

MESMERISM AND MATRIMONY. A BACHELOR'S STORY.

MARTIN SPEED was a bachelor. He had backed and filled, and hesitated and doubted about entering upon "blissful state" of matrimony, until the fire of youthful passion was all spent, and matrimony had become a problem to him as dry and formal to him as one in old Walsh's Arithmetic; to be ciphered out for an answer, as much as that proposition about carrying the fox, goose and bag of corn across the creek, that everybody "problemly" remembers. Being a phrenologist, he left the province of hearts, altogether, and went to examining heads, to ascertain the craniological developments of a woman's fitness for the position of a wife to Martin Speed, Esq., as letters came addressed to him at the Speedwell post-office. Speedwell was named for an ancestor of his, and boasted of several thousands of inhabitants; and, as it was a factory place it had a goodly share of good looking marriageable girls.

Martin studied Combe and Spurzheim and Gall, and grew bitter as disappointment saw him enter his forty-first year a bachelor. He looked back on the past, and saw the chances he had neglected, and the happiness of those who had started with him, and were now portly people the heads and fronts of families; and the delicate damsels he had slighted, respected mothers in Israel, and exemplary and amiable wives. He sought every opportunity for examining the heads of such as would submit themselves to his hand with a hope of catching the bachelor; for they knew his weakness, and he was well-to-do and an eligible match. But, in vain he looked for perfection. The bumps would not be arranged as he wished them. If he took a liking to a pretty face, phrenology immediately gave it the lie straight, and he at once avoided it.

It was at this juncture that a biological lecturer—came to Speedwell, and gave a series of exhibitions. These Martin attended, and biology at once became an "intensity" with him, a "new emotion." He attended all the exhibitions; and saw men perorate roosters and crows; hens and scratches; shiver with cold or burn with heat, at the will of the operator; saw a miser endeavor to clutch an eagle held out to him while under the influence of the wonderful spell, and the tongue of a woman stilled who for twenty years had been the pest of Speedwell by her loquacity.

This put the mind of Martin on a new track. He sold his old phrenological works and devoted himself to the study of the wonderful science through which such marvels were performed. The professor was a fine teacher, and Martin placed himself under his tuition. He succeeded admirably. In a short time he surpassed his instructor, and had more than his powers in influencing the susceptible among his weak brethren and sisters.

He formed a resolution to himself, that through this means he would gain a wife. Could he find one that his science could transfix like the man who was stopped by the mesmerizer half-way down, as he was falling from the roof of a house—he would marry her; for the reason, dear reader, that Martin had not married, was that he had heard of wives wearing—the authority over their looks, and he was a timid man.

In this new science he saw security, and sedulously sought for one of the right description. At every party where he was invited, at every sewing circle, at every knot of factory girls in which he mingled in the summer evenings, he tried his art, but without success. At last when on the point of despairing, accident gave what he had failed of obtaining by earnest seeking.

A widow—dangerous to bachelorhood as edge tools are to the careless hands of the inexperienced—came to the village on a visit. The weeds had been removed that marked her bereavement, and the merest touch of melancholy rested on her brow, but her eye was laughing, and a sweet curl strayed away and lay like a chiselled eddy upon the marble of her cheek. She had a jewel on her hand, and the black dress she wore was cut judiciously—the milliner that cut it had been a widow herself, and knew how to manage such matters—showing a beautiful white shoulder, and revealing a bust of rare loveliness. Martin met the widow at the residence of a friend, and liked her. He had never seen so prepossessing a woman, he thought. But she had buried one husband, and that was rather a drawback. One visit led to another, the liking still increasing, until he broached the subject of biology, with a wish, fervently felt, that this might be the woman he sought. She was fully acquainted with it, and in answer to his question if she was susceptible to its influences, she replied that she didn't know, but was willing to have the fact tested.

What a position for Martin! Seated by her side on a sofa, with her hand laid in his, her rich, dark eyes resting upon his with a look equal to that which the Widow Wadman poured into those of the unsuspecting Toby in the stillness of a summer evening. But science held him secure, and his nerves were as calm as the summer day of that evening.

By-and-by the beautiful lids drooped, the head bent gently forward, and the

widow with a sweet smile upon her lips lay fast asleep. Martin could have shouted "Eureka," in his delight at the discovery. Now his pulse quickened, and he stooped to kiss the lips that lay unresisting before him; but he didn't. By the exercise of his power he awakened her, how he had been tempted, and how gloriously he had resisted and laughed a little when she slapped his cheek with her fingers as he took pay from the widow's lips for his self denial, and went home half crazy with joy at his new found treasure, more like a boy of nineteen than a matured gentleman of forty.

Every night found him a visitor at this widow's, and every night the success of the science was proved, until by a mere look or wave of the hand the beautiful widow became a subject to his will and he at the same time a subject of hers. She was such a splendid creature, too! You would not find in a long journey another fairer, or more intelligent, or more virtuous. The question might be asked, what magnetism was the most pleasant or the most powerful, his or hers. But he thought only of his own, not deeming that he was a spell more powerful, that was irrevocably binding him. What could an old bachelor know of such a thing?

The state of things grew to a crisis at last, and Martin formally proposed to the widow that the two should be made one, by the transmutation of the church. To this she assented; and it was announced soon after, to the astonishment of all, that Martin Speed had married the Widow Goode. The punster of the village made a notable pun about Good-Speed, at which people laughed very much; and the editor of one of the papers, who was a very funny man, put it in print.

It happened, shortly after the marriage that they had a famous party, and some of the guests bantered Martin about his marriage, upon which he told them of the manner it came about. They were a little incredulous, and he volunteered to give them some specimens of his remarkable power over his wife.

She was in another room attending to some female friends, when he called her to him. She came immediately, and he asked her to sit down, which she did. He took her hand and looked into her eyes, to put her to sleep. Her eyes were wide open, and a lurking spirit of mischief looked out of them broadly into his. He waved his hands before them, but they remained persistently open. He bent the force of his will to their subjugation, but it was of no use.

"Mr. Speed," said she, laughing, "I don't believe the magnetism of the husband is equal to that of the lover; or, perhaps, science and matrimony are at war."

She said this in a manner to awaken a strong suspicion in his mind that she had humbugged him and had never been put to sleep at all. His friends, as friends will when they fancy a poor fellow has got into a hobble, laughed at him, and told the story all around the village. For months he was [the object of sport to everybody. People would make passes over each other as he passed, and women would shut their eyes and look knowing. But, whether his power had gone or not hers remained; and he cared not a fig, for he was happy in the beautiful spell of affection which she threw over him, that bound him as a chain of flowers.

The attempt to close her eyes was never repeated, for he was too glad to see them open to wish to lose sight of them. Life with Speed sped well, and Martin became a father in time. He never regretted the expedient he adopted to get his wife, though he never could make out exactly whether she had humbugged him or not.

A Scientific Curiosity.

THE last number of Nature calls attention to a scientific curiosity, in the shape of a work on botany, in which the author claims to have simplified the technology so as to render it much more comprehensible to "young persons" than heretofore. The following passage is cited as an example of how successfully this simplification has been effected:

"The pink (*Dianthus*) has four or five idola, ten to twenty ikona, and twenty to forty petala. The flowers are few, and di, tri, quingue ligate, and terminate separately and irregularly. The Sweet William (*Drythme*) has two idola, ten ikona, and five getala. The flowers are numerous and chorovineulate, and the mode of gemmation comprises several syntermynal and equimarginal chorhythma, or conturrythma. They cannot, therefore, be of the same genus, because the numerical indices, and typical characters of each gemmos, or hermaphroditic gembud of the two kinds of plants, are not symbolical; but differ, as well as the mode of gemmation, more widely than the specific and physical circumstances of their constitutional, or peculiar vegeto-organic structure.

Any "young person" who can understand the above would undoubtedly be worth more as a botanist than for the practical duties of life. If this is simplified, God save us from ever having to read the other kind!

At a recent railway festival, the following striking sentiment was given: "Our mothers—the only faithful tenders who never misplaced a switch."

SUNDAY READING.

PASSING AWAY.

BY FANNY E. BARTLETT.

The flowers at dawn of morning's light, With their sweet fragrance fill the air, As they unfold their petals bright, And gem the earth with beauties rare; Their odors borne by zephyr's high, Greeting the sun's enlivening ray, But soon they wither, droop, and die, "Passing away," "passing away."

The leaves in autumn gently wave And tremble in each passing gale; Soon they will fall and find a grave Upon the mountain and the vale. For we like them, must soon decay: The solemn dirge is sung by each— "Passing away," "passing away."

The bow of promise glides the skies; Its beautiful and varied hues Are brightening to the deepest dyes, With rosy tints our morning dews; Yon heavenly arch resplendent gleams, As o'er the earth reflects each ray: We gaze upon its last pale beams— "Passing away," "passing away."

Time in its ever onward flight Has scarcely winged another year; The tale is told of vision's bright And hopes laid low on death's cold bier. The aged pilgrim droops and dies, And youth and beauty, once so gay; Nature the solemn requiem sighs— "Passing away," "passing away."

An Effectual Rebuke.

On his way from his last tour in Ireland, Rev. Roland Hill was very much annoyed at the reprobate conduct of the captain and mate, who were greatly addicted to the ungentlemanly habit of swearing. First the captain would swear at the wind.

"Stop, stop, now," shouted Hill, "let us have fair play, gentleman, it is my turn now."

"At what is it your turn?" asked the captain.

"At swearing," replied Hill. After waiting until his patience was exhausted, the captain urged Mr. Hill to be quick and take his turn for he wanted to begin again.

"No, no," said Hill, "I can't be hurried; I have a right to take my own time and swear at my own convenience."

"Perhaps you don't intend to take your turn," responded the other.

"Pardon me," said Hill, "but I do as soon as I can find the good of doing so." The rebuke had its desired effect; there was not another oath on the voyage.

Where Hell is.

"I wish to ask you a question," said Mr. Sharp to our young minister, as he met him on the street; "I am anxious to know where hell is. The Bible I have read—geographies, histories, and other books, and I can't find out where it is exactly."

The young minister, placing his hand on his eyes, replied encouragingly, "My dear sir, don't be discouraged; I am sure you will find it out after a while. As for myself I have made no inquiries, and really don't wish to know where hell is. About heaven I have thought and read and studied a great deal. I wish to make that my home, and by the help of the Lord I will. Ask me about heaven, and talk. I don't know where hell is and you had better not find out."

"Lay Aside Every Weight."

As applied to Christians, it means that they should remove all that would obstruct progress in the Christian course.—It is not the same thing in all persons.—In one it may be pride; in another vanity; in another worldliness; in another, a violent and ungovernable temper; in another, a heavy, leaden, insensible heart; in another some improper and unholy attachment. Some persons would make much more progress in life if they would disencumber themselves of the heavy weight of gold which they are endeavoring to carry with them. Even a feather or a ring, may become such a weight, that they never will make such progress towards the prize.

Unkind Words.

How many little children have sung the hymn, "Kind words can never die," but have they ever thought that unkind words live as long as kind ones. An exchange paper truly says of them, "You may tame the wild beast; the conflagration of the American forests will cease when all the timber and the dry underwood is consumed; but you cannot arrest the progress of the cruel word which you uttered carelessly yesterday or this morning— which you will utter, perhaps, before you have passed from this house one hundred yards, that will go on slaying, poisoning, burning, beyond our own control, now and forever."

The men who never grow old live where they can get a constant influx of life from God. So powerful is this divine energy that one glance of the soul into the realm where are the sources of life will counteract the thousand trials incident to its present temporary improvement. Our bodies must, according to the laws of nature, fall to decay; but blessed are they who keep up such an illumination within that the building is glorified till the very moment of its fall.

SCIENTIFIC READING.

Singular Experiment with Black Lead.

It is a singular fact that what is generally called "black lead" does not contain a particle of lead. It is necessary to explain this, because the following is a chemical experiment, and the nature of the material should be known. The black lead of commerce is one of the many varieties of coal, or carbon found in the earth. Withby jet and Welch anthracite coal are other varieties. Scientific men call black lead "graphitic" carbon—which indicates its property when used as in the ordinary black pencil. It is well known that all substances expand by the application of heat, as is seen by the mercury in thermometers. It has been generally believed that liquids expand more than solids; but in the following new experiment it will be found that a solid (carbon) will expand ten times more by heat than any other known body. This may be illustrated in the following experiment for preparing the carbon: Take one ounce and three-quarters of black lead (graphitic carbon); chlorate of potash in fine powder, one drachm (one-eighth of an ounce); well mix these ingredients, then add gradually three ounces and a quarter of sulphuric acid. Mix the whole in a glass vessel, and stir it with a glass rod; let it remain together for twenty-four hours; then wash out the acid with repeated change of water. This is easily done, as the carbon sinks to the bottom of the vessel, and the fluid at the top can be poured off. Finally, the carbon must be perfectly dried at a temperature of about two hundred and twelve degrees Fahr. (boiling water heat). The carbon has now acquired a wonderful expanding property. Half a thimbleful being put into a large spoon, and heated over a clear fire quickly expands and fills the whole spoon. A few grains being put into a test-tube, and heated in a spirit lamp, expands so as to fill half the tube.

As this is a newly discovered property of carbon, other experiments will soon suggest themselves to experimentalists.

About Silk.

Facts and history compel us to yield to the Chinese the honor of this great discovery. Aristotle, Horace, Pliny, Virgil, and others recognize the Chinese genius in its discovery and skill in its product, while they eulogize its rare qualities, its richness and great beauty.

Little was known of its nature or character, in Europe, till near the dawn of the Christian Era. During the reign of Caligula it became a court dress. The Persians began the traffic in silks, and monopolized the Western trade till the sixth century. About the year 530, the eggs of the silk worm were secretly procured in China and brought to Europe. The first efforts to acclimate the worm and to manufacture silk were made in Sicily; and from thence the business spread through Italy and to other parts of Europe. The Moors were the first producers of silk in Spain. James the First made special efforts to introduce the rearing of worms and the product of raw silk in Virginia. In 1661 the coronation robes of Charles II. were made of Virginia silk. Gov. Oglethorpe brought eight pounds of raw silk from Georgia into England, in 1734, from which a dress was made for Queen Caroline.

Muscular Power.

The muscular power of a man is usually made to operate either by his legs or arms, rarely by both together. It has been estimated that by the action of his legs upon the tread wheel he can raise his own weight, averaging about 150 pounds, vertically through a height of 10,000 feet, in the course of a day of eight hours' duration, which is equivalent to 3,125 pounds raised through one foot in a minute. This is called the efficiency or number of units of work done by a man of average strength per minute.—Hence, from the preceding, a man who ascends a hill whose perpendicular height is 10,000 feet, does a good day's work.—With respect to the dynamical effect of a man working with his arms, we have the authority of Smeaton that the good laborer can raise 370 pounds through a height of 10 feet per minute, which gives an efficiency of 3,700 units of work per minute; which shows that a man is somewhat more powerful with his hands than with his legs.

Preservation of Wood.

A new process for preserving wood from decay has been introduced by a New Orleans inventor, which consists substantially in first cutting the timber into slabs to be subsequently re-united by tree-nails and then immersing them in a solution of coal tar mixed with powdered charcoal. The slabs are then united with the tree-nails, and the timber thus prepared is immersed in a solution of asphaltum, 80 parts; sulphur 5 parts; coal-tar, 5 parts; powdered charcoal, 5 parts.

There will be a transit of Venus across the sun, in 1874, and astronomers are already busy in making arrangements for its careful examination, as by it the distance of the sun from the earth is determined. The last transit of Venus was in 1769, and since that time instruments of greater exactness have been made.—Its results will be watched with great interest by scientific men.

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