Abel Mitchell's Will.

THE rich merchant, Abel Mitchell, called to his typewriter.

"You may go, Miss Morris," he said. He did not look up from the papers before him.

The young woman turned to the clock with a little start of surprise. It was only 4.30. But she quietly put on her hat, and with a murmured good night left the room.

Abel listened to the departing rustle of her skirts with a thoughtful expression. There was a sensible girl. A girl who never grated on his feelings. A girl who asked no useless questions. She had reached an age of discretion. If Jim was determined to marry a poor girl why couldn't he have taken one like Emma Morris?

Abel opened a heavy envelope and drew forth a folded paper.

"Jim never was confidential with me," he grumbled. "Perhaps I didn't invite his confidence. I don't know. Now he has disobeyed my direct command. That can't be overlooked. When he told me about this girl I said wait. 'How long,' he asked. 'Until you reach years of discretion,' I cried, and turned away. Jim is twenty-four. Twenty-four. And I married at twenty-one. Yes, and ran away, too. But it was different with me. My father had nothing to give me. I was quite independent. He was glad to have me shift for myself. Jim's father is a rich man. Jim's father has given him dollars where my father begrudged me pennies. Jim owes me filial obedience. He has disobeyed me to his bitter cost."

He unfolded the paper that he had taken from the envelope and ran his keen gray eye down the closely written lines.

"He has given up his father for a pretty face," he murmured. "Let him stand by the consequences. Who is she? What is she? It matters not. No doubt they trapped him into this marriage. 'A rich man's son,' they chuckled. But they'll find they're fooled. 'Father,' he said, 'I am to be married to-morrow night. Will you come with me to the wedding?' I turned on my heel. Then I looked back. 'You know the price you pay?' I cried. 'Yes, father,' he said, with his head high up. 'I know. Goodby and God bless you.' He asked a blessing on me! Ha, ha, ha; that's too rich! But he'll get evil for good this time. I'll cut him off with a dollar. Let him sup on herbs for a while. That'll take the veneer from love's young dream. I'll draw up a new will at home to-night and have it witnessed before I sleep. And to let him know what his foolish fancy has cost him, I'll write him a letter—a letter he can show to his new relatives. That's the thing—a letter."

He bent down with his head upon his hand and his eyes upon the paper. A rustle of skirts in the doorway drew his attention. He did not look up. It was a way he had.

"Ah, Miss Morris," he said, "back again?" He had quite forgotten that he had sent her home.

The young girl in the doorway did not answer. Her bright eyes were fixed upon the old man. She expected him to look up. If he had done so he would have seen a charming vision. She was a very pretty girl—dainty and neat from the tip of her new hat to the tips of her new shoes. But he did not look up.

"Just in time," he added. "I want to dictate a letter before you go."

He paused, and the young girl, as if seized with a sudden fancy, quietly stepped into the room and seated herself at the typewriter.

"You have been with us so long, Miss Morris," the old man continued, "that we view you as a confidential agent. Besides, this will be public property very soon. I am going to write to my son. Last night he married an unknown girl against my wishes. I am going to tell him that I wash my hands of him and his; that to-night I change my will, cutting him off with a solitary dollar. Are you ready?"

The girl at the typewriter gave the instrument a preliminary click or two.

"James Mitchell," began the old man, "as you have seen fit to disobey me, to cast my fatherly wishes in my teeth, I desire you to know that I wish to hold no further communication with you. While I cherish the impression that you were lured into this unhappy marriage——"

The typewriter stopped.

"Unhappy marriage," the old man repeated, and the clicking recommenced; "yet I cannot accept this as any excuse for your undutiful conduct. To-night I change my will, and you may rest assured that your name will be passed over with the smallest possible financial consideration. I prefer to have you understand this here and now. It will prevent you and your new friends from cherishing any false hopes. This is all I have to say, and no reply will be expected. ABEL MITCHELL."

The young girl drew the sheet from the machine, and bringing it forward laid it on the old man's desk. Abel glanced it through.

"A beautiful copy," he said, and carefully folded it. Then he placed it in an envelope and dipped a pen in ink.

"I do not know his address," he said, and knit his brows.

The girl at the end of the desk extended her hand.

"If you have no objection," she quietly said, "I will deliver it to him in person."

The old man looked up at the fair face bending over him.

"Why, who are you!" he cried.

"I am Alice Mitchell," said the young girl.

"Mitchell!" repeated Abel, dully. "M-my son's wife! And what——" but the ugly words would not come. He could not utter them in the light of those gentle eyes. "Will you be seated?" he lamely added.

"Thank you, no," said the girl. "I have but a few words to say; they will not detain you long." Abel's gaze dropped to the letter and the will, and a sarcastic smile twisted his mouth. "No, no," the girl quickly added. "I have not come to plead with you. You are quite wrong to imagine such a thing. And you were quite wrong, too, to insult me as you did in that letter." He looked up again quickly. There were tears in the gentle eyes. And there was a glint of fire in them, too. "You insulted me and you insulted my dear father. I have no mother." She paused a moment. "When you insinuated that my father was mercenary in this matter you did him a cruel wrong. He was bitterly opposed to our marrying without your consent. I disobeyed my father, too. But it was not for your money. This letter will bring us no surprise."

The old man dropped his eyes beneath her reproachful gaze.

"Perhaps I was hasty," he slowly said, "but the provocation was great." Then he quickly added: "But, knowing as you did that I opposed the wedding, and your father opposed it, too, why did you permit yourself to marry my boy?"

"I could make it clear to you, I think," said the girl gently, "if you loved your boy."

The old man trembled. If he loved his boy! All that was near and dear to him—all that was left to him of kith and kin. The babe that a dying wife had solemnly placed in his paternal arms. If he loved his boy! He drew a long breath and stared hard at the blank envelope on the desk before him.

"And now," said the young girl, "I only want to add that I think Jim was quite wrong in crossing your wishes. He might have waited. I wanted him to wait. But he is so proud, self-willed. I am very sorry that I should be the means of separating you, and, I am quite sure I am not worth the great sacrifice my dear—my husband—has made."

Abel was quite sure there were tears in her eyes again, but he did not look up.

"Where is Jim now?" he asked. Then he smiled grimly. "And why are you not enjoying your—your wedding tour?"

"There was a vacancy in the bank where my father is employed," said the girl, "and father secured it for Jim. His duties began to-day. Perhaps we will take our wedding journey later. We have to look out carefully for the main chance now, you know."

"And you didn't expect to fall back on my dollars?" said the old man.

"Not a penny of them," quickly replied the girl.

The old man fidgeted in his chair.

"And why not?" he asked.

"I think you understand," said the girl, and her gaze dropped to the letter on the desk.

"Does Jim know you are here?"

"No. At least he didn't know I was coming. Father will tell him to meet me at the corner at 5 o'clock. I must go."

"Wait," said the old man quickly. He looked at her searchingly. She met his gaze with a smile. Her mind was on Jim.

Abel deliberately put the will back into the envelope, and the envelope in its pigeonhole. Then he picked up the letter in its unaddressed envelope, tore it into minute particles and tossed them into the basket.

"I've changed my mind," he softly muttered.

He pulled down his desk cover with a bang and reached for his hat.

"There," he said, "I'm ready." Then he added, "Will you give me your arm, my dear?" As they passed through the doorway he paused.

"I think, Alice," he said, "that you and I are going to be very good friends. And now we must hunt up Jim and take him home with us."

Juvenile Precocity Blighted in the Bud.

"Papa," said the boy, as they drove along, "that's the same horsefly that was buzzing around the horse when we started out, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Then one horsefly will follow one horse more'n a dozen miles, won't it?"

"It seems so."

"I reckon," said the boy, who had been busy thinking hard, "you'd call it a one-horse fly, wouldn't you?"

"Perhaps."

"Then it was a one-horse town where we got this rig, wasn't it?"

"Don't be too fly, my son," said papa, grasping his whip and meeting the necessity firmly.—Chicago Tribune.

England's Home For Aged Horses.

Bombay, India, has an animal hospital that was established more than two thousand years ago. An odd institution in England is a Home for Aged Horses, Friar's Place Farm. The Duke of Portland is president of the society which manages it. Old favorites, whose years of service are numbered, can find an asylum there and be tended carefully for the remainder of their lives. There is no such asylum for horses in the United States.

NEW YORK FASHIONS.

Designs For Costumes That Have Become Popular in the Metropolis.

NEW YORK CITY (Special).—Nothing could be more attractive and dainty than the evening wraps which are now the rage for very young women as well as older ones. Materials now

DAINTY EVENING WRAP.

employed are of the handsomest. The linings alone are made of fabrics that were formerly deemed quite beautiful enough for a handsome evening gown. The fur and lace used for trimming must needs be of the rarest description.

There is no question but that the wraps this winter are to be every whit as costly as those of the last few years. The designs have been sent

over to this country, and women who have been abroad buying their winter wardrobes have sent over accounts of the new wraps that have just been designed over there. The present fad is to have at least one long black satin wrap. This, at first sight, would seem to be a most economical investment, for it is not so conspicuous as the light brocades or velvets, of which most of the wraps are made, and it is possible to wear it in public conveyances, which, of course, is not possible with the other wraps alluded to. The smartest black satin wraps are wonderful creations of the dressmaker's skill combined with the beautiful trimmings supposed to be necessary to them.

Evidently womankind is not yet prepared to resign the comfort of the short, close-fitting fur jacket, for it is easy to count them by the dozen in the furriers' cupboards, while they are being snapped up over the counters. Until last year these "sacques," as they are termed by the trade, were cut of Eton shape, sheered off sharply at the waist line, or a flute of fur stood like a saucy little tail about the hips.

Now the mode is to fit the short-haired fur basque-wise to the body, letting a spade-shaped tail fall below the waist line for five inches at back and front, but cutting out the pelt high on the hips. Not one pinch of fullness is given the sleeve at the

A DECORATED COVERT COAT.

shoulder, and it runs to the knuckles on the hand.

Costumes For Every-Day Wear.

Two useful gowns are shown in the large illustrations. One is a brown tweed with an absolutely plain skirt. The blouse waist is tucked and the wide collar and flaring cuffs are finished with stitched braid. A stock and a long-ended cravat of cream silk complete the costume. With it is worn a jaunty brown felt hat, which is ornamented with brown quills and velvet.

The other frock is designed a little more elaborately and has the strap trimming which has become so popular for this season, particularly for out-of-door wear. The straps of black braid trim the pointed tunic and is seen on the circular flounce of the jupe proper. The material is rough blue serge and the vest is cream silk tucked, with revers of lemon-colored cloth ornamented by a fancy braid of blue, red, cream and silver threads and set off by tiny black buttons. The revers and slashed jacket are of the same material as the skirt and are braided to correspond. A broad-brimmed rough straw, blue and white, is loaded with berries, leaves and rosettes of black tulle.

The Vogue in Handkerchiefs.

Handkerchiefs in colors are in great demand, and some of the prettiest and newest are in silk and linen. The plaids are in favor in these new styles, pretty soft plaids, the whole handkerchief composed of them, but in the most delicate colors, one having violet predominating and another green, and so on. A pretty handkerchief in which there is a large proportion of silk is of solid green stripes, which does not sound well, but is exceedingly pretty in reality. Red is found in these plaids in stripes, and also in handkerchiefs with narrow hemstitched edges, the hem being of the solid color embroidered with tiny dots. All shades are to be found in these little colored hems. Another variety of the handkerchief with the solid red hem has red dots worked inside on the white linen, or tiny red bow knots in the corners.

Pretty Idea in Gold Chains.

The jeweled hearts figure as slides in some of the new gold chains composed of fine links.

Colors For Velvet Gowns.

Deep plum, garnet, gray and tan are the fashionable colors for cloth and velvet gowns.

Handsome Coat For Winter Wear.

The little covert coat has been improving the shining hour by assuming decorative touches of fur that will undoubtedly prolong its sphere of usefulness far into the season. It has appeared lately in gray, brown and green, cut on the mode of a basque coat that is fitted to the figure with a rounding tail on the hip and flat collar revers folding in a group of three on the shoulder. An enterprising tailor saw fit to run a narrow piping of mink on the edge of the revers, over the fronts and around the tails, and his happy thought has evidently found instant favor, for these trimmed coverts are almost the first of the fur-touched wraps to go into active service.

CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

Who Likes the Rain?

"I," said the duck, "I call it fun,
For I have my little red rubbers on;
They make a cunning three-toed track
In the soft, cool mud. Quack! Quack!"

"I," cried the dandelion, "I,
My roots are thirsty, my buds are dry;"
And she lifted her little yellow head
Out of her green grassy bed.

"I hope 'twill pour! I hope 'twill pour!"
Croaked the tree-toad at his gray bark door;
"For with a broad leaf for a roof
I am perfectly weather-proof."

Sang the brook: "I laugh at every drop,
And wish they never need to stop
Till a big river I grow to be,
And could find my way to the sea."

—Our Young Folks.

Discovered Through a Child.

Perhaps some of our young readers will be encouraged to use their bright eyes more constantly by this story of how a little girl by her intelligent observation helped an older lad to begin a series of important discoveries:

When Sir Humphrey Davy was a boy about sixteen, a little girl came to him in great excitement:

"Humphrey, do tell me why these two pieces of cane make a tiny spark of light when I rub them together."

Humphrey was a studious boy, who spent hours in thinking out scientific problems. He patted the child's curly head and said:

"I do not know, dear. Let us see if they really do make a light, and then we will try to make out why."

Humphrey soon found out that the little girl was right; the pieces of cane, if rubbed together quickly, did give a tiny light. Then he set to work to find out the reason, and after some time, thanks to the observing powers of his little friend, and his own kindness to her in not impatiently telling her not to "worry," as so many might have done, Humphrey Davy made the first of his interesting discoveries. Every reed, cane and grass has an outer skin of flinty stuff, which protects the inside from insects, and also helps the frail looking leaves to stand upright.

Taking a Wayward Sparrow Home.

One often hears remarkable stories about the intelligence of sparrows, but we are apt to think that such tales must be taken with a grain of salt. The following incident, however, is vouched for by no less than five residents of Chicago, who saw the whole performance. Late one afternoon a half-fledged sparrow dropped from a tree to the roof of a shed. It no sooner landed than it began to croak as if it had lost its last friend. Pretty soon fifteen or twenty excited sparrows fluttered around the little one and seemed to be giving it some important advice. Evidently impressed, the young bird would straighten up on its slender legs and stretch out its neck. But invariably it would settle back into a forlorn heap and take up its mournful cry where it had left off. The old sparrows grew more and more excited, and finally a male and female fluttered down beside the little one, one on each side. After a moment's parley the female seized one of the youngling's wings in its bill; then the male grasped the other wing after the same manner. There was a chorus of shrieks from the other birds, a fluttering of the queer little group on the roof, and then the two devoted birds flew away, carrying the little one by its useless wings. I dare say that you have already decided that the father and the mother bird had come and carried their fledgling back to the home nest. I believe so, too.—Chicago Record.

When Dewey Was a Boy.

One of the anecdotes told to illustrate the daring of Dewey as a lad presents a very fair picture of him in his most characteristic moods. It fell to his lot at an early age, as it falls by a certain inverted primogeniture to the younger sons of all country families, to take the cows to pasture and back again. The pasture field was on a small hillside farm belonging to the Dewey family, and lying about a mile below the town. It was only a bit of a walk, but George always saddled a horse for it or hitched up the family carry-all. Between the house and the farm the Dog river falls into the Winooski, and is crossed at a ford. Vermont rivers rise rapidly after rains, and returning late one stormy afternoon in early summer, George found that the stream had risen above its banks and was moving swift and swollen between him and the town. He was rolling along in luxurious state through the fields in his father's carry-all, and by his side was his faithful courtier, Will Redfield.

"We can never cross Dod," said his companion, whimpering. "We shall drown sure."

"We crossed it an hour ago," retorted the young admiral, turning a frowning and critical glance on the turbid waters. "What man has done before, man can do again! Glang!" and into the rushing stream plunged the horse with one pale and one imperturbable face behind it.

It was a brief but sensational journey. A careening billow came along and lifted the bed of the buggy free from the wheels and carried it down toward Middlesex. In their acute peril the two cow herders contrived to scramble upon the horse's back, and thus were borne to the bank. George drove home in silence on the fragments of the wrecked carry-all. Perhaps the most human touch of it all was that he did not appear at the supper table. He went promptly to bed without a candle or a bite, and he said not a word of his adventure.

An hour later Dr. Dewey came back from downtown, where tales of the exploit were afloat. In no very amiable mood, he ascended to the bedroom of his son, whom he found sleeping with a suspicious industry that did not deceive him for an instant. "What is this I hear, my son," he said, addressing the darkness, "about your breaking up my carriage and nearly drowning yourself?"

"I should think you'd be glad I didn't drown altogether," came in an argumentative but tearful voice from under the cover. Dr. Dewey stood for a moment in silence, and then turned and left the room without another word.

History has given no record of what happened then. It would be pleasant to imagine that a warm supper was sent up to the lad; that a modernized "fatted calf" was set before him. But in this case I am relating history as it was given me, and I am unable to say whether forgiveness was freely given, or that the break of day saw condign punishment meted out to the admiral-to-be for his foolhardiness.

An Insect Monster.

One of the most ferocious and ingenious of all the insect tribe is the ant-lion. This bitter enemy of the ants is a veritable monster in form, but is hardly more than half an inch long. Its body is fat, and covered with little bunches of spiny hairs. It has six legs that look feeble enough, but it has a head and pair of jaws that are as formidable, compared to its size, as the eating apparatus of an alligator.

Unable to move rapidly or to fly, the ant-lion gains by strategy what delicacies it finds necessary to health and happiness. It constructs pitfalls in the sand, down which the unwary ant slides to certain death. For the purpose of excavating this trap it hunts a spot of loose and dry sand, under the shelter of a ledge or old wall, or at the foot of a tree. In such places ants are sure to be prowling about.

Having selected a site for the pitfall the ant-lion traces in the sand a circular furrow about two inches in diameter. Placing itself on the inside of this circle it thrusts the hind part of its body under the sand as a basis of operation. Using one of its forelegs as a shovel it deposits a load of sand on its head, which is square and flat. Then it gives its head a jerk which tosses the sand to a distance of several inches outside the circle. This process is repeated (the insect always moving backward) until another furrow is completed. Turning and moving backward in the opposite direction from the preceding the third furrow is completed inside the second circle. This process is continued until the ant-lion reaches the centre of the funnel-like pit thus formed. In shoveling out the sand the insect always digs at the inner side of the circle and makes the excavation steadily deeper. If the ant-lion finds a pebble in the way it carefully rolls it onto its back and backs out of the pit with it. Failing in this it digs a hole and buries the troublesome stone. When the pit is completed it is about two inches deep in the centre, at which spot the ant-lion takes its station, burying all but its terrible jaws from view.

Pretty soon an ant in search of food reaches the pit, looks down, sees two odd-looking prongs in the bottom and starts to investigate. Then the sand begins to give way and the frightened ant frantically tries to crawl out. If it seems about to succeed in this design the ant-lion loads its head with sand and snaps the sand at the ant. This is done so rapidly that the unfortunate ant is struck by volley after volley of sand and knocked back into the pit. After the ant-lion has supped on the juices of its victim it tosses the carcass out of the pit, repairs whatever damages may have resulted in the capture and calmly awaits another ant. The ant-lion will not take a dead insect. It prefers to do its own killing.

After two years of this tricky existence the pit makes for itself a cocoon of sand fastened together and lined with silk of exquisite texture and color. On the outside this cocoon looks like a little ball of sand about half an inch in diameter. At the end of two months the cocoon is torn open and a large and beautiful fly resembling a dragon-fly creeps out and unfolds its damp wings. Thus the ferocious creature of this pitfall becomes a beautiful dandy of the insect world, content to flit in the sunshine a few days and die, after having deposited some eggs that will hatch out more ant-lions.

Prodigious Age of the Earth.

Professor R. A. Fessenden of Allegheny, Penn., in his address before the American Association for the Advancement of Science at its meeting in Columbus, Ohio, concluded that the earth must be at least 500,000,000 years old.

He said that geologists used to think that there was unlimited time for evolution, but Lord Kelvin showed that the time was not unlimited, and must be something like 200,000,000 years. Later he has brought the time down since life was first possible on this planet to less than 50,000,000 years.

Lord Kelvin's estimates are based upon certain assumptions, the most important being that the radiation coefficient from the earth has remained constant. If the radiation coefficient was several times larger than at present the age of the earth would have to be increased very considerably.

A rough estimate of all sources of possible error has led him to the conclusion that we are justified in saying the age of the earth since life was possible on it is not less than 500,000,000 years, perhaps less, and consequently Lord Kelvin is justified in his statement that life could not have been originated on this earth.—Chicago Times-Herald.