

B. F. SCHWEIER,

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FISHERS OF MEN.

Down the calm river they leisurely doted;
There, in a nook that was shady and cool,
They brought out their lines, and their hooks
Were all as good as baited.

With bait well adapted the fishes to fool,
Mabel was with them, and Lizzie and Laura,
Blissful with heart and merry and fair,
Each beloved smile on her favored admirer.
Destined, perhaps, to fall into her snare,
They play'd to wit their lines in the river;
Little they cared though no fish should be caught;
Fondly each hoped that the fishes would deliver
Into her keeping the lover she sought.

Lightly they talked upon things with which
Cupid,
Had lavishly filled both their hearts and
their brains,
And laughingly said that the men were all
stupid,
The while they were artfully weaving their
chains.

The day passed away, and the fishing was
ended;
Pleased with themselves the fair innocents
looked;

They gazed on their victims, and each com-
plained
The fish she had angled so long for was
hooked.

Then back to the town the young men rowed
lightly,
Their baskets all empty—that fishing was
naught—
While on each other the maidens smiled
brightly—
The fishers of men had won at their game.

MARIA VASSAR.

I had parted from my cousin Charles
lightly and merrily, as people do part
whom I expect to meet again in a few days.
I had thought of him at all, it was as
one who had been enjoying himself
while I plodded on in the dull city
counting house, when there came to me
one morning, a telegram from Rivers-
dale, where he had been stopping. I
had no idea, as I leisurely seated
myself to open the message, that there was
anything more serious within than a
request that I would send him his dress-
ing-gown, which he had left behind him,
than I had that any impossible thing
could happen.

Since then a telegram has always
given me a thrill of horror. You can
fancy the shock the one I had just re-
ceived gave me, as, with careless curi-
osity, I cast my eye over the paper to
read these words:

CHARLES HOTEL, RIVERSDALE.
Charles died last night. Come at
once.

Charlie had been my cousin and my
very dear friend. Although not like
each other in any way, we had been
very intimate. We told each other our
love affairs, our little adventures. We
talked freely about other fellows, and
about the girls we knew. Indeed, we
were more frank than any; but brothers
usually are with each other. The night
before we parted he had said to me, "I
shall be married before the year is out,"
and he had let me look at a picture he
wore against his heart. He was full of
youth, and hope and beauty—dead! Oh,
no, it could not be! The telegram was
a cruel, practical joke, or some mistake
had been made. "Charlie might be ill,
wounded perhaps; but he was not dead."
Quivering with horror, yet at every
instant doubting that the message told
the truth, I hastily crumpled some linen
into my portmanteau, and drove in a
cab to catch the train. I had so far
failed to realize the truth when I
reached the station that I had expected
to see Charlie waiting there for me;
and when I was at the very door of the
hotel at Riversdale, I said to myself
that I was mad or in a dream, that in a
moment more I should be mocked at for
my credulity, or should awaken
and find myself at home or in bed.

I was brought to a full sense of the
awful truth in a moment when a stout,
gentleman, with a round rufy face, on
which his present expression of anxiety
and trouble looked utterly unnatural,
advanced towards me, and said, in
something of the tone in which people
speak at a funeral, "Mr. Ross, I be-
lieve, my name is Cliechester."
"You telegraphed to me," I gasped.
"Is it true?"
"I grieve to say that it is only too
true, Mr. Ross," he answered. "Come
into this room. There is a painful
curiosity in the house about the event,
and we must secure privacy."

I followed him, growing faint and
dizzy as I went on, and it was not
toward me. I looked at him, without
being able to speak, and he, after a
pause, broke the silence.
"It is a very horrible thing. The
mystery is the most awful part. You
know that your cousin was in excellent
health when he left you. He was in
good spirits, also. His intended wife is
at the hotel with her parents. They
spent the evening together. He seemed
very happy. Do you know of any reason
why he should commit suicide?"
"Why he should commit suicide?" I
gasped.

The landlord answered: "It is either
suicide or murder. He is found dead
in his bed this morning, with a knife
wound over his heart. A knife was
lying loosely in his right hand. His
left was so tightly clenched, that the
nails are buried in the flesh. Something
seems to be clutched in it—what we
cannot tell. Mr. Ross, I fear very much
that it is murder—that in my home
your cousin's life has been taken by
some enemy or robber. In my house,
I can never forgive myself for sleeping
so soundly that night—for feeling no
presentiment of danger. Many a night,
doubtful of my watchman, I have stolen
out of my bed and gone in my slippers
from door to door, anxious about gas,
anxious about fire, fearful that the val-
ues that some of my guests bring with
them might prove a temptation to bur-
glary. My wife has often laughed at me
for my nervousness. And that night I
slept that night when murder was
being committed under my roof!"

The man's trouble was so genuine,
that in the midst of my sorrow I sym-
pathized with him. I remember saying

something of the sort before a cloud
came over my eyes, and a sound, as if
of a roaring sea, came into my ears. After
that I remember very little. I had
been over-worked that summer and was
not well; this frightful shock had
quite prostrated me. When I began to
comprehend what was going on about
me again, the inquest was over, and my
cousin's body prepared for burial. They
had found in his clenched left hand a
slender bit of gold, about half an inch
long, with a tiny diamond in its joint;
and the verdict they had given was,
"Murdered by some person or persons
unknown."

All that I could say was that my cousin
had no enemies that I knew of. All
that I could do was to kiss him upon
his frozen brow and follow him to the
grave. I did not even see his betrothed;
but her mother told me she suffered
terribly, and was on the verge of delir-
ium. They took her home the day
after the funeral, but I stated. I had
no choice but to stay. The weakness that
had caused the swoon proved the fore-
runner of a serious illness; and I was
but a troublesome guest at Cliechester's
Hotel for many days.

As I recovered and found my way to
the coffee-room, I was treated with much
consideration, and, as an invalid, made
many acquaintances, who would not
have troubled their heads about me had
I been well.

One guest, a beautiful lady, with
great blue eyes, and a voluptuous form,
often passed before my sofa, to ask me
with the most bewitching smile how I
felt, or to leave beside me a flower she
had gathered in the garden, or a book
that might beguile a weary hour.

After a while we fell frequently into
conversation. She was bright and full
of pleasant repartee. She had, in her
earliest youth, been an actress. Whether
she got weary of it, or did not succeed,
upon the stage she did not tell me. She
was now twenty-eight, and her contact
with the public had effectually banished
all reserve and restraint from her man-
ner. We were friends at once. In
three weeks I was her lover. My ill-
ness had procured me leave of absence.
I prolonged it to the utmost possibility.

The cause that brought me to Clie-
chester's Hotel was a terrible one, but
it seemed to have brought me also the
greatest joy of my life. All the women
I had ever met before seemed tame and
spiritless beside Maria Vassar. I won-
dered how I had lived before I knew
her. And she? Surely she loved me.
She neither refused my kisses nor drew
her hand from mine, when I held it
passionately against my heart. His
love need of many words when I had
such speech as this:

My heart was often heavy, still I had
not forgotten my cousin, and the dread-
ful details of his murder were constantly
being rehearsed. The detectives were
hard at work. The slender arrow of
gold, with a diamond at its head, was
their clue. It had in some way guided
them. They felt sure of discovering the
murderer.

I told my troubles to Maria Vassar.
She strove to comfort me.
She listened patiently to all that the
detectives had hinted at, but shook her
head over it.
"They only want the money those
poor parents will pay them," she said.
"They have found no clue to the mur-
derer's identity. They never will. It
was a case of suicide. He had quarreled
with his sweetheart. Of course she
will not own it now."
"But the ornament," I said—"the
broken ornament?"
"Something of her's he treasured, I
suppose," she said. "Oh, no one mur-
dered your cousin, rest assured."

It was a strange experience alto-
gether.
Once I said to her, "Maria, sometimes
I am frightened. The murder of my
best friend brought me to know you. We
have talked of my love for you and
my death together. What does this
forebode? Trouble and a tragic part-
ing? Sometimes I think so."
"I saw her turn pale, and it was my
turn to console her. We parted that
night with fond farewells and kisses.
Before breakfast next morning the head
detective called upon me. He wore a
triumphant look, as if he had secured
the most important anticipations.
"We have found the murderer," he
said. "That little arrow," he said. "We
traced it and found who it belonged to,
and that told the story. We arrested
her last night. It will be a surprise to
you when you see her."
"A woman?" I asked.
"Yes," he answered, "and a young
one."

There was a chambermaid in the
house, a black-eyed girl whom I had
always distrusted. It was secure of see-
ing her in the room to which they led
me that I asked no more questions.
But when the door had been opened
by the stout man in charge, I looked
for her in vain. On a chair near the
window sat a lady dressed in black silk.
She turned her head. It was Maria
Vassar.
I saw in her face that it was she who
was the prisoner.

She arose and came toward me.
"Hush!" she said holding out her
manacled hands. "You can do no good.
If they think I did it they must
try me. Only if I might have a word
with you alone."
Her smile, beaming upon the detec-
tives who were with her. They glanced
around the room, and saw that there
was only one means of egress. They
then strode outside the door, and closed
it upon us.
"This is a horrible outrage!" I
gasped. "What in heaven's name does
it mean?"
"Kiss me!" she said. "Kiss me as
you did last night, on my cheek, on my
brow, on my lips."
I took her in my arms—I showered
caresses upon her, and called her my
poor insulted darling.
It was she who drew herself away.
"That is the last," she said. "No one
will ever kiss me again. My poor boy,
I killed your cousin. He caught a pen-
dant of my ear-ring in his hand as I
stabbed him. He gave it to me. They

have traced the present to him, and
bribed my maid to search my trunk, and
I loved him. I never loved any more
but him. Why should I tell you any more?
You can guess at all. And he had left
me for that school-girl he meant to
marry. I always carry a dagger about
me; it is a fashion I learned in Italy.
Going up stairs alone at night, I passed
his door. It had blown open. I saw
him lying upon a lounge, and he had
his portrait in his hand, and pressed it
to his mouth and kissed it, and went
mad, and flew into the room and stabbed
him. You have the story. I don't
think you'll try to hang me. Though,
poor boy! I never should have married
you; you were not rich enough."

She stooped her head and kissed the
hand that I had pressed against my
breast, to lift its tumultuous beating,
and then she lifted up her voice, and
said, "I am ready."
I never saw Maria Vassar again. She
was condemned to death, but the sen-
tence was commuted to imprisonment
for life.

Catching Sharks.

Do you know how sharks are caught
out in California? At Anaheim Land-
ing, in that State, they make a business
of shark-catching, for about four
months every year, beginning in May.
Sometimes one person will catch from
one to fifteen in a day. This is the way
they do it. Large stakes are
driven into the sand at intervals along
the beach. To these stakes one end of
a large rope is tied; on the other end
is a strong iron hook, baited with fish.
This is thrown into the water, and
then, tempted by the bait, the shark is
caught on the hook, he is drawn upon
the shore and killed. There is some-
times a very exciting struggle during
the latter operation. The sharks are
generally from six to seven feet in
length, and weigh about one hundred
and fifty pounds. Of course a fish of
this kind is possessed of considerable
strength, and it is not often that one
man can manage the caught monster,
and it occasionally requires the united
strength of four men to place the victim
on terra firma. Three kinds of shark
are caught at the landing. The leopard
shark (so named because of its spotted
appearance) and the flat shark are
worthless, except for their fins, which
are sold to Chinamen. The Mongolian
make delicious soup from shark-fins,
and it is also said that they make ex-
cellent combs from the same material.
Each oil-yielding shark yields about
two gallons of oil, which is sold at re-
tail at fifty cents per gallon.

Delicacy of Feeling.

Delicacy of feeling is a trait of
character almost more lovely and en-
gaging than any other. It is a quality
whose hidden principle exists in a
greater or less degree in every mind,
though it is less often thrown into the
shade by the working of the fiercer pas-
sions, in the rude encounters of life. Man's
mind, as manifested in his daily con-
verse with the outward world, seems to
be made of "sterner stuff" and cast in
rougher moulds, but delicacy is no mark
of weakness, for it is essentially con-
sistent with the stoutest courage and
the sublimest energy. It is in every
respect a manly quality, and
throws over the whole intellectual and
moral character a kindlier hue. If true
delicacy exist in a heart, it will glow
spontaneously from it, and never can
the cold count of hypocritical formal-
ity be mistaken for the warm welcome
of the soul. Power, mental or physical,
never appears so great as in the hands
of those who seem unconscious of its
possession. True intellectual greatness
gathers an additional charm when ac-
companied by real delicacy of feeling.
Kindness may enter where the sword
cannot penetrate, and a "soft answer"
is a winning department, springing
from delicate feelings and a generous
heart, have always proved irresistible.
Breathing nothing but harmony and
love, "a ministering angel" to man-
kind, it goes to and fro in the earth,
uniting everywhere more firmly and
strongly the bonds of social union.

What Plants Absorb.

Dr. J. C. Draper, of New York, main-
tains that all living things, whether
animal or plant, absorb oxygen and
give out carbonic acid; and that the
life of the plant is one of continuous
drinking in of oxygen gas. Having
grown plants similarly nourished in
the dark and in sunlight; he found that
all the parts were proved in both
cases almost at the same time, and
the slightly slower evolution of the
series grown in the dark was marked
by a slightly smaller weight, while the
same plant measured by night and by
day grew slightly faster in darkness
than in sunlight. The roots of plants
grow under both circumstances throw
out the same kind of matter. There-
fore, as the evolution and weight and
root-excrements agree, he argues that
the carbonic acid has been, in both cases,
thrown off as a consequence of growth,
and has never been absorbed by the
roots, and then given out as a vapor
from the leaves.—Selected.

Old Times.

In the days of Sir Matthew Hale,
men who could read might, by law,
become priests. On one occasion a man
who could not read desired, by or-
dained, and he took his place before his
examiner, with a copy of the Lord's
prayer in his hand, and a friend who
could read at his back. Prompter com-
menced whispering to him—Our Father
who art in Heaven—Our Father who
art in Heaven," he repeated, in a loud,
confident voice; the prompter contin-
ued—Hallowed be thy name—"Hallowed
be thy name." His thumb was
now over the next sentence, and the
prompter gently requested him to take
it away, when "Take away your
thumb!" rang through the room, and
this was clearly illustrative of the
learning of that time.

For the honest people relations in-
crease with the year. For the vicious
inconveniences increase. Inconstancy
is the defect of vice; the influence of
habit is one of the qualities of virtue.

Largest Diamond in Existence.

It is not very easy to make out which
is the largest diamond now in existence.
Two are mentioned as entitled to the
honor—the Braganza, in the crown of
Portugal, and one which belongs to the
Rajah of Mattan, in Borneo. The Por-
tuguese jewel is of doubtful quality. The
weight 1680 carats, and is the size of a
hen's egg, but is believed only to be a
white topaz. The Portuguese Govern-
ment withhold any information on the
subject, but if it is genuine it is
worth nearly \$300,000,000. The Bor-
neo gem was found on the island
about 120 years ago, and weighs 367
carats. A Governor of Batavia is said
to have offered \$50,000 and two men of
war for it without success, and though
many battles have been fought over it,
the Rajah regards it as a talisman, and
it is still in possession of the same family.
The Orloff diamond in the Russian
imperial scepter weighs 194½ carats;
Catherine II gave \$450,000 for it, and
pensioned the merchant who brought it
to her at \$20,000 a year. It is not cut
to advantage, and another among the
Russian crown jewels, which weighs
105 carats, is but partly cut. It is easy
to make up for the loss. Sir David
Barrow, the advantages of cutting are
not always very plain, while the enor-
mous diminution of weight which com-
monly ensues affects the public esti-
mation more than the increase of
brilliance. The famous diamond which
the Regent Orleans bought from Gov-
ernor Pitt for \$675,000 formerly weighed
410 carats, but was reduced by cut-
ting to 136½. The Duke of Westmin-
ster's diamond was reduced by cut-
ting from 89 to 78 carats. But the
most prominent example of the kind is
the Koh-i-noor, which weighed 186 carats
when it arrived in England, and lost 80
by cutting in 1851. Why it was cut at
all nobody seems very able to say, and
competent judges deny that its brilliancy
has been increased to such an extent.
Brewster warned Prince Albert of the
impossibility of improving the lustre
without serious diminution of weight;
but a foreign diamond merchant thought
differently, and, as is usual in England,
his opinion on matters of the kind is
taken before that of a native. The vul-
garity of taste which only admits of
regularity has deprived the world of
many great diamonds, and we shall
probably have to wait long before it
universally acknowledges that sym-
metry is not absolutely necessary to beau-
ty. The ancient regalia of the Visig-
othic kings in the Hotel Cluy, the
so-called ruby of Charlemagne in the
Laure, the ruby in the English crown
at the Tower, are not less beautiful
because they lack a little rough. The
great jewel wearers and collectors, the
rajahs of India, seldom have their dia-
monds cut into regular forms, and the
Koh-i-noor was no exception. Its history
may be traced for nearly 2,000
years, and it seems that at some remote
time it weighed 793½ carats; but that
Shah Jehan had it cut by a Venetian in
his service, who contrived to reduce it
to the 186 which it weighed when it
reached England.—Jewelers' Circular.

Tapirus.

Where it is Found and How it is Pre-
pared.—Curious Facts. The plant from
which tapirus is obtained is a native of
South America, and cultivated exten-
sively in the East Indies and the Indian
Archipelago. It is a woody plant, with
slender stalks, and grows to the height
of about eight feet, and known as the
Cassava or Manioc plant. It has smooth,
palm-shaped leaves, and bears small,
green flowers, which grow in clusters,
with an immense-sized fleshy root,
sometimes weighing as much as forty
or fifty pounds. The plant belongs to
a highly poisonous tribe, and is itself
one of the most virulent of the species.
This poison is found more particularly
in the juice of the plant, a small quan-
tity killing birds, quadrupeds, and even
man himself, causing cold perspirations,
great swelling and convulsions, gener-
ally ending in death; but this deleteri-
ous substance is so highly volatile if
exposed to heat, or even the open air
for about two days, that its property is
entirely dissipated.

A Surinam physician administered it,
by way of experiment, to dogs and
cats, which died after twenty-five
minutes in dreadful agony. Dissection
proved that it operated by means of the
nervous system alone—an opinion con-
firmed by thirty-six drops being given
to a criminal. These had hardly
reached the stomach when such tor-
ments and convulsions ensued that the
man expired in six minutes. Then on
the next day the body was opened,
when the stomach was found shrunk to
half its natural size, so that it would
appear that the poisonous principle resides
in the volatile substance, which may be
dissipated by heat, as indeed is satis-
factorily proved by the mode of preparing
the root for food.

The root from which tapirus is pro-
duced is of rapid growth and comes to
perfection in six months, and somewhat
resembles a large parsnip. It is then
taken up and washed, and the rind,
which is of a dark color, peeled off;
then grated or ground into a pulp, and
the pulp submitted to pressure, by
which the juice is expressed and pre-
served. The meal or pulp that remains
in the press being dried is called cacha-
ne, and is made into bread or cake,
which is called cassava bread. The
expressed juice, after being allowed to
stand, deposits a white powder, which,
after being well washed and dried, con-
stitutes what is called tapioca flour, or
Brazilian arrowroot, and by the French,
moussache. All the products of the
roots are nutritious and easy of diges-
tion. The natives frequently ferment
the expressed juice with molasses and
form an intoxicating beverage called
onycan, that supplies the place of wine
and beer of the temperate climate.
When the climate is favorable, the
plant is of a hardy nature and easily
cultivated. It requires a dry situation,
and the land to be of good quality, and

will not well yield on the same ground two successive crops.

The mode of planting is from cuttings, and first
ground is needed by the plant at its
first growth. There are nine different
species enumerated by botanists, but
two only of which are cultivated for hu-
man food; they are known as the bitter
cassava and the sweet cassava. The
roots are very similar, the first by far
the most poisonous, the only perceptible
difference being the two roots
being a tough ligneous cord running
through the center of the sweet cassava
root, which the bitter variety is wholly
without.

Bread is made of both kinds, which
is palatable and wholesome. In Guinea
the mode of preparation is as follows:
The root is rasped in large tins or
wooden graters fixed on benches, be-
hind which the women employed in
making it stand in rows. A sufficient
quantity being rasped for one time (for
the surplus would ferment and spoil),
it is put in long circular baskets of
plaited rushes, about ten feet long and
nine inches in diameter, called mangras.
These are hung up with weights
attached to the lower end, which draw
the plaited work tight together, thus
squeezing out the juice. When all the
fluid is extracted, the mangras are
emptied of their contents on raw hides
laid out in the sun, where the coarse
flour soon dries. It is then baked on
small plates made of dry clay, with a
dowel through the middle, and the most
difficult part of the process. The coarse
flour is laid perfectly dry on the hot
plates, when the women, with a dex-
terity only to be acquired by practice,
spread it out in a round and very thin
layer, nearly the size of the plate it is
laid on. This they do merely with a
piece of calash, which they keep in
constant motion, pressing gently every
part of the surface until the heat has
united the meal into a cake, without in
the least altering the color or scorching
it. Their method of turning a cassava
cake of that size is like sleight of hand,
for they effect it with two pieces of spli-
cane without breaking it, though
scarcely as thick as a dollar, and, as yet,
only half cemented together, and of a
substance always brittle, especially
when warmed.

This cake is very nourishing and will
melt to jelly in a liquid. This cake af-
ter becoming cold, is broken up and is
the tapirus of commerce, but it is dan-
gerous if eaten in any large quantity,
when dry, as it swells, or becomes
moistened, to many times its original
bulk. It will keep for any length
of time if kept in a dry place. The
Eastern tapirus is generally packed in
bags of about one hundred pounds each,
but that of South America, and com-
mercially known as Rio tapirus, is
generally packed in barrels of about
two hundred pounds weight, and is
considered far superior in quality; con-
sequently it commands a much higher
price. The Indians sometimes eat the
simple root after having roasted it in
hot ashes without any subsequent pre-
paration; the leaves are also boiled and
eaten by the Indians. Such is the pro-
ductiveness of the cassava plant that it
will yield nourishment to more human
beings than six acres of wheat.—Ameri-
can Geographer.

What the Birds Accomplish.

The swallow, swift and night hawk
are the guardian of the atmosphere.
They check the increase of insects that
otherwise would overrun it. Wood-
peckers, creepers and chickadees are
the guardians of trunks of trees. War-
blers and fly-catchers protect the foliage.
Blackbirds, crows, thrushes and larks
protect the surface of the soil. Snipe
and woodcock protect the soil under the
surface. Each tribe has its respective
duties to perform in the economy of
nature; and it is an undoubted fact that,
if the birds were all swept off the face
of the earth, mankind would not live on
it; vegetation would wither and die. In-
sects would become so numerous that
no living thing could withstand their
attacks. The wholesale destruction of
insects by grasshoppers, which have
lately devastated the West, is undoubt-
edly caused by the thinning out of the
birds, such as grouse, prairie hens, etc.,
which feed upon them. The great and
inescapable service done to the farmer,
gardener and horticulturist by the birds,
is so general and so well known, that
it needs no further proof. Spare the birds
and save your fruit; the little corn and
fruit taken by them is more than com-
pensated by the quantities of noxious insects they de-
stroy. The long persecuted crow has
been found, by actual experiment, to be
far more good by the vast quantities of
grubs and insects he devours, than the
little harm he does in the few grains of
corn he pulls up. He is one of the
farmer's best friends.—N. Y. House
Journal.

The Ombus.

Of all the public conveniences that
have been constructed since the days of
the ark, commend us to an ombus. In
stages there is no change, no variety.
After the first twelve hours or so people
get cross and sleepy; and when you
have seen a man in his night cap, you
lose all respect for him. Then on
sudden crowds of people frequently get
prosy, and tell long stories. Again,
there is the whole train of evils consequent
on a change of the coachman.

Now you meet with none of these
afflictions in an ombus. The passen-
gers change like the figures in a kaleid-
oscope, and though not so glittering, are
far more amusing. We believe there
is not an instance on record of a man's
having gone to sleep in one of these
vehicles. As to long stories, who would
venture to tell one in an ombus? and
even if he did, nobody could hear what
he was talking about.

Yes, after mature reflection, we are
decidedly of opinion that of all the
vehicles, save the glass coach, in which
we were taken to be christened, to
sombre caravan in which we must one
day make our last earthly journey,
there is nothing like an ombus.

CHOOSING A WIFE.

One day Marmaduke Oates looked
into the glass and was struck with the
fact that he was not as young as he
used to be. The day before he had
heard some one speak of him as an old
bachelor. To be sure, it was a very
silly young person, his niece, who was
not yet sixteen, but he had not liked it
very much when and what was not, in
his opinion, quite true now, might become
true if he lived long without marry-
ing. A man of middle age was much
more solid and respectable at the head
of a family, very much more so.

"I think I shall marry," said Mr.
Oates, with an air of decision.
"I wonder how it would have been
by this time," he said to himself, "if
I had long ago married her as much
Delia Abbott had liked me as well; if
she had not married Mr. Roper, and
why she married him I could never
tell) and had married me. I wish I
had never asked her to have me. We
might have been friends still."

Then he considered.
"I was the one offended," he said, "if
I choose to forgive, I may, I suppose;
Delia is a widow now, with a son as old
as she was when I saw her last. I'll
call on her. She's been married. I'll
get her opinion of married life. Per-
haps she may know some young lady
who would suit me. One of the advan-
tages of marrying late in life is that
a man can have a young wife who will
be doing to him always, and no desire
to do, as Douglas Jerrold suggests,
change his wife as people do bank notes
two twenties for one forty. Delia can't
be far from forty now. How the time
flies!"

That day when the proper hour
calls had come, Mr. Oates rang Mrs.
Roper's door bell. Having been shown
into the parlor, he waited for some time
before a rustling sound announced the
approach of a black silk dress; then a
lady stood in the doorway, and there
was a pause. He had sent up his card,
and Delia—for this was Delia—had
known whom she should see, as well as
he knew whom he should; but each gave
a little start and then exclaimed
almost simultaneously:

"Dear me, how stout you've grown."
But it was Delia, after all; Mr. Oates
saw that in a few minutes. The pretty
little nose and the soft little mouth
were there; the hands were prettier
than ever; and just at that moment she
said:

"I begin to know you. How odd it
seems. You're not married, are you?"
"No," said Mr. Oates, "I'm an old
bachelor."
"Dear me," said Mrs. Roper; "so
you are."
He had expected her to say: "Oh
dear no."
"I've been through so much since
you saw me," said the widow, taking
out her handkerchief. "We've lost
poor pa, you know—of course you know
that."
"I always thought your father died
in your infancy, Delia," replied Mr.
Oates. Then he added: "Beg pardon."
"Oh, no," said Mrs. Roper, "call me
Delia, if you like. It reminds me of
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