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Weary.

"I am weary of life," said the rose,
As she leaned to look over the wall;
"I am tired of the garden close,
Of the birds and the bees and all."
She was plucked with a careless smile,
As the beautiful dame went by,
To live in her locks a while,
And be cast in the dust to die.

"I am tired of the tree," said the bird,
"Of the sun and the wind and the rain;
Of the green and thrills I have heard,
And warbled again and again."
He was shot from the sky and the stars,
In a cage, like a savage thing,
And he bruised his breast on the bars,
And died with a broken wing.

"I would go to the war," said the boy
"I am weary of clover in bloom;
In the rush of the battle is joy,
And I sigh for sabre and plume."
In the teeth of the cannon he led;
To the wail of the wounded, the moan
Of the dying, and over the dead,
He mounted the steps of a throne.

For the soul is a thing that grows,
The soul is a deathless flame,
In the king, and the bird, and the rose,
It were ever the one and the same.
It was born of a beam of the sun,
From the heart of the blossom it passed,
To the bird, and the boy where it won
Perfection and glory at last.

THE SNAKE CHARMER.

I don't pretend to account for it, you know, or offer any excuse, such as inherent madness, or taint in the blood, but I simply say—as I would that I have a lock of gray hair in a bald place on my head and a mole on my neck—that I am irresistably drawn toward tropical snakes and have a leaning in the direction of fakirs and smugglers. My friend Harcourt is as much drawn the other way, but I swear I had no notion of the probable effect on him the day I drew him into a little cross street or court, where a number of very fat, well-preserved boas were lolling in the obscurity of a dark glass case on a pile of semi-white blankets.

Harcourt, something of a dreamer generally, followed me in my searchings after wonders, as amiable as a collie, with only an understanding in a tacit sort of way that I was not to introduce him to women who would fancy it an incumbant benevolence to pull him out and make him talk.

I hardly think he knew where we were until I forcibly plucked him out of the unrestricted glare of July day to the gaudily papered passage way to the museum.

"Harcourt, I have lovely specimens to show you—mottled boas and cobras, and an awfully swell kind of a snake charmer done up in the true Oriental flimsies—red coif, bracelets of sequins, bare ankles, and all that. The Rajah is a snake you should know. Upon my life, I think he begins to know me."

With the best intentions in the world, I gave Harcourt a little push, and he stumbled against the cage with a dull thump on the glass, which roused "Rajah," and, rearing his head very sensibly, he gazed straight into our [illegible] could ever become, my friend shrank back and seemed suddenly bereft of his legs. I steadied him up, and really thought on the moment that the ministerial Harcourt had imbibed an extra glass of some spirited American drink. He asked me to take him in the air. He was pitiably weak and as ghostly as if he had seen his grandmother's ghost in a camera obscura.

The strong, rollicking breeze brought him round, and almost quite himself he led the way to one of the wayside parks so refreshingly frequent in the large cities of this country.

He laid his hat on the park seat and nervously wiped his forehead, while I tried to entice a pigeon from the gravel without plum cake, seeming not to notice his strange agitation.

He reverted to the affair uppermost in my mind himself in his painful straightforward way:

"Don't laugh, Strahan, when I tell you that I am the slave to an all pervading dominant horror. I cannot look at snakes, although once I really believed that Nature intended to inspire admiration in making a brown and green boa. And women of the tropics were once my adoration, with their brown velvety skins, black eyes and graceful movements." He shuddered.

"Now I can never see the one without being reminded of the other. In fact, I think there has been a sort of sympathy between women and snakes since the conquest of Eve by the serpent. Both are fascinating. The serpent fastens you with its gaze like a woman; the woman stings you to death like the snake. Let me tell you my story. Perhaps then you may find an excuse for me, and tolerance of something that is not superstitious, heaven knows!"

I could not think of anything to say, so I said nothing.

Harcourt, as I explained, was painfully direct. I do not like verbiage, but I shun a man generally who dives headlong into a thing and drags you with him. Yet, I liked Harcourt, as we sometimes do a chap who we fancy has suffered his full measure.

"There are pages in my life, Strahan, which you do not know; but you do know that I was an officer in one of her Majesty's Foot Guards in India, and that I sold my commission on account of fever to De Land, of the Hawkhurst Blues, and left before my time. I was a wild fellow in those days. A few hours before my departure, while returning from a tiger-hunt in which I and my followers were shamefully outwitted, I ran across the tent of a snake charmer—a villainously dirty old Hindoo, who with horrible yells and imprecations made the twilight hideous by cudgeling his daughter, as he swore she was, while she asseverated with lifted arm to 'Allah,' that she was simply his slave. I interfered, of course. We had a free fight, leaving the old fakir *hors de combat*, and I bore off the child Zobeide—one of the loveliest creatures even then that I had ever seen, and as wild as a hawk.

"It was lucky that I had been fully prepared to leave the company. As it was the boys of my mess begged me to have nothing to do with Parsee, Hindoo or Arab women, to leave this dark-eyed houri behind. Seeing me obdurate, Captain Bellamy said:

"'Do as you will, Harcourt, but you may regret the day you did so foolish a thing. Kindly remember that I warned you.'

"And how often I have!

"But then—it was with a glow of exultation I admitted to myself the entire ownership of anything so untainted and so beautiful as Zobeide. She was as delicious to my senses as a pomegranate blossom, and was gratitude herself. Poor, starved, unloved little thing! She twined about me like a vine. Again that convulsive shudder.

"You recognize the old routine—the manner of disposing of such cases? My maiden aunt considered it scandalous, but consented to chaperone my protege. Into her hands I gave Zobeide for a year—stipulating that she be taught all Christian graces. And so I left her to tapestries, French verbs, and the piano.

"I confess I thought very little about her. The only life betweem me and my estates was severed by the death, while hunting, of my cousin, the young Earl of Favisham, and I was brought to realize my position by my solicitor. I could give my wife a position which would seem desirable in English eyes; I entertained some extravagant notions about the new life at the hall and the new Lady Favisham whom I would introduce to my people. The most dazzling beauty on the walls of the old picture gallery would, I felt, pale beside the charms of the last Lady Harcourt, Countess of Favisham.

"Yet how shall I describe my first meeting with her? I heard her light foot in the corridor, and the rustle of her silken gown. The morning sunshine flooded the room, the odor of roses from their tall green vases for a moment turned me faint. Was it a fancy that the old musty incense of the jungle where the boa lies coiled entered the room with her, emitted by her white garments.

"She glided toward me, scarcely making a sound, and my senses seemed bound by a spell.

"There was no forbidding airs of hauteur. She coiled her arms about me, and slid her dusky cheek along until it lay against mine; yet it was cool.

"I was very nearly overcome when my aunt entered the room, bringing a current of fresh air with her. 'Is she not lovely, your little Indian savage?' pointing to Zobeide, who seemed to drift—not walk—over the floor to the piano, from which she evoked such quaint minor chords that I begged her to come and talk to me instead of playing.

"From that hour my soul passed out of my body to the keeping of this girl. She spoke to me caressingly, soothingly, as a child. When wearied of my cravings for her kisses and caresses, she would shut herself up for hours in her apartments, or would gallop away over the downs on her black horse Selim, an Arabian I had given her.

"We were married in London one day, and began life in an irresponsible, un-English way, as my aunt had said. But we were always together. If we gave no balls, that was a mere matter of taste. I had once had a passion for such diversions, but it had died in me, as had most passions except for my child-wife. Zobeide seemed to revel in the county ball at first, and to gloat on the homage and admiration she received. But very soon she tired of that sort of thing, and even of her rides with Selim, the great splendid rooms, the library and the picture gallery, the lakes, the swans, and the [illegible] gleaming ghostly in the moonlight.

"She had wearied of the homage of men and the envious amazement of women, awe-struck by her beauty long ago. She locked herself up more often in her own wing, and always laughingly refused to admit me. I cannot see why I did not marvel at this, but this was no more strange than that I gave up hunting, which had been a passionate fancy of mine before. My aunt had laid her hand on my brow, saying:

"'How changed you are, Henry!'

"'Nonsense!' I replied. 'It is you who are altered. Where is Zobeide?'

"'Always that question!' she murmured in a tone of distress.

"Once she pulled me into her own chamber, saying in a way calculated to startle me—but it did not—

"'My dear boy I want to speak to you. I must speak now with you. Why do you allow Lady Favisham to amuse herself daily with a brood of detestable snakes?'

"'Does she?' I asked listlessly. 'My good soul, why should I interfere if the child really does amuse herself. Don't worry about Zobeide, dear; I don't!'

"'No, poor boy. I wish you did!'

"Strange! I passed the conversation off as if it had related to the flannels of the rheumatic tenants. Yet ordinarily I should have been paralyzed with horror at the idea of my wife juggling with snakes. It sets my teeth on edge now only to think of it, and it would have made my hair stand on end had I been in my right mind.

"I was insane all that horrible summer when a snake charmer ruled at Favisham Hall, the seat of a loyal and hot-blooded race of which I was the last and least worthy.

"Yet any one that knew Lady Harcourt at that time would not have wondered at her autocracy, I am sure. Even the servants were tinctured with the poisonous atmosphere, and only my aunt, who constantly went abroad, was able to shake off the leaden pall which had settled down upon us at the hall.

"Suddenly, in obedience to the wishes of my physician, I made ready to run over to my shooting box in Scotland. I was stubbornly firm about taking my wife with me, although she demurred and even wept when I presented the tour to her. I carried my point, and we were away just ten days.

"Lady Harcourt stipulated that her wing of the hall was to remain undisturbed during her absence. But she expected fully to be back within a week. My aunt had gone to Rugby.

"I will try and describe our coming home as intelligently as possible.

"I had noticed with wonderful elation that my head was clear and my whole mind more coherent during our absence, as if some terrible influence had been wanting to sway and blacken my life.

"On the contrary, my wife, although so young and lovely, with all the world to fall at her feet, seemed strangely ill at ease during our trip, and grew so nervous nearing home that she actually leaped from the carriage as it drew up before the hall. She had coiled herself up in it without a word, although I talked incessantly of the rains and the hops.

"Perkins, the butler, gravely met us, saying, 'Dinner awaits, my lord,' like a theatrical call-boy. But my wife sprang out and rushed off to her own apartments with her wraps on her arm, humming a little strain of a Hindoo song which she knew made me particularly unhappy.

"I threw myself in a deep chair and broke the seals of two or three letters, running over their contents in the great banquet room, where the tall wax lights flared in their sconces, trying to be patient till Lady Harcourt came. The flowers wilted in their blue and gold vases; the clock ticked ominously; still Lady Harcourt did not appear. I think a sort of paralysis must have seized me; yet I remember that I felt satisfied that the end had come. I knew by some strange foresight that the curtain had fallen on the tragic little comedy I had played at the old hall, with the woman who society had declared would one day shock or startle every one. I knew that I should never lift my head again to find her black eyes glowing from behind the tea urn. I had not been unhappy with Zobeide, but I question if I was in a state to know the quality of happiness she gave me. I had grown to think the thoughts she gave me, that was all.

"I simply told Celeste, my lady's maid, that I would go to her apartments; but Celeste, with the desire probably to save me a detested sight, ran up the polished stairs, her little slippers making a loud noise in the silent house.

"With a shriek Celeste staggered halfway down the stairs, her face like chalk, her eyes wildly staring.

"'Oh, monsieur! don't go in, if you value your life!

"I pushed her aside and entered Lady Harcourt's boudoir, hung with the pale green silk curtains she had chosen because it would remind her of the jungle where we first met. The old overpowering, indefinable odor met me at the threshold, but I stepped across her tiger-skin rug and felt every vein in my body congealing with horror.

"My wife's little gray silk bonnet and scarf lay on the floor near the sofa where she reclined, her hair, unbeund, streaming in disorder over the mossy green carpet. She was quite dead, but had, perhaps, breathed her last only a moment before I found her.

"On the bosom which had pillowed my head so often lay the head of a monster boa. His loathsome body wrapped tightly about the luckless girl had squeezed her to death. In a fervor of gladness over her return or madness from hunger he had killed the woman who fondled him when not with me.

"I managed to retain my senses somehow, and left the room, so permeated with poison. Down stairs once more, I breathed freer than for many days. I leaned out of the window and looked at the old stars which had twinkled through every hour of my miserable misspent life. I realized all at once how base and inactive I had become, a dreamer, but was I to blame?

"The old butler kindly led me to my room, begging me to drink of the glass he forced to my lips, saying that all should be done well.

"I drank, and, throwing myself on the bed, I lost my mind in a dreary and dreadful maze which melted into a long sleep. I knew in that sleep that the python had been strangled and the rumor given forth that Lady Harcourt had fallen dead from heart disease.

"The end of it all came, of course, and I went through it properly, I heard afterwards; but I think my body had acted without soul for once.

"I went to Switzerland—a place happily free from snakes, where I recovered my old mental poise, and got back to a point where I could reflect upon all that fearful time which seemed a sort of heaven to me while it lasted—my strange irresponsible life with Zobeide, a charmer of serpents, a ruler of men!

"Now you know, Strahan, why I do not care to look on such sight. It unnerves me to look on a boa more than to meet a wild beast face to face. Don't laugh."

Laugh! I was never further from it at any moment of my life!

Harcourt's experience only strengthened me in my theory about the sympathy between snakes and—some people. It is always a woman who charms snakes, you know; never a man. I wonder why?

Physicians as Opium Slaves.

Many physicians become slaves to the opium habit. A recent Austrian medical author speaks of the incredible number of physicians who have fallen victims to it and of the many who have only just escaped. A Prussian writer had sixteen cases of morphia addiction under his care, of which medical men formed more than one-third. The majority of my own patients are medical men. The physician is apt to resort to the drug because his calling involves special inroads into his mental and physical well being. Nearly always, in them as in others, there is some form of neurotic disorder. Any form of persistently painful disturbance involves this risk. A medical gentleman (a former patient of mine) says:

"I proclaim it as my sincere belief that any physician afflicted with neurotic disease of marked severity, and who has in his possession a hylodermic syringe and Magendie's solution, is bound to become, sooner or sater, if he tampers at all with the potent and fascinating, alleviative, an opium habitue."

Twins in Mind as well as Body.

Mr Galton has shown that many twins do actually behave under similar circumstances in almost identical manners, that their characters often come as close to one another as it is possible for the characters of two human beings to come, and that even where the conditions of later life have been extremely different, the original likeness of type often persists to the very end, in spite of superficial variations in style or habit of living. Some of his stories, carefully verified, are very funny. I will supplement them with two of my own. In one case a couple of twins (men) had a quarrel over a perfectly unimportant matter. They came to very high words, and parted from one another in bad blood. On returning to their rooms—they lived apart—each of them suffered from a fit of remorse, and sat down to write a letter of contrition to the other, to be delivered by the morning post. After writing it one brother read his letter over, and recalling the cause of the quarrel, added at once a long postscript, justifying himself and reopening the whole question at issue. The other brother posted his note at once, but thinking the matter over quietly, afterwards regretted his action again, and supplemented it by a second palinodia, almost unsaying what he had said in the first one. I saw all three letters myself the next morning, and was simply amazed at their absolute sameness of feeling and expression.

A mixture of seeds of hardy bedding plants will cost but a small sum, but will add greatly to the beauty and attractiveness of the front yard.

SPORTS OF THE BLIND

The Boys play Ball, Leap Frog and Tag.

Of the employments and education of the blind so much has been written that there can scarcely be said to be any lack of information on the subjects. Their amusements, or the less practical sides of their existence, have not been so fully told, but they form a no less interesting chapter in the history of these unfortunates. Their pastimes are not so restricted as would naturally be supposed, although, of course, anything to which sight is an absolute essential is beyond their enjoyment. Some attention was recently attracted by an article from the pen of the superintendent of the state school for the blind of Kentucky, in which that gentleman described a game of base ball played between nines whose members were totally blind. The description when submitted to the blind of Missouri's Institute was pronounced by them as something possible, but by no means enjoyable. In the game cited trees were used for bases and a regular base ball was the object batted. The batter was told when to strike by the pitcher's counting one, two, three. The catcher's difficulty in the premises and that of the fielders also, who were guided only by sound, can easily be imagined. The time spent in looking for the ball, too, would do much toward keeping down the score, unless a game, like a Chinese drama extended over several days.

The boys at the Missouri Institute play ball, but it is on a very much simplified principal. Instead of a ball, an old tomato or fruit can is used and the batter tosses it himself, as seeing lads do in the game of "knock out." The fielders stand outside of the limit that the record in such cases has made and then listens to music of the batted and rebounding can. The batter has three wacks at it, and the fielder who retrieves the can on the third knock out takes his turn at the bat. The game moves with considerable rapidity. The fielders seldom collide and so acute does their sense of hearing become and their faculty of judging the fall of the can, that they rarely intrude on each other's territories.

Another sport of the blind boys, and one that has in it more of the wonderful than their ball playing, is their game of "foot and a half." This, as everybody knows, is an elaborated and rebound edition of the simple leap-frog pastime. It differs from the latter in the fact that the "back" moves away from the "scratch," or jumping line, and toes a line further off each time the leader of the jumping cohort goes over him. The jumpers then leap from the scratch and clear the stooping boy in one leap until the feat is too difficult, when they make it "one and over," or a jump from the scratch and a second one to clear the "back." The boy who fails to make the leap of the leader, who sets the pace at "one and over," when it is within the reach of any other player to still make it an "over," takes the place of the stooping boy and the ex-stooper becomes the leader.

In playing this the jumping boys will work carefully out to the "back," and so get their distance, and then with a little run will leap light upon him with their hands and make the over with that wonderful precision which may truly be accounted skill in the youth blessed with sight, but which in them approaches the miraculous. They also play a fair game of tag by running over the big yard allotted to their play. This yard is divided by two brick walls and crossed by several rows of tree-boxes at regular distances. These objects serve as landmarks for the running youngsters and guide them in their play. There is about them as much boisterousness and rush in their outdoor games as there is with any party of lads that ever gathered round a country school-house, and their daring seems equalled only by their immunity from harm.

AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR.

The Story of a Birthday Present.

Lois had a sad history. She had been left alone in the world without a penny and with a younger sister to support. Her father had been a light-hearted sea captain, and while he lived she had never known the meaning of sorrow until that fateful day when he had sailed away and ship and crew were never heard of again.

Then she met Jack and had become engaged to him. He was to make one more voyage and then they were to be married; but the poor fellow had never returned, and she was left to mourn his memory, Hard, indeed, was the struggle to bring up her little sister. Trot never knew how Lois worked at night until her brain reeled sewing at starvation wages.

Trot was not ungrateful, but she was like most little girls, and took things as they came without asking how they were acquired. One day she found a sixpence, and at once thought of buying Lois a present. It was such a little sum that she had great trouble in finding anything to her fancy.

At last, in a shop window, she saw some little pincushions—two scallop shells set over a bit of colored satin, with a loop of ribbon to fasten to one's belt or a nail.

They might do, she thought.

Alas, they were ninepence apiece.

But the half-grown girl behind the counter was good natured.

"Look here," she whispered to Trot. "I know how hard it is to get things when you're young and aren't earning yet. She charges ninepence for these, but she buys 'em of an old sailor, who makes them himself for fourpence. You go down this street along the wharf to a little yellow house. There's toy boats in the window, and parrot's, and he's an old man with a wooden leg, and just ask him, He'll sell you one, I think.

"It's very nice of you to tell me," said Trot.

And, with a grateful look, she sped away; and though Lois would have expected to see her killed outright, did get safely through the crowds of drays and carriages at the water-side to the yellow house where the little old man with the wooden leg kept his queer shop and as the sign over the door declared "Apartments" also.

Some sailors smoked on the steps. One whittled at the end of the workroom.

As Trot stood modestly waiting a tall man, with a long beard, who looked thin and ill and very sad hurried past her, and went upstairs.

It was then that the old man asked her what she wanted.

"One of them cushings?" he repeated. "Well, my dear, yes. By the dozen is my rule; but I breaks rules for pretty, little lassies like you. Will you have a blue, a pink, or a yaller silk? Make up your mind, and I'll pitch down what you choose. My darter puts on the silk; I gums the shells on and polishes 'em, and so they're finished. She's at work upstairs now. So which?"

"Blue, please" said Trot.

And away stumped the old man.

When he came down he showed her the cushion, took the silver, and went to hunt up a bit of paper to wrap it in; and the whittling sailor spoke to him.

"That poor chap looked blue," he said.

"He is blue," said the old sailor. "All that's come and gone is nothing to this," he said. "He hoped ag'in hope until now. But, you see, he's looked for his gal a month now and can't find her; and he says either she's dead or married, and he's talking of putting a pistol to his head. I never see a chap so mortal down in the mouth afore."

"Folks has lived through it and married other gals," said the sailor, whittling hard and turning very red.

"Yes," said the old man; "but don't you see he's had three years on a desert island and seen two men along of him die one arter the other, and was at starvation's door when Captain Briggs picked him up, that weak he couldn't stand. And now this worry, Sartainty can be borne better than onsartainty, be it ever so woeful. Here, little lassie!"

But Trot, with eyes and mouth wide open, did not even see the little package he held out to her. A memory of a nose and of hair like that of the tall man she had seen burst upon her. Jack had no beard, but, oh! but, oh! she was strong in childish hope, and that childish expectation of fine endings to real life stories which we lose in after life. Lois would have sighed and gone away but Trot clutched the old man's jacket with her thin little hands.

"Oh, please, sir," she said—"oh, I believe it's Jack. I always knew he wasn't drowned. Oh, please tell him, if he's Jack, I'm Trot and Lois is, my sister. Oh, tell I think it's Jack and that it is Lois he is looking for. We're Captain Lee's daughters—tell him—tell him!"

"Good Lord!" shouted the whittling sailor, dropping his knife. "It's like a play. The fellow is looking for Cappen Lee's darter."

Up he went, five steps at a time. Down he came with the man with the beard.

"Where is she? Where is she?" he gasped. "This—this isn't Trot.

"This isn't Jack. Oh, dear, dear!" cried Trot. "Only your nose—that looks like. Oh! is it Jack Darrow?"

"Where is Lois?" was all he answered.

And the whittling sailor wiped his eyes with a big red handkerchief, and the old man yelled "Hurray!"

Then he crammed the pretty cushion into the child's pocket and she went away with her hand in the thin, brown hand of Jack Darrow, and told him all as they hastened along.

"Go up and prepare her, Trot," said Jack. "This is sudden. It might hurt her."

So Trot climbed the stairs, thinking what she might say, and she came where Lois sat at work and said, "Lois, I wanted to give you a birthday present, and the fairies put a sixpence into my shoe, and I went to buy a pincushion; but I've got a bigger present than that. "Guess what it is? It's—it's—Jack!.'

"The child is delirious!" shrieked Lois. "Oh, Trot, Trot—my little Trot!"

"Oh, Lois!" said Trot," I'm only preparing you. Jack has come back. He's downstairs."

But Jack was upstairs by that time, and, for my part, I think that joy, however sudden, seldom kills.

"Oh, what a wonderful birthday present you brought me!" cooed Lois, cuddling her sister next morning. "Oh, my pet, we shall all be so happy together!"

And so they were.

Scene in New York City.

"Does this line of people begin at the Battery?" was asked at the ticket office window of the Grand Central station the other day.

"Out in midocean, I should judge," was the laconic reply of the jumping jack inside the window, who flew from side to side playing a wild game of tickets and coins on the broad sill, as the line passed between him and the brass rail outside,

"Move on into the corner to count your change," the stalwart policeman on the outside whispers to any one who dallies a fraction of a second in front of the cage.

Men sweep the whole of their change together with their left hands. Women invariably stop to count the pieces in a dazed, fumbling sort of way born of suspicion, nervousness, tight gloves and many packages.

Now and again a neat little tailor made Boston girl sweeps off the change like any young dude, bettering him by having a neat little purse in her left hand, which snaps viciously as she tilts her nose and an oxidized silver umbrella handle toward the big chandelier and passes by.

"From ten to fifteen thousand people pass by between this window and that brass rod daily," gasped the jumping jack, wiping the perspiration from his brow as the gong sounded and the last man tore through the gate, his cane punching into the stomach of the big fat policeman, and his coat tail catching on the complacent brass knob. "The work is divided between three men."

"Don't you find coins very inconvenient for hasty handling?"

"An infernal nuisance. I wish all money was in cardboard, like tickets. We have so many pennies, too, because we charge a fixed rate per mile.

Penalty of Carelessness.

Roman Guerrero, a manufacturer of gunpowder at the little city of Genemuns, near Segovia, Spain, was sitting in a saloon when he was accosted by two huntsmen called Pablo Casado and Juliam Gomez, who wanted to buy powder. He produced about a hundred-weight and showed it to them. Night having set in, a light was required to examine the stuff. Suddenly a terrific explosion occurred, which shattered the saloon into fragments, sent the three men and three others having beer, seated near them, into eternity, and wounded thirteen others.

A Moorish Legend.

A Spanish Moor, being on the eve of setting out on a pilgrimage to Mecca, intrusted all his money to a man who had hitherto borne a reputation of umblemished probity. His fortune consisted of two thousand besants. On his return he was not a little surprised when the reputed honest man denied all knowledge of himself or his money. The pilgrim entered a complaint against him, entreated the judge to help him to this property, and took his oath on the truth of his statement—but all in vain! The old man's good name outweighed all he could say; the plaintiff was non suited, and went away in despair.

Presently he met an old woman, who was toddling along with the help of a staff. Touched by the stranger's grief, she stopped him, hailed him in Allah's name, bid him take heart, and having listened to his unvarnished tale, said:

"Be of good cheer, young man; maybe, with Allah's aid, I shall get back your gold. Do you buy a chest and fill it with sand or mould; only let it be bound with iron, and well locked. Then choose three or four discreet men, and come to me. We shall succeed, never fear.

The Spanish Moor followed her advice punctually. He came with four friends, bringing a chest which the strongest porters could scarcely drag along.

"Now follow me," said the old woman.

On reaching the door of the supposed honest man, she went in with the Spaniard's four friends, bidding the latter wait below, and not make his appearance until the chest had been carried up stairs.

She now stood in the presence of the hypocrite, when she introduced her four companions, saying,

"Behold! Here are some honest Spaniards, about to make a pilgrimage to Egypt. Their treasures are boundless. They possess, among other things, ten chests full of gold and silver, that they know not where to stow away just at present. They would entrust them to safe hands for a time; so I, well knowing your honesty and unsullied reputation, have brought them hither. Pray fulfill their wishes."

Meanwhile she had the heavy chest brought in, which the pretended honest man gloated over with greedy looks. But just then the despoiled pilgrim rushed in, impetuously claiming back his two thousand besants. The faithless depository was frightened, and lest the young man should reproach him with his treachery in presence of the strangers, who would then take their chest with its untold treasures, which he had already determined to appropriate to himself, he cried out to the Moor:

"Be welcome! I was almost fearing you would never come back, and was puzzled what I should do with the two thousand besants. Allah be praised! Here is what belongs to you."

The Spanish Moor went away with his treasure as triumphant as though he were carrying off so much booty. The old woman begged the master of the house to put this first chest in a safe place, while she went and ordered the rest to be sent She then sheered off with her four companions, and of course never returned.

Commerce in the Arctic Ocean.

For the second time since the wealthy Russian merchant Sibiriakoff began his persevering efforts to force his steamer through arctic ice to the mouth of the Yenisei River, the feat has now been accomplished. The steamship Phœnix, laden with merchandise from Leith, has unloaded her merchandise on the banks of the Yenisei, whence it has been carried by steamer and lighter many hundreds of miles up the great river. The Phœnix hopes to return to Europe with Siberian produce.

When Nordenskiold came home, after making the northeast passage, he said there would be no difficulty in establishing trade by steamer between Europe and the mouth of the Yenisei. If this was true, the fact was very important, for the Yenisei is one of the world's great rivers. It is navigable by large vessels during the brief summer season for six hundred miles from the sea, and by light draught boats to the very heart of Siberia. For years Mr. Sibiriakoff has been trying to demonstrate that Nordenskiold's judgment was correct, but every year, except one, his vessels have been baffled by the ice in the Kara Sea.

In 1880 his steamer, the Oscar Dickson, reached Siberia, but on the return trip she was crushed in the ice and sank. His steamer on the Yenisei has taken several loads of Asiatic produce to the mouth of the river, but though Sibiriakoff sent from Europe three vessels in one year, not a pound of his Siberian freight has ever reached Europe by sea. His ventures in the Arctic Ocean have cost him $500,000, and the successful voyage of the Phœnix will have to be repeated several times if he ever regains the money he has lost.

It is not likely, however, that this uncertain route to Siberia will ever be worth much to commerce. The Phœnix was favored with a fine season for Arctic travel. In fact, it is believed the route to Franz Josef Land was nearly free from ice all summer, offering a splendid opportunity to explorers had any of them happened to be on hand.

A Homely Wife.

A good story is told, says the *Washington Capital*, of one of the fair dames of the diplomatic corps who recently called at the residence of a Government official whose wife is noted for her domesticity. The husband himself chanced to be at home, and pending the descent of madame from the nursery went into the drawing-room to greet the lovely foreigner. The following conversation ensued:

"Ah, monsieur, you have one very homely wife!"

The host, whose better half was really not distinguished for her beauty of face, which, however, was more than compensated for by a superb figure, a graceful carriage and a charming amiability, stammered in reply:

"Ah, madame! why, really—do you know—I—"

"Yes," innocently explained his visitor in her pretty broken English; "yes, shevery homely. In fact, she stay at home all the time."

Soapstone paint is said to be an excellent rust preventive for iron surfaces.

—Spring costumes are extremely simple, both in make and drapery. Skirts are almost plain.

Cousin Claude; or My Uncle's Will.

I had always been led to expect that I would inherit my uncle's money. My parents were poor and I am inclined to think that they looked forward with unnecessary eagerness to the time when I should be able to bring them out of their poverty.

I little knew the condition of the will which ran as follows: Unless I married my Cousin Claude before I was eighteen, all the fortune was to be distributed among certain hospitals and we were none of us to get a cent. I first heard this from my cousin's own lips. He was surprised that I had not heard it before, but he spoke very kindly on the subject and did not try to urge me very hard to accept him. He was almost old enough to be my father, but was fine-looking and a man of intelligence.

When he had told everything he said: "Dispassionately, I should say that your happiest course lay in accepting me, because you insure large worldly prosperity to yourself and to those you are bound in duty to consider, because you place yourself in your own proper sphere and station—because I know myself to be an honorable man, well fitted for the responsibilities your decision would devolve upon me. On the other hand I see a raint of selfishness in my words. Your young beauty tempts me; the fortune you secure to me tempts me, and I question myself whether I have a moral right to seek to bind your youth to my declining years, though without you they must be past in comparative poverty, no small sacrifice to one who has known only luxury! Only since I have seen you have I learnt to feel all the embarrassments growing out of our uncle's strange will."

He paused; and I, who had been revolving in silence all that he had said, answered calmly. "I am to accept you, then, before my eighteenth birthday or all this wealth goes to swell the coffers of various hospitals and colleges; my parents are still poor, condemned to this dreary life; you are impoverished, and I am forever shut out from all hope of a higher earthly existence. Is it so?"

He bowed his head.

"I see papa coming," I said. "I will go to him; and to-morrow morning I will inform you of my decision."

He kissed the hand I extended to him; then drawing it within his arm he led me to my father.

I shut myself in my room that day and spoke to no one. I knew now how my parents had always regarded me—less as a child than as the instrument of their release from poverty,

They must be freed—I saw that clearly—but perhaps I need not be married at once. I decided the question quickly enough that I would accept my cousin. Had I possessed but a little more experience I should have known that my reluctance to a ratification of my vows arose from a doubt whether I would love the husband I felt compelled to accept.

The next day the old house was filled with smiling faces—no gloom sat on any but my own, and I kept my sadness for the solitude of my own room. A week later, the day following my birthday, Claude went away. In another month my parents and myself left the old house for ever.

We took up our abode in the splendid London mansion where my uncle had lived his lonely, useless life. Here we were soon surrounded by the elite of society. I had young companions of my own sex in plenty; but I found them shallow and frivolous. I had lived in thought, they in the externals of a giddy existence. I liked the young men no better. Claude grew daily in my esteem and affection. I became reconciled to a lot that would secure me so kind and constant a friend. I learned to lean upon and trust him. He was counsellor, guide, friend, as well as lover.

We were married, and I was happy—a brief, bright happiness. The month we had allotted to travel was not passed when I brought home his mangled remains—crushed out of all human semblance by that dreadful railroad collision which shocked the country that year, and I entered the home he had prepared for his bride clad in the garments of widowhood.

I remained in my solitude for some years—years that I devoted to the improvement of my mind. I was twenty-two when I again re-entered society. I, was still young and not unattractive, and was rich. I need not have remained a widow long, but I was in no haste to marry; above all, I meant, if ever I resigned my liberty, it should be into the hands of one whom Claude might have approved.

And at last I found such a one, or he found me. More truly, I suppose, a mutual and inexplicable attraction drew our spheres into contact. We knew not of each other's existence, as we know things here, until we met, but our souls were no strangers even in that hour. They mingled then into one—a bond of sweetest unison was formed, of which marriage was but the external symbol, and in perfectest accord all the years of our life have since been passed.

Claude would have loved this man, and I often think that he looks upon us from that other life to which he has gone, and smiles upon a union that is so completely fraught with happiness.

La Puenta.

The town Puenta is on the line of the great transcontinental Southern Pacific railroad line, twenty miles east of Los Angeles, and has a population now of very nearly 500. The town has an abundant supply of pure water. The soil of the country around about it is very rich, and the climate simply perfection. Puenta is the commercial centre for 400 square miles of the richest land in the world, and five miles to the southeast of it are the celebrated Puente oil wells, operated by Messrs. Lacy & Rowland. Seven wells are being pumped, giving their owners a very comfortable daily income. The oil is piped to the town of Puenta and shipped thence by rail to Los Angeles. The town is a little over a year old, but it has had a marvelous growth and will probably grow even more rapidly in the future. Ten passenger trains per day pass this point, and consequently it is brought very close to the metropolis. Thhre is a new school house just built, and although Puenta has no newspaper there is a very promising field for one.

—New black silk jerseys, elaborately braided, fasten with one button, and then round off over a vest of white pilot cloth closed with handsome pearl buttons,

NEWS IN BRIEF.

—Julia Folville of Belgium is soon to be brought out as a rival to Josef Hofmann.

—Foreign scientists have discovered minute diamonds in meteorites found in Siberia.

—More than 200,000 bird skins are now shown at the Natural History Museum in London.

—In Morocco women who talk scandal are punished by having cayenne pepper rubbed into their lips.

—Henry Clay was in the Senate of the United States at twenty-nine, contrary to the Constitution.

—John Hampton, after graduating at Oxford, was a student at law in the Inner Temple at nineteen.

—Maurice of Saxony died at thirty-two, conceded to have been one of the profoundest statesmen and one of the ablest generals which, Christendom has seen.

—On December 7, 1887, the King of Spain, aged eighteen months, was taken to the Senate House and placed on his father's throne, with all the paraphernalia, and amid great enthusiasm.

—Dr. Schliemann has discovered the location of the temple of Aphrodite Urania in Cythera. Rain-storms and an inundation of the river compelled him, however, to return to Athens via Sparta.

—There are 200 private railroad cars in the United States, representing a value of nearly $5,000,000. They are worth anywhere from $1,000 to $60,000 each, the most luxurious, probably, being that owned by George M. Pullman.

—The cornflower that was the favorite of Kaiser William—the blue "bachelor's button" of this latitude—is said to be the badge of the Liberal party in Belgium, while the red poppy is that of the Conservatives or Clerical party.

—From the earliest years of Queen Elizabeth to the latest of Queen Victoria, England has had scarce an able statesman who did not leave the university by the time he was twenty, and many of them left at an earlier age.

—The late Lord Beaconsfield left the cloister and entered the great world early, as did John Bright, and commenced his political career by writing a book at seventeen, in which he predicted that he would be Prime Minister.

—A Kansas prairie chicken is credited with causing the stoppage of a train on the Missouri Pacific Railroad by flying against the bell rope and striking it with such force as to ring signal gong in the locomotive.

—The wooden cross marking the place where King of Bavaria Ludwig II. met his death, is to be replaced by a small chapel built on piles. King Otho's condition has undergone no change; on the last visit paid to him by his mother he failed to recognize her.

—A traveler on a Georgia railroad wanted to get off at a station where the train did not stop. It was after dark, and so when the conductor would not agree to stop for him, the passenger went to the front platform of the rear car, drew the coupling pin, set the brakes, and when the car stopped jumped off.

—At Omaha, recently, the two-year-old son of a Bohemian farmer fell 70 feet to the bottom of a dry well. As the latter was too narrow for a man to descend, the work of widening it with shovels was begun. After sixty hours' imprisonment the youngster was rescued, apparently little the worse for his experience.

—M. Gervais, a French authority, says there are men capable of bearing arms—in Germany, 5,000,000; in France, 4,500,000; in Austria-Hungary, 1,800,000; in Italy, 2,000,000; in England, 8,000,000; in Russia, 6,000,000, and in all other European States, 4,000,000. That gives a total of 24,100,000. Of that number 10,000,000 are trained soldiers.

—The latest entertainments in Chicago, according to an exchange, are "bird talk matinees." These consists of a lecture "replete with pretty stories and unheard-of facts, coupled with bits of verses and snatches of biography. On a stand near the lecturer are birds in variety—wrens, jays, ravens, bobolinks, robins and larks—illustrative of the lecture." The ladies attend in "pretty carriage and street dresses."

—In a carefully compiled table of labor statistics in the United States, France, England and Germany, it appears that labor of all kinds, skilled and unskilled, is paid over one hundred per cent. more in the United States than in any of the other countries named. In some cases—notably in the wages of women—the difference is over three hundred per cent. in favor of the United States.

—There is living in Chennubbee, Sumter county, Ga., a country girl named Irene Wilkinson, who is quite a curiosity. She is 24 years old, weighs 71 pounds, measures 2 feet 2 inches around the head, 2 feet 4 inches around the waist, 3 feet 4 inches high and has arms and legs only 15 inches long. She is quite intelligent, does good needlework, and also the cooking for her aged father and mother.

—Berlin, it seems, has gradually become the headquarters of the carved wood industry, supplanting Switzerland. Six hundred artists in wood-carving, the same number of turners and 700 carpenters are engaged in manufacturing such articles as cigar cases, newspaper and picture frames, napkin rings, etc. The value of the annual export of these articles is given as 5,000,000 marks, and this is exclusive of the costly carved wood furniture, the manufacture and export of which are assuming large proportions.

—It is interesting to learn that Mrs. Cleveland always calls her husband "Mr. President," Mr. Cleveland addresses his wife as "Frank." Martha Washington, in her younger days, called her husband "George," but in the last twenty-five years of her life always addressed him as "General." While in the White House Mrs. Hayes called her husband "Mr. Hayes." Mrs. Lincoln and Mrs. Garfield always addressed their husbands respectively as "Abram" and "Jim." Now the question is, what should a President's wife, according to etiquette, call her husband? Precedent seems to give no answer,

Wood pulp is rapidly being substituted for plaster of Paris in the manufacture of all kinds of building ornaments in France, where a new method has been devised.