

MY LAST ILLUSION.

More years ago than I can state
(Or would divulge if I were able)
It was my privilege and fate
To worship the enchanting Mabel.

She was a maid of sweet fifteen;
Blue-eyed and flaxen as a fairy
Was Mabel; as a rule I lean
To something darker, but I vary.

And for a while we lived enrapt
In our young loves, and all was jolly;
Till I was shamefully entrapped
By one who bore the name of Molly.

For Molly's eyes were black as ink;
And Molly's hair was deepest sable;
It pains me even now to think
How badly I behaved to Mabel.

But I was doomed to pay the price,
For Molly proved both false and giddy;
I gave her some sincere advice
Once, and was jilted for a middy.

Oh, bitter, bitter was my cup!
I hardly cared for life or sun;
Till I saw Mabel, and repented.

But Mabel's wrath was undisguised,
She was distinctly cold and haughty;
I told her I apologized,
I owned that I was very naughty.

I left no stone unturned to woo
The sufrage of her tender mercies;
I wrote her letters not a few,
And some extremely poignant verses.

Tears, woe, entreaties, all were vain;
We parted with a final flare-up—
I only saw her once again,
Just at the time she put her hair up.

For several years we ranged apart;
But though in minor ways unstable,
Down in its depths, my tormented heart
Has always hankered after Mabel.

And often, when I heard the name
It would begin to throb and mope
In homage to my boyhood's flame,
And anguish longed for her photo.

I have no longings now. To-night
For one brief hour we came together,
And for that one brief hour you might
Have knocked me over with a feather.

Perhaps the fault was mine. Perhaps,
In nourishing a youth's ideal,
I had forgotten how the lapse
Of time would modify the real.

Maybe the charms that won the boy's
Young heart were there in full perfection,
But could no longer counterpoise
My till for a dark complexion.

But ah, what boots the abstract doubt?
Seeing that she has wed another,
What boots it that I thought her stout,
And growing like her dreadful mother?

'Tis but my last illusion fled,
Perished, dissolved in idle folly;
The Mabel of my dreams is dead—
I wonder what became of Molly!

—London Punch.

A CLEVER THIEF

By Mrs. Christine Stephens

FOR the greater part of the year our little neighborhood in Penobscot County, Maine, was kept in a state of alarm by the frequent and sudden visitations of a large black bear, which turned up when most unlooked for and in most unexpected places. It was all the more exciting, as no bears had been seen in that locality for some years. This one was so inquisitive and daring in its treatment of human habitations, that I think it must have been partially tamed at some period of its life.

Its first reported appearance was about the end of March, when Dod Nerrick and Wink Dudley were making maple sugar on the side of Jack's Ridge. They had a little camp in the lee of the great maples, with a rough stone arch and a set of big iron kettles. Here they used sometimes to stay and boil sap nearly all night after a big "run."

One night they had put their last kettleful on to boil, after a hard day of rain, which at the last had turned to snow. The sap did not evaporate rapidly, and the boys were tired out. They built a new fire about 9 o'clock and threw themselves down on a bed of fur boughs in one corner of the camp to drowse, but had hardly shut their eyes when a loud sniffling like that of a great dog aroused them.

There in the doorway, with long muzzle extended and head swaying from side to side, was a big black creature with shining eyes. Dod noticed in the light of the arch fire that it had a white stripe in its face. It snuffled toward the other corner of the camp, where two pails of warm syrup stood.

With a whoop of terror both boys leaped from the boughs and boiled, nearly running against the bear in their frantic haste to get out of the camp, and did not stop till they reached home.

On going to camp early the next morning, they found the pails overturned. What had not been devoured of their contents had run down through the wide cracks of the camp floor. Part of a small ham, from which the boys had fried savory slices for their dinners, was pulled down from its peg by the arch and eaten, and the boughs of the bunk were scattered about the camp. Outside great tracks in the soft spring snow showed their visitor to be a bear. Probably it had just come from the long fast of hibernation, and the odor of boiling syrup had tempted it to the camp.

Dod and Wink did not see the bear again till toward the middle of May. Dod had determined to hang a May basket for Luck Jane Nickey, despite the dire threats of her father, who had given out word that any youngster caught galloping over his onion beds on such a "tom fool's errand" would be flogged.

As an earnest of his intention, the old gentleman kept two or three long birch withes standing in a corner in his entry. But Dod was not impressed by these formidable preparations, and sallied forth one bright moonlight night with Wink.

When nearing the Nickey place, the boys heard a great commotion in the barnyard, which was at some distance from the house—plaintive bleatings, deep howlings, and at times a loud stamping of sheep and cattle about the yard. Dropping their May baskets on the doorstep, Dod and Wink ran down to the yard to discover the cause of such a commotion.

"It's a bear!" exclaimed Wink, peering between the high bars.

"Our bear!" cried Dod. "There's the white stripe. Run for Mr. Nickey!"

Wink rushed to the house to waken the owner, while Dod gathered stones and hurled them with all his might promiscuously at the flying combatants.

In the gathering dusk the bear turned once more to Dod and the yearling. Dod was in a panic. To leave the already bruised yearling to be torn and tortured by the cruel bear could not be thought of. Yet the ugly glow in the bear's eyes warned Dod of danger. He could no longer hear the tinkle of the bell. The cows had reached the yard. A bird began singing off a little way in the woods, and Dod could hear the "Yeep, yeep, yeep! Yawp, yawp!" of a wandering flock of belated turkeys wending their way homeward before an exasperated and noisy small boy on the next farm.

Suddenly loud shouts broke over the ridge above Dod, and his father and the hired man came running into view. Then the bear took to her heels and disappeared into the scrub.

The yearling was pulled out of the hole and driven home, a good deal bruised and torn about the flanks.

The next morning several men started out to hunt the creature, but not a sign was discovered. Then a trap was set. But she was altogether too knowing to be "taken in," although she managed to secure the bait—a shank of veal and several other dainties.

Not long after that she looked in on Betty Marston one hot morning, just as Betty was putting her cream in to churn. With hysterical cries for help the girl tumbled out of the buttery window at the back of the house, and ran to the meadow, where the men were mowing. She left the bear in possession of the kitchen, where a large baking of pumpkin pies from the brick oven had been set down on the wide brick hearth to cool.

When the excited haymakers rushed in with pitchforks and rakes, they found only the empty pie-shells, out of which the bear had deftly scooped the contents.

She had upset the big dash churn and guzzled some of the cream; the rest was running across the kitchen floor and out at the door.

Several parties soon went out to seek the bear, but no clue to her whereabouts could be discovered, nor did she fall into any of the snares that were set for her. She harvested Dod's watermelons and Wink's lucious cantelopes in the burned patch later on, and destroyed no end of corn in the silk.

In the fall she took a few fat lambs just to fortify herself for the winter, which the harassed farmers were glad to see set in.

Toward the end of February Dod and Wink set out one morning on snowshoes with guns and axes to go up to Jack's Ridge to prepare wood for the coming sugar season. They worked through the forenoon, cutting and breaking up the dead maple limbs, getting a large pile ready. After lunch they went with their guns away over the ridge and down the wooded valley beyond, hoping to find some rabbits, and possibly a few partridges.

After tramping for about two hours they had secured only one rabbit, and were about to start toward home, tired out, when they were saluted by fierce growls and snarls close at hand. The boys were terribly alarmed. They could not run on snowshoes, but whatever the beast was that it could make but slow progress through the deep snow. So they stopped to listen.

The growls seemed stationary, and to proceed from a dense brush of a fallen hemlock not far away. Dod and Wink determined to find out what creature was making such a fuss and why it did not show itself.

Cautiously making a circuit, they approached the hemlock, and after clambering over brush and small bushes, in which they frequently entangled their snowshoes, they discovered that the sounds came from an old, hollow pine stump. Through a small hole above the roots and half hidden by hemlock boughs a bear's head protruded.

With the white stripe in her face, her red mouth, big white teeth and glaring, wicked eyes, she made a very ugly picture indeed. The boys had stumbled upon her den at last.

Some time during the winter a small hemlock had been blown down and lodged across the opening under the great pine roots, through which, in the fall, she had entered to make her bed. Snow had drifted in among the hemlock branches, and what with frequent rains and the warmth of the creature's body within, had formed a wall of ice, barring her exit. Her breath had kept a small opening, and through this she plunged her head, now that she had awakened from her long sleep, to reconnoiter. She had scented them from afar, and at once gave voice to her rage.

Seeing them near, she made frantic efforts to break through. She dug and bit savagely at the sides of the aperture, making the ice and hemlock twigs fly in little showers, all the time uttering wild and furious cries. The boys feared she would soon be loose upon them. Dropping into their guns some small chunks of lead to serve as bullets, they approached as near as they dared and fired through the boughs. The lead tore through the bear's scalp, and brought redoubled roars and fiercer struggling. She had now her head and shoulders out. The situation was alarming. Wink reloaded and fired a second charge, which took effect in the shoulder. Dod followed it up with a shot through the head, and the bear fell back into the cavity.

Some minutes passed before the boys dared to make a close investigation; but as no further sound came from the den, they grew brave and went up to it. The old bear was dead. Enlarging the hole in the pine stump, Dod and Wink entered her den. The bounty on the old bear's scalp, together with her skin, brought Dod and Wink a purse of money.—Youth's Companion.

Black Adventure.

BALLOON ADVENTURE.

COMTE HENRY DE LA PAULX, the daring aeronaut, who is at present conducting a series of experiments in marine ballooning on the Mediterranean, in the vicinity of Cannes, predicts that, if things go as he has reason to expect, he will, during next summer, show that he can sail about on the Mediterranean as safely in his balloon as he could on a yacht, remaining for a week or fortnight on the water. He says he has already solved the problems of demonstrating the stability of the balloon at a small elevation over the surface of the water for an indefinite length of time, and of deviating from the course of the wind at least thirty degrees. On land the Count has had some wonderful adventures. His hundredth aerial trip was accomplished in November of last year, and since then he has made five more ascents. He has beaten every record in the world, having covered a distance of about 13,500 miles; passed 882 hours, that is to say, about thirty-six days, in his balloons, and conveyed 327 passengers.

"One of the most sensational excursions I ever made," he said, "was on October 22, 1898, when M. Mallet and myself sailed over the furnaces of Liege, with a thousand cubic metres of inflammable gas at an elevation which was rather dangerous, and landed in Pomerania, near Rostock, after a voyage of more than 650 miles. It was a glorious night, and at 10 o'clock we passed over a town, where a silvery chime rang out the hour with tones that seemed to gather a marvellous sweetness as they echoed through the silence of the night. After passing over the town of Chimay, in Hainaut, Belgium, we emerged from a momentary fog and saw the Meuse, near Dinant, like a silver streak in the landscape, the Chateau of Walsen, the old abbey of Waulsort, and the rock of Bayard. The next scene was one of the most memorable I ever witnessed. The horizon looked strangely illuminated in the distance, and as we approached the lurid blaze of light became stronger, until the whole sky seemed to be on fire. We looked at our maps, and concluded that we were in the vicinity of Liege.

"As we came nearer the effect was grandiose, flames shot up hundreds of feet into the sky from innumerable furnaces, and the sight was realistically Dantesque. It required by little imagination to make us believe that we were about to enter the inferno, and the doleful inscription, 'Abandon hope, all ye who enter here,' would have been quite in place in the burning sky before us. Suddenly we realized that we had better mount higher if we did not want to be roasted. We quickly threw out some ballast, and the balloon rose about 400 fards higher. It was not too much, for the conflagration seemed to increase every instant, fire belching out of a hundred funnels, the flames roaring with a sinister noise as they shot up into the air, rarefying it and threatening to suck us into the burning whirlpool. The sight was unique and fascinated us in spite of ourselves. All the furnaces and blasting furnaces were in full work, crowds of men were shouting, immense Cyclopean hammers rebounding on enormous anvils, and steam drills were hissing and seething. Looking down from our frail basket it seemed as if the ground were burning. We could distinguish the forms of the workmen, who looked like pigmies surrounded on every side by fire, and we wondered how they could live in the midst of the flames. We gave a sigh of relief as we bounded over the last furnace and were carried on over the plains of Holland and the north of Germany. At 1 o'clock we landed in a pine forest near Rostock."—London Globe.

LOST IN THE DESERT.

"The craze to find a metal is a funny thing," said the oil prospector. "I always had it, and once, in British Columbia, away north, it gave me a close call. I was alone when I got as far as the last settlement. There were four Indians and a fur trader there. They all advised me not to go into the barrens, but like a good many others, I thought I was wiser than the natives, and I only meant to go a few miles. There was nothing to do but foot it, and carry your provisions and blankets on your back.

"The country was flat as a floor and bald and smooth as my head, with no landmarks. The only way I could get direction was by the sun and the stars.

"When I had been out for about two days my provisions were nearly gone. I was going to turn back and make a dash for the settlement. All day long a gray cloud had been moving up from the west very slowly. I suppose it was coming on so slowly I didn't realize what it meant to be without the sun to guide me. There wasn't even a blade of grass on that desert, nor a living thing, nor a stone sticking up. The clouds kept bending over more and more, and finally they closed down over me like a trap.

"I shall never forget the lonesomeness of that place, and how, whenever I stopped walking, I would strain and strain my ears without hearing anything but the thump of my own heart. But I thought I was all right, and kept on walking toward the settlement, steadily, until it was nearly night. Then I saw something white a few yards off to one side. In one gasp the breath went out of me. The white

thing was a bit of cracker I had dropped when I had eaten my lunch!

"I sat down and tried to think. I knew it was no use to walk that way any further. I began to think my bones would whiten out there on the barrens, but finally I went to sleep. In the morning I was crazy with hunger. I ate my last piece ofhardtack, and nearly all day I walked aimlessly, hoping to find some landmark. There was no sleep in me that night. Whenever I shut my eyes I could see nothing but a great flat plain with a line across it—the straightest line you ever saw.

"Well, it was that crazy notion that saved my life. It suddenly occurred to me that I could draw a line across this desert. When it was getting light in the morning there were a few minutes when I could see which side of the circle was east by the glimmer through the clouds. So I worked with my sheath knife till I had built a little pile of earth, and waited for day to come. The moment I saw the glimmer and had the direction I ran toward the sun a hundred yards or more, sighting the piles of dirt, but they looked like towers on the desert.

"All that day I built piles of earth southward until I lost count, and the next day when I saw the glimmer of morning I knew I had the right direction. Toward night I struck a dog's track, and finally I sighted a clump of three and a group of cabins. I fired my revolver several times, until I saw two men on horseback coming out to me; then I swung down on my knees and fell over, flat on my face.

"It was several weeks before I could close my eyes at night without sighting along little piles of earth."—Youth's Companion.

FOUGHT DOG IN DARK.

A half hour's fight with a mad dog in a dark cellar was the thrilling experience that fell to the lot of Policeman Quirk, of the Morrisania station, on a recent afternoon. The mongrel had bitten two children and caused a panic in the neighborhood before the policeman cornered him. Shortly after 1 o'clock the dog, foaming at the mouth, plunged into a crowd of children at 159th street and Melrose avenue, and bearing little Elsie Heinz to the ground, fastened his teeth into her left arm. A boy struck the brute a glancing blow with a ball bat, and was attacked for his temerity. He dodged and the animal sprang for four-year-old Joseph Kern, who stood dazed directly in the animal's path. With teeth fixed in the boy's right arm, the animal began to tear the child's flesh. Policeman Quirk arrived just as John Murphy had beaten the dog off the child. The two followed the dog down into the cellar of 809 Melrose avenue. The moment they entered the brute made a rush at them. The policeman stunned it with his club, but the dog came back at him in an instant. Murphy retreated to the dumbwaiter shaft, and Quirk hit the springing brute with his revolver. A wound in the side only made the animal more savage, and it closed in on the officer, even catching his trousers in its jaws. Wounded a second time the animal drew itself together and made a flying leap for the officer's throat, but a well-directed bullet ended its career. When Quirk appeared dragging the carcass a rousing cheer went up from a thousand throats. When the excitement had subsided it was found that the girl's wounds were slight. On the upper part of the boy's right arm, however, were two bad wounds, while his clothing was torn and he was suffering from shock and fright.—New York Times.

A STORM AT SEA.

I contented myself with the fore-crossrees, some seventy feet above the deck. As I searched the vacant stretch of water before me, I comprehended thoroughly the need of haste if we were to recover any of our men. Indeed, as I gazed at the heavy sea through which we were running, I doubted that there was a boat afloat. It did not seem possible that so frail craft could survive such stress of wind and water.

I could not feel the full force of the wind, for we were running with it, but from my lofty perch I looked down as though outside the Ghost and apart from her, and saw the shape of her outlined sharply against the foaming sea as she tore along instinct with life. Sometimes she would lift and send across some great wave, burying her starboard rail from view and covering her deck to the hatches with the boiling ocean. At such moments, starting from a windward roll, I would go flying through the air with dizzying swiftness, as though I clung to the end of a huge, inverted pendulum, the arc of which, between the greater rolls, must have been seventy feet or more. Once the terror of this giddy sweep overpowered me, and for awhile I clung on, hand and foot, weak and trembling, unable to search the sea for the missing boats or to behold aught of the sea but that which roared beneath and strove to overwhelm the Ghost.—From Jack London's "The Sea Wolf," in the Century.

Submarine Warboats.

It is said that Great Britain is now endeavoring to overtake France in the development of the submarine branch of her navy. The Admiralty has decided upon a submersible torpedo boat which can travel for long distances on the surface at high speed, and can, at need, dive entirely below in about six seconds and can reach a depth of 100 feet. These boats are to be of 200 ton displacement. During the present year the French Navy will have thirty submarine boats in commission, and Great Britain expects within a short time to complete nineteen.

HOUSEHOLD AFFAIRS.



KEEP THE RANGE IN ORDER.

Lastly, the range, whether coal or gas, needs attention. Cooks know well that flues must be attended to if hot water and proper heat are to be obtained, but a large majority appear to be unaware that, in addition to being properly black-leaded and rubbed up, the shelves should be carefully dusted daily, and washed weekly or so with strong hot soda and water. The same remark applies to gas stoves, the shelves of the oven being thoroughly cleansed in hot soda and water, and the enameled parts well rubbed up with a flannel dipped in salt.

When the biennial cleaning is on, the boiler of the range should always be seen to, not only to insure a regular supply of hot water, but to avoid actual danger. Recollect, any disturbance of the regular supply of water to a self-filling boiler implies danger of explosion, whether the disturbance be due to neglect or frost.

CLEANING LIGHT CLOTH.

Wraps of white or pale-colored cloth such as are so fashionable at present for dress occasions, soon succumb to the influences of our dirt-filled atmosphere. Every touch leaves its mark on them. One of the best ways to care for these delicate coats is to have constantly on the toilet table a bottle of strong borax water, say a teaspoonful of borax to a pint of water, dissolved while the water is hot.

When the first suggestion of soil appears, rub it with a fresh piece of cotton dipped in borax water. If the spot is difficult to get out, use two or three fresh pieces of cotton, so that the soil is not scattered, and rub briskly to keep the water from soaking into the cloth.

This treatment will remove dust, mud spots and also perspiration stains. It is wise to treat a spot as soon as possible after it is acquired, as every hour makes any soil in cloth more difficult to get out. While cleaning thoroughly, borax water does not leave the ugly circle of stain that gasoline so often does.

USEFUL JAVELLE WATER.

Every laundress should use javelle water. A small teacup of the fluid added to a boiler of water will assist materially in keeping the clothes white and will not injure them in the least. The most obstinate stains of fruit, tea, coffee, etc., on the tablecloths and napkins will usually succumb to an application of one part of javelle water diluted with four parts of soft water. If the stained article is soaked in this fluid for several hours and then thoroughly washed and rinsed, it will usually come out perfectly clean and white. Only white goods can be treated in this way, however, as javelle water is likely to fade colors.

It is made as follows: Place four pounds of bicarbonate of soda in a large granite or porcelain lined pan, and pour over it four quarts of hot water. Stir with a stick until the soda has dissolved, add a pound of chloride of lime, and stir until this also has dissolved. Allow the liquid to cool in the pan, strain the clear portion through thin cloth into wide mouthed bottles or jugs and cork tightly for use.

The part that contains the sediment may also be bottled and used for scrubbing sinks, tables, and anything to which grease is liable to adhere.

As an aid to the housewife in doing washing quickly and easily this fluid is unsurpassed. The quantity which may be lessened by dividing by two or four as the case may be. One-fourth of the items named will be enough to last for three or four washings.—New York Daily News.

HOUSEHOLD RECIPES.

Florentine Cream—To the juice of three lemons add one and one-half cups of sugar; soak half a box of gelatine in half a cup of cold water half an hour; stir over the fire until dissolved; add this to the sugar and lemon juice; when cold add three cups of whipped cream; mould and serve cold.

Rice Flummary—Boil four and a half ounces of rice flour in half a cupful of milk, stirring all the time; when quite thick add four tablespoonfuls of granulated sugar and half a teaspoonful of almond flavoring; turn into a mould; when cold turn it out on a platter and serve with cream or fruit sauce.

Cranberry Cream—Soak two tablespoonfuls of gelatine in one-third cup of cold water; wash one pint of cranberries, put them in an agate pan with two tablespoonfuls of water; then rub them through a strainer; add to the pulp one cupful of sugar, return to the fire and when boiling add the soaked gelatine; pour into a pan and stand this pan into another of cold water; stir until it begins to thicken; add one pint of whipped cream.

Kidney Omelet—Chop cold boiled kidney quite fine; make an omelet with three eggs beaten; three tablespoonfuls of milk, a pinch of salt and a little pepper; put one teaspoonful of butter in a frying pan; when melted turn in the mixture; let cook slowly until crust forms on the bottom; in the meantime sprinkle over the omelet the chopped kidney and a little parsley; fold in half; turn out on a hot platter; spread with butter and garnish with parsley.

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