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A LARK'S FLIGHT.

Out in the country the bells were ringing.
Out in the fields was a child at play,
And up to heaven a lark went singing
Billies and free on that morn of May.
And the child looked up as she heard the
singing.
Watching the lark as it soared away:
"Oh, sweet lark, tell me, how'nward wing-
ing,
Shall I go also to heaven one day?"
Deep in the shade of a mighty city,
Tolled a woman far daily bread,
Only the lark to see her and pity,
Singing all day in a cage overhead.
And there they dwell in the gloom together,
Prisoned and pent in the narrow street,
But the bird still sings of the golden weather,
And the woman dreamt of her childhood
sweet.
Still in her dreams the bells were ringing,
Still a child in the fields was she;
And she opened the cage as the lark was
singing,
Kissed him gently and set him free.
And up and on as the bird went singing,
Down came a voice that seemed to say,
"E'en as the lark that is heavenward wing-
ing,
Thou shalt go also to heav'n one day."
—F. E. Weatherly, in Cassell.

HER FIRST ENGAGEMENT.

BY FRANCES EDWARDS.

A very pretty gray team and a rather old-fashioned basket phaeton stood in front of a large, cream-brick house on Clifton avenue, one Tuesday morning in late June. The air and sunshine and sky were perfect. A most tempting morning for a drive.

The owner of the turnout, Colonel Baker, was within the mansion soliciting Miss Hazel Traff's company for a drive. The young lady had not the slightest objection to going with him. He was an old friend of her father's, an amusing story-teller and very fond of his horses. He was called "Colonel," not from any connection with military life, but it was a title received in his early boyhood days and it had clung to him as nicknames and titles of his sort often do.

As for Miss Hazel, she was an unspoiled child of sixteen, with a merry laugh, bright, brown eyes and hair that "fuzzled" about her face, cheeks where the color came and went like the rose flush in an evening sky. She had no extraordinary talents and gave promise of none, except the talent of being charmingly girlish and exceedingly feminine in all her tastes. She was at that happy stage of young life—just beginning to have "admirers." Her dear friend, Ethie Longstreet, had said at parting the week before on graduating day: "Now, dear, at the first symptom of an engagement you write me, and I'll do the same to you; be sure and accept your first offer. It always brings good luck in the end, and even if it isn't just what you desire, you know it is always easy to break an engagement." With this sage advice reposing in her mind, Hazel kept her eyes open to the possible advent of a lover, though she felt very shy, and in fact dreaded a proposal outside of her own dreams.

The colonel she did not regard in the light of an admirer. He was older than her father, and had been married twice already, which ought to be enough for any sane man, she thought.

Presently they came out of the house and he helped her into the carriage. Very lovely she looked in a pale ecru dress, and a hat to match with a flaming bunch of poppies low down on one side.

"Which way shall we go?" he said, as he took up the reins.

"Oh! I don't care—anywhere so that we can go fast—you know I don't like to poke along."

This airy maiden well knew that the colonel always liked to drive fast. She gave him a quick glance and a little laugh.

"Yes, well, have you been out to the park lately? Not suppose we go out then; there is plenty of room and good roads," he added.

"Very well. That will be delightful and say, when the horses are going real nice won't you let me drive just a little? I think I am a good driver," with another upward glance, "and with you here, colonel, there could be no possible danger."

So they went spinning along unrequited drives and lovely shady places. The colonel prided himself on the rapid, even gait of his favorites. Hazel had her wish to drive granted. She pressed her little foot against the rod and held the reins until her arms were "all tired out." Then the colonel took them again and turned the horses toward Clifton avenue, Hazel chatting away about her friend Ethie, and the lovely time she would have when she would visit her next month.

On the way down the avenue they met Dr. Whitebeck, driving slowly, and bent over in his seat, meditatively eyeing the dashboard, as if profoundly considering some scientific theory or studying the latest "treatment of a case." The moment he looked up and saw them, he grasped his whip. The horse gave a start, which nearly threw the doctor over backward, and went furiously up the street.

"Deuce take that colonel!" he muttered under his breath. "What business has he to be driving her out so much? Tien with a grim smile and a long-drawn breath, "It's none of my business, though, none whatever, if she rides to the end of the earth with him."

This young man had met Hazel the summer before while visiting a school friend. He was proud, poor, reserved and ambitious—a self-made man—yet uncomfortable in society. He lacked the ease and polish that many an unworthy, weak man possesses, who is brought up

in the habits of refined society. He felt this lack keenly—overestimated his "barbarism"—as he called his unpolished style.

It was a singular fact that in the sick-room he never felt any of these sensations, but was self-possessed, calm, masterful. Many ladies who considered Dr. Whitebeck dull and disagreeable on a first introduction, modified their ideas at once on seeing his tenderness and skill with a patient.

Hazel first saw him, by accident, binding up the broken leg of a dog one day when she was out for a walk in the country. His goodness to this little stray creature touched her heart, and his manly form and open face beaming intelligence and kindness as he arose from his cramped position on the ground impressed her strongly. She went up to him like a child, without embarrassment or hesitation, and spoke of what he had been doing.

It followed in the conversation that he knew her friends with whom she was stopping, and walked home with her. They were introduced, though, as Hazel said, "it was entirely superfluous after such an extensive acquaintance." Almost every day during the remainder of the summer they were companions, riding, walking, fishing, sailing.

Dr. Whitebeck was more at his ease in the open air. His scientific knowledge often came into use, and he grew to be a sort of hero—a skilled hero in her eyes; she thought there was nothing he did not know and could not do.

To him, this child-woman grew more charming every day. Her innocence and open admiration for him was quite too much for his reserve, which melted completely away in the sunshine of her presence. She was such a lovable little maiden, with her merry laugh and ready sympathy. He did not realize how he had opened his heart to her and the strength of his passion until it was too late. When he did see his danger with sudden clarity he said to himself: "She does not know it. I'll make no resistance now, but go on and be happy in the present, as I shall probably never again know happiness in my life." So they had parted without one word of love being spoken.

The following winter Dr. Whitebeck had commenced practicing in the same city where Hazel lived. She met him occasionally and invited him to call, but he was always busy and a strange coolness grew up between them. He actually seemed to avoid her. She thought with a woman's sensitiveness that she had been silly and foolish, and he regarded her as too trifling a piece of humanity to be worthy of his least attention, so with equal coolness she studiously avoided him.

The summer days slipped away, she and the colonel enjoying many a drive in Sylvan Park. She made a visit to Ethie and came home looking prettier, if possible, than ever. With her thoroughly hopeful disposition and perfect health she seemed to radiate happiness.

Autumn came and early winter, still she had received proposals—not one. Her young gentlemen friends did not find it easy to make advances with her in spite of her frankness and seeming pleasure in their society. The only person who really enjoyed her confidence was the colonel, whom she regarded as a sort of father-confessor.

However, the fatal day came at last. She and the colonel had been out for one of their numerous drives. They had been unusually merry, the colonel behaving much like a young boy. On bringing her home, he came in ostensibly to "get warm." Standing with his back to the fire and his hands folded behind him, and his feet wide apart, he regarded Hazel in an abstracted way as she threw off her wraps, dropping her cloak on a chair, her hat on a sofa, dragging a scarf over a stand and leaving a mitten on the floor.

Suddenly bringing his heels together with a click and raising himself up on his toes and letting himself down again, he said:

"Come here, child, I want to tell you something."

Hazel came over to where he was standing, and, dropping into a chair, looked up with expectation in her eyes.

The colonel took a step, wheeled around facing her and said in a deprecating way, "I don't know how to tell you, I am not an eloquent man—not much of a man anyway—but I—I love you, have loved you since you were a wee child. Perhaps—I suppose I do seem old to you, but I feel younger than I did at twenty. I do so long to devote the remainder of my life to you, darling, could you? Do you think you could be my wife?"

Hazel, at first dumbfounded and feeling a strong inclination to laugh and cry both, tried in vain to collect her wits. Her first offer! And Colonel Baker, with his queer ways and bald head standing there with that ridiculous quaver in his voice! It was too much!

"No," she cried, springing up. "How could you ever think I would consent to such a thing?"

Then a sense of all his goodness and worth—it mingled a feeling of pity at his distress—came over her, and clasping the palms of her hands together, she said, brokenly: "Oh! you are so good. I like you. I am very sorry, but I am sure—I don't think I could make you happy."

"My dear child," he said, with sudden courage, taking her clasped hands in his, "is there any one whom you care more for?"

"No, oh, no!" she said, blushing and then suddenly paling. "There is no one."

"Then let me have an opportunity to win your love. I can't give you up, dear. The thought of you has entered so entirely into my life that I cannot go away without a little hope. You do not hate me, little one!"

"No, no!" she said, in distress, "but I—"

"Never mind, don't try to explain yourself or your feelings. Let everything be just as it always has. Remember that I love you and let me come and see you often." Pressing two fervent kisses on her hands, he shot out of the door and was off before Hazel had time to turn around.

She gathered up her things and went straight to her room. Then she threw herself into a large wicker chair and began rocking herself violently and screaming with laughter. This was succeeded by fits of crying, and again more laughter and tears, until exhausted, she dropped to sleep in her chair with her head resting on the broad arm. When awakened late in the day by her cramped position and a raging headache, she was too miserable to think, or offer any resistance, when her sister insisted on putting her to bed. It was so unusual for her to be ill.

In the days that followed Hazel was alternately merry and sad, very talkative or absolutely silent for hours together. She sat little and seemed restless and nervous in the house, would start when ever the door bell rang, and if it happened to be Colonel Baker, she always tried to escape to her room, and was invariably "engaged or not at home." She spent much time out of doors, taking long walks even on severely cold days. Her face grew pinched and lost its color.

How long this state of affairs would have continued it is impossible to say. But for the intervention of an accident, the colonel's efforts to win her love would probably have never ceased to this day.

Hazel was coming up the street one day from the postoffice. There had been a storm of sleet and snow the day before and the walks were treacherously slippery. She was looking over her letters when suddenly, right on a crossing, her foot slipped. There was a horse coming around the corner. She never knew just what happened; she struck something and felt herself being lifted, while a well-known voice said, "My God! I have killed her! Oh, my darling! My darling!" Then all sensation vanished.

Some time later, when consciousness returned, she found herself in bed with a frightened, fearful group around her and Dr. Whitebeck calmly pouring something down her throat. He had just put her displaced shoulder in order, and she felt a terrible dizziness in her head. Then he ordered everybody out of the room and lowered a window, saying she must have more air. He wrote out his prescriptions and was ready to leave. His eyes were closed, but the tears were running down her temples. He set his teeth together, but it was no use.

"Forgive me!" he said, in a tone of agonized entreaty. "Oh, God! I might have killed you."

Hazel opened her eyes very wide. She gave him a look which said plainly: "I love you," and with a faint smile closed her eyes again.

In a moment he was on his knees beside the bed, and, quivering with long repressed passion, he exclaimed:

"Hazel, Hazel, my darling! Do you love me? Do you! Tell me, love! Oh!" he went on, "I never meant to tell you this; not until I had something more to offer than an empty hand; but I love you with all the strength of my being. Do you forgive me?"

She smiled again and said, "There is nothing to forgive, dear."

Then he bent over and kissed her again, oh, so fondly. "Tell me, dear, that you will be mine some day. I must hear you say it."

"Oh," she answered with a little sigh of happiness, "I am entirely yours."

There is little more to tell. Her recovery was rapid, with a physician and lover in one. The colonel found out his mistake. But at the wedding Hazel whispered to her first bridesmaid, Ethie, that she thought first proposals lucky. The colonel had sent her a lovely diamond bracelet for a wedding present.—*Detroit Free Press.*

MEXICO'S PRIMEVAL WOODS

SOME OF THE VEGETABLE WONDERS OF VERA CRUZ.

What a Traveler Saw in Primeval Forests—Strange and Useful Plants and Trees.

Fannie B. Ward, in a letter describing a visit to an isolated region of the state of Vera Cruz, Mexico, says: The forest abounds in a species of magnolia, here known as yolochochitl, covered with lovely, sweet-smelling flowers, which are pinkish white outside and yellow within. The petals, before full blown, assume the form of a cross, and afterward of a splendid star. The superstitious Indians never fail to cross themselves and mutter an ave at sight of one. They tell us that an infusion of the glittering leaves is a certain cure for vomit and diarrhea, and that its flowers will relieve palpitation of the heart. Among the myriad vines is one with scarlet leaves that is always found encircling the stems of the magnolia, the celebrated "water plant," called by the Mexicans the "Easter flower." In case of dire necessity, its large red leaves would appease hunger, but its chief mission is that of nature's cup bearer. It treasures the priceless dew within its hollow leaves, and presents to thirsty travelers a never-failing store. Our pious guides and servants, believing it to be a boon direct from heaven, because of the cross and star upon the yolochochitl, were perpetually imbibing the moisture between fervent orisons, till the wonder grew how their distended stomachs could contain so much.

The valuable vanilla brambolia is indigenous to these humid groves, and is carefully sought during certain seasons by the Indians of the tierra caliente. It is now produced only in the States of Vera Cruz and Oaxaca, though (according to Baron Humboldt, Europe received its entire supply of this commodity from Mexico prior to 1812. The aromatic-fruited plant was assiduously cultivated by those ancient tribes, the Totonacs, who once inhabited all this coast region. Though it requires little care—nothing but shade and moisture being necessary to its existence—and is today more valuable than in the days when Montezuma and his Aztec nobles traded for it with the Totonacs, it is no longer grown to any great extent. But it still springs up out of sight in the wilderness, and flourishes at its best in hidden jungles on the eastern declivity of the Vera Cruz Cordillera. The Indians who reside hereabouts in their primitive villages are restricted by stern laws from gathering the neglected plant at will. The vanilla harvest begins in March and ends in May, and during that season the alacide of every hamlet apportions to each man his quota of labor and profit—carefully looking out for his own little share of the proceeds. The delicate pods—every one of which has a sure marketable value—are watched with great solicitude while being dried in the sun and made ready for shipping, to protect them from mold, mice and insects. Here, too, the Jalapa abounds, a tiny plant, with slender branches and heart-shaped leaves, tinged with red, hiding here and there a blossom of violet blue. It is called by the natives tonolapat, and takes its European name from the old town, Jalapa, near which it was discovered in Cortez's time. This beautiful convolvulus springs up spontaneously on all the mountains of Southern Mexico, having tap roots of pear-like shape. Unfortunately, the Indians destroy it by tearing away its tubercles, and the day is not distant when the drug will become more scarce than the quina tree.

Among the many trees which were hitherto unknown to us are wild guavas, a sort of myrtle, growing naturally in the higher altitudes of the tropics, and here attaining a height of several feet. Its fruit, which seldom ripens before being eaten by birds and larvae, is luscious and indescribably fragrant. Everybody is fond of green guavas, but few have ever had opportunity to test their taste with the fruit when fully ripened. They are in great favor among physicians, because of their astringent and anti-febrile properties; and guava jelly, as all the world knows, is one of the necessities of a traveler's outfit. When cultivated the shrub changes its appearance so greatly as to be scarcely recognizable; its branches grow longer, its leaves acquire a silvery lining, and its fruit becomes as large as lemons, much resembling the latter in shape and color.

In these forests nutmeg trees are found in great profusion, though becoming extremely rare in other portions of Mexico. The natives use an enormous quantity of Malacca nutmeg, both as remedy and a condiment—their chief medicines being these, camphor and assafetida, but with characteristic improvidence they neglect nature's benefits, and buy what they might easily raise. Here also are countless lime trees, the wood of which is valued by the Indians for making those various odds and ends which are sold by thousands all over Mexico. In Europe these trees have been so changed by horticulture that they scarcely appear to belong to the same species as their brethren in the virgin woods. Across the ocean the bark is used for well ropes, and the charcoal made from it is preferred to any other for the manufacture of gunpowder. Then here is the "vegetable butter" tree, the Avocado pulp, the fruit of which yields a soft rich pulp of buttery nature. It is pear-shaped, light green inside, and called by the Indians huacuate. It can never be eaten as fruit, but is so imitative for salads that New York epicures frequently pay as high as \$3 for a single pear, for sometimes the fruit comes to your markets from Cuba. Strange to say, this vegetable butter tree belongs to the laurel family, but is the only member of it which produces anything edible. First there is the bay tree (Laurus

noville), the leaves of which are indispensable in French cookery, while its berries yield an oil much prized in medicines; next comes laurus camphora, the bark of which yields camphor, and lastly, sassafras, the aromatic wood said to be a powerful sudorific.

The forests are full of wild dahlias, growing about three feet high, and producing only single blossoms of pale yellow. They are perennial in Mexico, and from this country were first carried across the sea. The double flowers, with their hundred tints and varieties, have been produced by cultivation, and many a wealthy Mexican, who imports his garden-dahlias from Europe at great expense, has not the remotest idea that the plant is indigenous to his own soil. Dahlia roots are a staple article of food among the Indians, who eat them boiled and salted. Though somewhat insipid to the taste, they are decidedly preferable to wild potatoes; and perhaps the day is coming when these bulbs, made succulent by horticulture, will furnish our tables with a new delicacy.

WESTWARD-BO!

"Oh, where are you going, my pretty fair maid?"
"I'm going to Bismark, sir," she said,
"A town far away in Dakota."
"May I go with you, my pretty maid?"
"There are too many men there now," she said,
"I'm told, for the feminine quota."
"And what will you do there, my pretty maid?"
"Oh, that was settled long since, sir," she said;
"I shall marry a wealthy young farmer."
"Are you going alone there, my pretty maid?"
"There's a couple of thousand behind me, she said,
"But I am the charmingest charmer."
"Oh, why don't you marry here, my pretty maid?"
"Cause no one has asked me to, sir," she said,
"And I am a couple and twenty."
"But, why do you hurry so, my pretty maid?"
"Tis a race for a man, you know, sir," she said,
"And I must get there while they're plenty."
—Columbus Dispatch.

HUMOR OF THE DAY.

The Prince of Wales—The new baby. A motto which undertakers do not believe in—Live and let live.

The butcher may be regarded as a help-mate to the human family.

In many boarding-houses the torture of the steak is still adhered to.

Tailors will give you fits, but it requires a lawyer to run up a suit.

It is all well enough to preach "peace on earth and good will to men," but no man can feel that way with a boil on his nose.—*Chicago Ledger.*

"Tell me, Thomas, how many voyages around the world did Captain Cook make?" "Three." "Correct. And on which of these voyages was he killed?" "Pick."

A poet sings, "Where are the girls of the past?"
And over them makes quite a fuss.
He may sing if he likes of the girls of the past.
But the girls of the present for us.
—Boston Courier.

The greatest punishment to a prisoner is enforced idleness, but the greatest trial a woman can undergo is to have a new bonnet in the house on a rainy Sunday.—*Chicago Ledger.*

There is no great difference between the average young lady possessed of a musical education and the squeaking toy. They both have to be pressed to sing.—*Boston Transcript.*

The sporting fraternity have grown so respectable of late that a young lady whose father is in the undertaking business now speaks of her parent as a professional boxer.—*Boston Transcript.*

Said the magistrate to an actress: "Your profession, mademoiselle." "Artistic." "Your age?" "Twenty-two." "Clerk, you can now swear the lady to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."—*Paris Figaro.*

When single, I longed to be married;
When married, I wish I had staid;
The benedict wishes he'd married,
And the wife she had died an old maid.
Like flies at a window in summer,
We mortals resemble, no doubt;
Those outside all wish to be inside,
Those inside all want to get out.
—Cincinnati Sun.

It Is Well to Remember

That old friends are best.
That the tongue is not steel, yet it cuts.
That the purest water runs from the hardest rock.
That cheerfulness is the bright weather of the heart.
That sleep is the best stimulant, a nerve safe for all to take.
That it is better to be able to say no, than to be able to read Latin.
That cold air is not necessarily pure nor warm air necessarily impure.
That a cheerful face is nearly as good for an invalid as healthy weather.
That there are men whose friends are more to be pitied than their enemies.
That advice is like castor oil, easy enough to give, but hard enough to take.
That wealth may bring luxuries, but that luxuries do not always bring happiness.
That grand temples are built of small stones, and great lives made up of trifling events.
That nature is a rag merchant who works up every shred and art and end into new creations.
That an open mind, an open hand, and an open heart would everywhere find an open door.
That it is not enough to keep the poor in mind; give them something to make them keep you in mind.
That men often preach from the housetops, while the devil is crawling in to the basement window.
That life's real heroes and heroines are those who bear their own burdens bravely and give a helping hand to those around them.
That hasty words often rankle in the wound which injury gives, and that soft words assuage it, for giving curses, and forgetting takes away the scar.—*Good Housekeeping.*

A BARRA AVIS.

Freaks and curiosities in plenty.
The various time shows gather.
But here's one I wish
That never was seen,
And that is the youth of twenty
Who doesn't know more than his father.
—Boston Courier.

The Last Dollar.

Oh, the world looks so bleak and the sky looks so bare
When the last dollar is gone,
And a man's whole physique takes an aspect of care.
When the last dollar is gone,
Then the Jew and the Greek, and the plain and the fair,
Feel as mean as a sneak and as fierce as a bear.
When the last dollar is gone.
—Lynn Times.