

THE MIDDLEBURGH POST.

T. H. HARTER, Editor and Prop.

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Since the beginning of the century France has fallen from the second to the fourth place in point of population among European countries.

Emperor William, of Germany, is keeping his soldiers so hard at work playing war that the New York Telegram suggests they possibly might welcome the reality as a relief.

There is a club in Berlin called "The Giants," every member of which is six feet tall. Vienna has a "Lazy Club," no member of which does anything for a living, and London a "Baldheaded Club," where nothing but polished skulls are seen.

The Medical News voices a very great truth when it says that "it seems strange that people will submit to the indignities of the nose-makers. A thousand are outraged in order that one or a few may possibly be benefited or relieved of a trifling expense."

There seems to the New York News to be an epidemic of embezzling prevalent in this country at the present time, for it is impossible to pick up a newspaper without finding some case in which trust has been betrayed by the treasurers of either public or private funds. These embezzlements or shortages, as they are sometimes less harshly called, are in the majority of cases the result of reckless expenditure on the part of the persons who default.

The wandering St. Regis Indians, who are found in camps and villages on both sides the St. Lawrence, still retain their own language, though most of them speak English and some of them French. They address one another and their beasts, dogs and horses in the Indian tongue, and, according to their belief, "the robin bird speaks the Indian language." The women are industrious, kindly and shapely in middle life, while the men are fat and idle, after the manner of savage males brought under civilizing influences.

The California co-operative experiment known as "The Atkinson Colony," in honor of Edward Atkinson, is at last to have a trial. Its location is in Kern County, where a tract of ten square miles under irrigation has been secured. A small sum is to be paid down for the land, the balance to be secured on long-term payments. The prospectus has been carefully guarded, but the San Francisco Examiner professes to have seen it and gives an account of the aims and hopes of the colonists. No recruit is to be barred on the score of religion. Women are to be admitted to membership, and the promise of wages as high as those paid to men is held out to them as an inducement to join the colony. Payments for all services and exchange of commodities will be made by means of a system of credits given at the conclusion of each day's work. A colonist who can show by his book that he has credits will be entitled to merchandise at the colony store. Should he desire any article not in stock it will be the duty of the merchant to order the article and charge a reasonable price for it. The profit will go to the common fund, which the Board of Directors will control. A marked point of difference between this experiment and others is that individual ownership of land will be permitted, the community interest extending only to the products of the soil. The funds from the sale of crops will go into the treasury until the regular dividends shall be declared. The articles of association explain that employment will be furnished to every colonist, and that the members will receive full value for actual labor and no more, so that no one or more men in the community will be enabled to absorb the product of any number of his fellow-colonists. To meet the "unearned increase" problem the colonists propose to "divide the increased value of the lands on which colonists settle among the actual workers every six months." One provision in the articles prohibits sale of liquor within the colony. Schools will not be established, the children availing themselves of the instruction furnished by the State. The colonists are to take possession of their land next spring, and live in tents until they are able to build houses with their own hands.

"EVERY woman loves one man once in her life, and she never loves twice."—Paul Bourget. This Frenchman talks nonsense. He does not seem to be familiar with the genius of the women of his country, let alone that of those of other countries.

AUTUMN SUNSET.

Across the wheatfields o'er the western hill,
The blood-red sun is sinking crimson bright
Along the valley floods the sunset light,
And then reflected from below, until
The whole wide sky the sunset colors fill—
And on old woodlands far along the right
Steals down the deeper glades the approaching night,
And down the vale where glides the glimmering rill.

Along the west the fields of ripening grain
Stretch over dale and upland, hill and plain,
And, tossing plumed heads of golden green,
Drink the rich pure nectar drops that run
From the upturned goblet of the sun,
And mix their golden with its crimson sheen.

—James T. Shotwell, in Toronto Week.

Closer Than a Brother.

BY BUIJT JOHNSON.



PERCIVAL WARELEY seemed to exist only to enjoy life and to make life enjoyable to others, and by all who knew him it was admitted that he succeeded wonderfully at his chosen duties. He never was seen without cheerful expression on his face, and, although he was not at all brilliant, his conversation was so thoroughly in keeping with his countenance that almost any one was glad to exchange a few words with him. Some young men, when they heard Percival's praises sounded by young women, insisted that they could be quite as agreeable and light-hearted as the popular youth had they nothing to do but enjoy life and spend the money that a busy father had saved for an only son. Probably they were mistaken, for Percival was not the only young man in New York who had plenty of money and no business occupation, yet some of the others looked quite as dull and unhappy as the poorest people they met on the street.

Nothing, though, in this imperfect world seems quite as it should be, so there was a drawback to the entire enjoyment of any one who sought Percival Wareley's society, and who were willing to help him spend his money. It was the young man's closest friend, Mr. Henry Drock. This person was at least fifteen years the senior of young Wareley, who was only twenty-four, and he took all the pleasures of the rich so calmly that people wondered if he enjoyed them at all.

Yet Percival seemed fonder of him than of any other man and took him wherever he went, introducing him into society and proposing him at clubs as if there was no doubt that others would enjoy Mr. Drock's society quite as much as Percival himself. People will stand a great deal from young men who are rich as well as agreeable, so Drock was endured politely, some middle-aged people remarking that there was 100 times as much to him as to Percival himself, for the fellow seemed entirely sensible, and could talk fairly well upon the affairs of the day, whereas Percival's interest in anything which did not produce amusement in large quantities were limited.

Meanwhile, that Drock reciprocated his young friend's regard could not be doubted for an instant. No matter how uninteresting anything might seem to the older man, his eye never rested upon Percival without displaying an active and honest fondness. Some people were mean enough to suggest that Drock's regard was that of a well-kept dog, and for the same reason; but Percival had insisted at one time, when conversation chanced to be about his friend, that Drock was one of the hardest men in the world to do a favor to, for his tastes were few and his means ample.

Young women of the class that says anything that comes to mind had expended much curiosity and some questions upon the couple, but all they learned was that Drock had known his young friend from early boyhood, and always liked him; he had first met him in the town where Percival's father had found a wife, and where the family spent a month or two of every year. He said he never had met a better-natured, more open-hearted young man, and, such qualities being scarce, he liked and respected them accordingly. It did him (Drock) a lot of good to see a young person enjoy life so heartily and persistently, instead of turning against it on being satiated with pleasure, and he thought it did men good, anyway, to be sometimes in the society of men younger than themselves.

Drock evidently meant all he said, but his fondness for Percival did not meet the approval of some men and women who wanted Percival to become fond of them. Young and impressionable men who are rich in their own right and scarce in any society, so there were handsome women some years older and a hundred times smarter than Percival Wareley who would gladly have married the young man for his money.

Likewise there were scores of men, young and old, who would have given their very souls to coax the youth and his money into business with them, even if their highest ideal of business was to get ahead of the bookmakers at the race tracks, or to try some "system" on the proprietors of other gambling establishments. But Drock was always in the way; he never talked business himself and seemed to have no business training.

To see Percival without Drock was next to impossible, for the two men

kept bachelor's hall together, and no amount of contriving sufficed to get Drock out of the way while Percival should be "let into" some grand money-making scheme "on the ground floor."

Ladies fared rather better, for Percival's bosom friend was not an eavesdropper, yet the women who were longest headed had no faith in ever resuming their blandishments just where they had dropped them at the end of a chat, for they felt sure that Percival unbosomed himself to his friend, and that Drock's counsel would go a long way with a young man so impressionable and so entirely destitute of obstinacy.

Desperate cases require desperate remedies, so a couple of experienced and businesslike belles one day formed an alliance for the purpose of securing Percival and his money; one of them was to marry Drock, who himself, according to the younger man, was well off, and then to bring her bosom friend and her husband's together at her own house. It was a well laid plan, and neither woman doubted that it would succeed for each, just for fun, had brought dozens of men to her feet; it failed, however, through Drock's utter inability to perceive that a handsome woman was making love to him—he was so stupid about it as to spare her the mortification of thinking herself deliberately rejected.

It was a great disappointment, aside from the financial loss, for the belle had been in society long enough to have learned that a matter-of-fact fellow without any vices was the most satisfactory material from which to make a model husband, especially if he had the virtue of constancy to the degree which Drock manifested in his regard for Percival.

A month or two later all the man raged, for Drock and his young friend went into business together as partners. The theory that Drock intended himself to get all of Percival's money was spoiled by the new firm securing a confidential office manager a man who occupied a similar position for many years with Percival's father.

The partners in the new firm took business cares lightly, but while at the office or on the street they still were almost inseparable, going downtown together and lurching together.

Then society and every one else who wanted anything from Percival would have given up had not the young man still spent his money freely; he gave yacht parties and coaching parties in good style, and seemed to delight in seeing people enjoy themselves; but one condition of the enjoyment remained, that Drock should be one of the party. Still, this slowly became less a penalty than a pleasure to people who regarded the younger partner as anything but a gold mine to be worked by any one who could get at it, for Drock slowly but surely took to city ways and manners, until he became quite as good company as most of the men of leisure who helped women to kill time.

Suddenly, however, the fateful day that awaits any young man was reached by Percival Wareley, the fate taking the form of a young woman whom Percival thought far prettier and sweeter than any other. So quickly did the affair take shape that society did not have an inkling of it until the engagement was announced, for the lady, although well born and well-to-do, was of a retiring disposition and out of the rather lively set into which the accident of birth and of a gayety loving mother had placed Percival. The society that had known and enjoyed Percival did not intend to be robbed of him, for if the young man had done so much entertaining while a bachelor, what could he not do when he had an establishment of his own? The young lady who was to become Mrs. Wareley was suddenly loaded with attentions and overwhelmed with calls from ladies who knew her yet had rather ignored her in earlier days as being dreadfully uninteresting and spiritless.

Sad to relate—but the truth must be told—several determined efforts were made to break the match on the principle that a young man who has broken with one girl is easier than any other to snap up. Then, however, Drock, who had become rather an old story, resumed his original prominence, and some spiteful maidens wondered whether he was present during all the formalities and delights of courting.

There was one place where he could not be, women thanked their stars, and that was at the house of the young man's intended during the hours in which women exchanged calls; all of the fair sex, therefore, who owed him grudges did their best, in their own skillful manner, to excite curiosity and suspicion in the mind of the young lady who had secured the great catch of the season, and they succeeded far enough to prompt her to make many inquiries which seemed to annoy Percival, whose general answer was only that when he liked any one he liked with all his might, and never changed, as the bride would find out to her own satisfaction. He also said that Drock had long been known and trusted by the elder Wareley, and a son ought to be allowed to be fond of a man whom his father had liked, no matter how strangers might object.

"But," said Percival's fiancée one evening, in tones which sounded as if there was a flood of tears impending, "some of the girls insist that you won't be able to live without him, even after we're married. I don't want any other man beside my husband in the house all the while."

"The girls don't know anything about it, my dear," the young man replied reassuringly. "You shall be ruler of the house and no one shall come into it, not even my dearest friend, except when you like. Drock thinks too much of me to offend any one whom I love. Besides, he's very happy

for my sake, that I'm going to marry such a love of a girl, and I've heard him say, over and over again, that the happiest husbands and wives are generally those who see least of other people."

"But how is he going to get accustomed to the change, after having been closer than a brother to you for several years?"

"I'm sure I don't know. Perhaps he'll follow my example and take a wife. To tell the truth, I—well, I'll tell you some other time."

"Oh Percival! A secret! You're keeping something from me."

"Only for a little while, and I assure you there's nothing dreadful about it—it will make you laugh when you hear it, I'm sure."

"When will you tell me?"

"Just as soon as we're married, my dear; husbands and wives mustn't have any secrets from each other—so Drock himself says, and I'm sure he knows."

The young woman would no more have repeated this conversation to any one than she would have drowned herself before trying on her wedding dress, but somehow the impression was passed from one to another that there really was some secret behind the inseparable companionship of Drock and Percival.

So male gossips tried at once to extract it from Drock himself, but that honest fellow met all the insinuations by the assertion that Percival was a real good fellow—the cleanest hearted young man he knew—and that no one was gladder than Drock that he was about to get a sweet and trustworthy wife, and to be as happy as he deserved.

Drock kept close to the young man right up to the wedding day, which was also the twenty-fifth anniversary of Percival's birth. He even acted as "best man" at the ceremony, during which he looked as happy as if he were not giving away a friend. When the young couple were at last securely bound together for life and had escaped from the church to the seclusion of their carriage, Percival's attempt to kiss the bride again was frustrated by a small but determined hand, as the young woman said:

"Not until you've told me the secret about Drock."

"Oh, I don't want you to laugh at me so soon after marrying me. Do let me wait a few days."

"No—not even a few minutes. You promised to tell me as soon as we were married."

"Very well, then; I'll keep my word, although there's really nothing to it. You see, when I came of age my father declared that I hadn't sense enough to go in when it rained. Wasn't that funny?"

"No; I think 'twas real horrid."

"Well, dear, perhaps he was right. You see, he was a very matter-of-fact man, while mother, although as good as gold, was a gay, thoughtless, careless creature, and every one said I was her right over again. She had died a year or two before I came of age, and I failed rapidly a year or two after, and had lots of money, and I was the only child, and he was afraid I'd go to the bad. He had no relations to leave me to, but he remembered Drock as a man who had always seemed very fond of me when I was a boy up in the country, where mother came from."

"One day he sent for Drock and had a long talk with him, and then he told me he had turned as much as possible of his property into cash and given it to Drock to give to me when I reached my twenty-fifth year, if I'd previously acted according to his advice, and formed no habits of friendship of which Drock didn't approve. I was to be allowed to spend all the money I liked in any decent way, but not a cent on any sort of vice or dissipation."

"Drock has really been your keeper then," said the bride, instead of your friend, as every one has supposed?"

"Really, my dear, he has been a big-hearted, sweet-tempered friend, in spite of his position, and, as I look back, I suspect that I tried his patience awfully at times. To tell the truth, as I got some sense, little by little, my patience was tried, too—not by anything he did or said, but because I really seemed unfit to go about without a keeper. But Drock did his best by me, and I—"

"And you turned out so well," said the bride, suddenly volunteering a little shower of kisses, "that I think all rich young men should be treated just like you, and not be allowed to run at large without some sensible person to take care of them."—Once a Week.

How the Apple Tarts Went.

Meyer, the confectioner, stood behind his counter and gazed sadly at the huge pile of apple tarts which were beginning to grow stale, for during the last few days business had been unaccountably slack. Suddenly he be thought himself of a plan. Sitting down to his desk he wrote out the following advertisement and sent it to the newspaper office:

"Genuine Offer of Marriage—A young man of agreeable exterior and ample means desires to form the acquaintance of a lady with a view to making her his partner for life. Beauty and wealth are not so much an object as a good character and an amiable disposition. Young ladies who may feel inclined to cast in their lot with him hereby requested to call at Herr Meyer's confectionery establishment to-morrow afternoon at three o'clock, and, as a means of recognition, to eat an apple tart."

A few minutes after three the whole stock of apple tarts was cleared out.—Sheffield (England) Telegraph.

It is estimated that last year 1,285,000,000 bananas were consumed in the United States alone.

HOW ABOUT

HARD TIMES?

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