed to see a few friends. Of course there was an inundation of them; and each one expected to hear my story, and to tell a companion one, something like mine, only a little more so. It was astonishing, the immense number of people that had been hurt with guns. No wonder. I was sick for a day or two afterwards. I was more prudent next time, however, and

as the gossips had got all they wanted, I saw only my particular friends. Among these my neighbor, the sportsman, insisted on being reckoned, and after a little hesitation we were obliged to admit him. I say we,—for, on hearing of my injury, my good cousin, Mary Mead, had come to nurse and amuse me. She was one of those safe, servicable, amiable people, made of just the stuff for a satellite, and she proved invaluable to me. She was immensely taken with Mr. Ames, too, (I speak of the younger, for, after the first curl of condolence, the elder sportsman never came.) and to her I left the task of entertaining him, or rather of doing the honors of the house,—for the gentleman contrived to entertain himself and us. Now don't imagine the man a hero, for he was no such thing. He was very good-looking,—some might say handsome,—well-bred, well educated, with plenty of common information picked up in a promiscuous intercourse with town and country people, rather fine tastes, and a great, strong, magnanimous, physical nature, modest, but perfectly self-conscious. That was his only charm for me. I despise a mere animal; but, other things being equal, I admire a man who is big and strong, and aware of his advantages; and I think most women, and very refined ones, too, love physical beauty and strength much more than they are willing to acknowledge. So I had the same admiration for Mr. Ames that I should have had for any other finely proportioned thing, and enjoyed him very much, sitting quietly in my corner while he chatted with Mary, or told me stories of travel or hunting, or read aloud, which he soon fell into the way of doing. We did try, as much as hospitality permitted, to confide his visits to a few ceremonious calls; but he persisted in coming almost every day, and walked in past the girl with that quiet sort of authority which it is so difficult to resist. In the same way he took possession of Mary and me. He was sure it must be very dull for both of us; therefore he was going, if we would pardon the liberty, to offer his services as reader, while my nurse went out for a ride or a walk. Couldn't I sit out under the shadow of the beech-trees, as well as in that hot room? He could lift the chair and me perfectly well, and arrange all so that I should be comfortable. He would like to superintend the cooking of some birds he brought one day. He noticed that she didn't do them quite as nicely as he had learned to do them in the woods. And so in a thousand things he quietly made us do as he chose, without seeming to outrage any rule of propriety. When I was able to sit in a carriage, he persuaded me to drive with him; and I had to lean on his arm, when I first went round the place to see how matters went on. Once I protested against his making himself so necessary to us, and told him that I didn't care to furnish the gossips so much food as we were doing. When I turned him out of doors, he would certainly stay away, he said; but he thought, that, as long as I was an invalid, I needed some one to think and act for me and save me the trouble, and as no one else seemed disposed to take the office, he thought it was rather his duty and privilege,—especially, he added, with a slight smile, as he was quite sure that it was not very disagreeable to us. As for the gossips, he didn't think they would make much out of it, with such an excellent duenna as Cousin Mary,—and, indeed, he heard the other day that he was paying attention to her. I thought it all over by myself, when he had gone, and came to the conclusion that it was not necessary for me to resign so great a pleasure as his society had become, merely for the fear of what a few curious people might say. Even Mary, cautious as she was, protested against banishing him for such a reason; and, after a little talking over of the matter among ourselves, we decided to let Mr. Ames come as often as he chose, for the remaining month of his stay. That month went rapidly enough, for I was well enough to ride and walk out, and half the time had Mr. Ames to accompany me. I got to value him very much, as I knew him better, and as he grew acquainted with my peculiarities; and we were the best friends in the world, without a thought of being more. No one would have laughed at that more than we, there was such an evident unsuitableness in the idea. At length the time came for him to leave Huntsville; his horse was closed, except one room where he still preferred to remain, and his friend was already gone. He came to take tea with us for the last time, and made himself as agreeable as ever, although it evidently required some effort to do so. Soft-hearted Cousin Mary broke down and went off crying when he bade her good-bye, after tea; but I was not of such stuff, and laughingly rallied him on the impression he had made. "Get your bonnet, and walk over to the stile with me, Miss Rachel," he said. "It isn't sunset quite yet, and the afternoon is warm. Come! it's the last walk we shall take together." I followed him out, and we went almost silently across the fields to the hill that overlooked the strip of meadow between our houses. There was the stile over which I had looked to see him spring, many a time. "Sit down a moment, until the sun is quite down," he said, making room for me beside him on the topmost step. "See how splendid that sky is! a pavilion for the gods!" "I should think they were airing all their finery," I answered. "I look more like a counterpane with bright goods than anything else I can think of." "That's a decidedly vulgar comparison, and you're not in a spiritual mood at all," he said. "You've snubbed me two or three times to-night, when I've tried to be sentimental. What's amiss with you?" and he bent his eyes, full of a saucy sort of triumph, upon mine. "I don't like parting with friends; it sets me all awry," I said, giving back his own self-assured look. I was sorry to have him go; but he thought I was going to cry or blub, he was mistaken.

"You'll write to me, Miss Rachel?" he asked. "No, Mr. Ames,—not at all," I said. "Not write? Why not?" he asked in astonishment. "Because I don't believe in galvanizing dead friendship," I answered. "Dead friendship, Miss Rachel? I hope ours has much life in it yet," he said. "It's in the last agony, Sir. It will be comfortably dead and buried before long, with a neat little epitaph over it,—which is much the best way to dispose of them finally, I think." "You're harder than I thought you were," he said. "Is that the way you feel towards all your friends?" "I love my friends as well as any one," I answered. "But I never hold them when they wish to be gone. My life-year spins against some other year, catches the fibers, and twists into the very heart." "So far?" he asked, turning his eyes down to mine. "Yes," I said coolly,—"for the time being. You don't play at your friendship, do you? If so, I pity you. As I was saying, they're like one thread. By-and-by one spindle is moved, the strands spin away from each other, and become strange yarn. What's the use of sending little locks of wool across to keep them acquainted? They're two yarns from henceforth. Reach out for some other thread,—there's plenty near,—and spin in that. We're made all up of little locks from other people, Mr. Ames. Won't it be strange, in that great Hereafter, to hunt up our own fibers, and return other people's? It would take about forty-five degrees of an eternity to do that." "I shall never return mine," he said. "I couldn't take myself to pieces in such a style. But won't you write at all?" "To what purpose? You'll be glad of one letter,—possibly of two. Then it will be, 'Confound it! here's a missive from that old maid! What a bore! Now I suppose I must air my wits in her behalf; but, if you ever catch me again,—Erit!'" "And you?" he asked, laughing. "I shall be as weary as you, and find it as difficult to keep warmth in the poor dying body. No, Mr. Ames. Let the poor thing die a natural death, and we'll wear a bit of crape a little while, and get a new friend for the old." "So you mean to forget me altogether?" "No, indeed! I shall recollect you as a very pleasant tale that is told,—not a friend to hanker after. Isn't that good common sense?" "It's all hard work,—mere cold calculation," he said; "while I"—He stopped and colored. "Your gods, there, are downright turn-coats," I said, coming down from the stile. "Their red mantles are nothing but pearl-colored now, and presently they'll be russet-gray. That whippoorwill always brings the dew with him, too; so I must go home. Good-night, and good-bye, Mr. Ames." "I scarcely know how to part with you," he said, taking my hand. "It's not so easy a thing to do." "People say, 'Good-bye' or 'God bless you,' or some such civil phrase, usually," I said, with just the least curl of my lip,—for I knew I had got the better of him. He colored again, and then smiled a little sadly. "Ah! I'm afraid I leave a bigger lock than I take," he exclaimed. "Well, then, good friend! good-bye, and God bless you, too!—Don't be quite so hard as you promise to be." I missed him very much, indeed; but if any think I cried after him, or wrote verses, or soliloquized for his sake, they are much mistaken. I had lost friends before, and made it a point to think just as little of them as possible, until the sore spot grew strong enough to handle without wincing. Besides, my cousin stayed with me, and all my good friends in the village had to come out for a call or a visit to see how the land lay; so I had occupation enough. Once in a while I used to look over to the old house, and wish for one good breezy conversation with its master; and when the snow came and lay in one mass upon the old roof, clear down to the caves, like a night-cap pulled down to the eyes of a low-browed old woman, I moved my bed against the window that looked that way. These forsaken nests are gloomy things enough! I had no thought of hearing again of him or from him, and was surprised, when, in a month, a review came, and before long another, and afterwards a box, by express, with a finely kept bouquet, and, in mid-winter, a little oil-painting,—a delicious bit of landscape for my sanctum, as he said in the note that accompanied it. I heard from him in this way all winter, although I never sent word or message back again, and tried to think I was sorry that he did not forget me, as I had supposed he would. Of course I never thought of acknowledging to myself that it was possible for me to love him. I was too good a sophist for that, and, indeed, I think that between a perfect friendship and a perfect love a fainter distinction exists than many people imagine. I have known likings to be colored as rosily as love, and seen what called itself love as cold as the chilliest liking. One day, after spring had been some time come, I was returning from a walk and saw that Mr. Ames's house was open. I could not see any person there; but the door and windows were opened, and a faint smoke crept out of the chimney and up among the new spring foliage after the squirrels. I had walked some distance, and was tired, and the weather was not perfect; but I thought I would go round that way and see what was going on.—It was one of those charming child-days in early May, laughing and crying all in one, the fine mist-drops shining down in the sun's rays, like star-dust from some new world in process of rasping up for use. I liked such days.—The showers were as good for me as for the trees. I grew and budded under them, and they filled my soul's soil full of singing brooks. When I reached the lawn before the door, Mr. Ames came out to see me,—so glad to

meet that he held my hand and drew me in, asking two or three times how I was and if I were glad to see him. He had called at the house and seen Cousin Mary, on his way over, he said,—for he was hungering for a sight of us. He was not looking as well as when he left in the autumn,—thinner, paler, and with a more anxious expression when he was not speaking; but when I began to talk with him, he brightened up, and seemed like his old self. He had two or three workmen already tearing down portions of the finishing, and after a few moments asked me to go round and see what improvements he was to make. We stopped at last at his chamber, a room that looked through the foliage towards my house. "This is my lounging-place," he said, pointing to the sofa beneath the window. "I shall sit here with my cigar and watch you this summer; so be circumspect! But are you sure that you are glad to see me?" "To be sure. Do you take me for a heathen?" I said. "But what are you making such a change for? Couldn't the old house content you?" "It satisfies me well enough; but I expect visitors this summer who are quite fastidious, and this old worm-eaten woodwork wouldn't do for them. What makes you look so dark? Don't you like the notion of my lady-visitors?" "I didn't know that they were to be ladies until you told me," I said; "and it's none of my business whom you entertain, Mr. Ames." "There wasn't much of a welcome for them in your face, at any rate," he answered, "and to tell the truth, I am not much pleased with the arrangement myself. But they took a sudden fancy for coming, and no amount of persuasion could induce them to change their minds. It's hardly a suitable place for ladies; but if they will come, they must make the best of it." "How came you ever to take a fancy to this place? and what makes you spend so much money on it?" I asked. "You don't like to see the money thrown away," he said, laughing. "The truth is, that I've got a skeleton, like many another man, and I've been trying these two years to get away from it. The first time I stopped to rest under this tree, I felt light-hearted. I don't know why, except it was some mysterious influence; but I loved the place, and I love it no less now, although my skeleton has found a lodging-place here too." "Of course," I said, "and very appropriately. The house was haunted before you came." "It was haunted for me afterward," he said softly, more to himself than to me; "sweet, shadowy visions I should be glad to call up now." And he turned away and swallowed a sigh. I pitied him all the way home, and sat up to pity him, looking through the soft May starlight to see the lamp burning steadily at his window until after midnight. From that time I seemed to have a trouble,—though I could scarcely have named or owned it, it was so indefinite. He came to see me a few days afterward, and sat quite dull and abstracted until I warmed him up with a little lively opposition. I vexed him first, and then, when I saw he was interested enough to talk, I let him have a chance; and I had never seen him so interesting. He showed me a new phase of his character, and I instead, and answered him in a few words as possible, that I might lose nothing of the revelation. When he got up to go away, I asked him where he had been to learn and think so much since the last autumn. He began to be, I thought and hoped, what a sterner teaching might have made him before. He seemed a little embarrassed; said no one else had discovered any change in him, and he thought it must be only a reflected light. He had observed that I had "a remarkable faculty for drawing people out."—What was my witchcraft? I disclaimed all witchcraft, and told him it was only because I quarrelled with people. A little wholesome opposition had warmed him into quite a flight of fancy. "If I could only," he began, hurriedly; but took out his watch, said it was time for him to go, and went off quite hastily. It was very weak in me, but I wished very much to know what he would have said. (CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK.)

FREEMASONRY AND GRIDIRONS.—A worthy police captain, says the New-York Post, entertained a fancy to become a Freemason, and was accordingly proposed and elected. A friend accompanied him to the place of meeting, which was in a building the lower part of which was used as a place of entertainment. The neophyte was left in an apartment next to the servant's room, while his friend went up stairs to assist in the opening ceremonies. A Celtic maiden, who caught a glimpse of the stranger, resolved to take part in his initiation, and procuring a gridiron, placed it over the range. It was not long before the captain looking inquisitively through the door, saw the utensil reddening in the heat. The recollection flashed through his mind of Masonic candidates and some peculiar ordeals which they were made to encounter. "What is that, Bridget?" he eagerly inquired. "And sure," replied the Hibernian virgin, "it's only the gridiron that I was told to place over the coals." "Who told you?" asked the eager policeman. "And was it not the gentleman who came with you?" "What?" "What could he want of it?" demanded the captain. "And sure, I can't tell," replied Bridget; "they are often using it; it belongs to the people above stairs. I always heat it when they want to make a Mason." This was too much for the excited captain, and taking to his heels he soon put a safe distance between himself and the lodge.

NATURAL OYSTER BEDS.—Along the Jersey shore, where the rivers empty into salt water there are natural oyster beds, whence is procured the seed oysters which supply the planted beds. In the spring the oyster in the natural bed deposits its spawn—a white gelatinous substance, which adheres to whatever it touches—and in this way spreads a large growth of small oysters, some not larger than the head of a pin. From these seed beds the oysters are taken and laid in shoal salt water, to be easily taken up when wanted, and where they remain for several years, till they get sufficient size for market. Thousands of bushels of the small seed oysters are in this way distributed along the shore on the planting grounds or sold to be carried away for planting to other States. The practice is to take these seed oysters away in the spring and fall. If allowed to remain in their beds over fall, they will separate and spread, but it removed at that period of the year the young oysters die by the thousands. If they do not get bedded early in the mud, the tides, blown out by the winds, leave them exposed, or, adhering to the ice in the winter, they are lifted out their beds and either carried away or crushed. Unless something is done for the protection of these natural oyster beds, it is believed that they will all be destroyed, and even those engaged in the business, it is said, acknowledge the destructiveness of the present mode of operation and desire that the period of taking the oysters for planting shall be confined to the spring of the year. Forty days from the first of April, it is believed, would be sufficient for all planting purposes, and an effort will be made at Trenton to get the Legislature to limit the planting to that period. Clams have been nearly destroyed by the continued raking of the beds, and the seed is now only kept up by those hid in the bottoms of the deep channels.

LEAP YEAR.—The year in which young ladies are permitted to "pop the question" will not commence until the 29th of February.—Any year divisible by 4 without a remainder, is leap year, which comes every fourth year. The solar year is 365 days, 4 hours 48 minutes and 47 1/10 seconds. For convenience we drop these hours, minutes and seconds in our ordinary reckoning, and call the civil year 365 days. Hence we lose nearly a day in this reckoning every fourth year—we actually lose in 4 years, four times five hours, 48 minutes, and 48 seconds, which is not quite a day.—But, for round numbers again, we call it a day, and therefore add a day to every fourth year—naming it the 29th of February. Of course by thus adding a whole day, we add a little too much—nearly 12 minutes a year. That in 100 years would amount to, say 1120 minutes, and of course if this discrepancy also were not provided for, in the course of centuries it would vitiate the calendar. Therefore, once every hundred years a leap year is skipped for three consecutive centuries, on the fourth century it is retained because the balance is a little the other way again.—Thus for three centuries we have an excess of 3380 minutes, leaving a discrepancy of 699 minutes. This, then, is partially corrected by continuing the leap year as usual on the fourth century, putting us within about 480 minutes or eight hours of being right at the end of every fourth century—near enough right for all practical purposes.

LIFE.—Ah, there is a touching beauty in the radiant up-look of a girl just crossing the limits of youth, and commencing her journey through the checkerboard sphere of womanhood. It is all dew-sparkle and morning glory to her ardent, buoyant spirit, and she presses forward exulting in blissful anticipations. But the withering heat of the conflict of life creeps on; the dew-drops exhale; the garlands of hope shatter and dead, strew the path; and too often, ere noon-tide, the clear brow and sweet smile are exchanged for the weary look of one longing for the evening rest, the twilight of life. Oh, may the good God give an early sleep unto these many!

Mrs. Smithers has a great idea of her husband's military powers. "For two years," says she, "he was a lieutenant in the horse marines, after which he was promoted to the captaincy of a regular company of sashpeds and minors."