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It is disgraceful! cried Gertrude Foster, passionately. "That is a fact," returned her brother, coolly, "that what are you going to do about it?"

The young man was lying in a hammock, swung at the end of the piazza; his sister was seated near him, in a rocking-chair, which she kept in vigorous motion, as though thereby trying to accentuate her remarks concerning the letter she held in her hand.

A boy, about sixteen years of age, was lounging on the steps, with a novel before him, but the contents of that epistle had apparently taken away his interest in the story, for he was not reading.

"You surely are not surprised, Gertrude," continued the occupant of the hammock. "I have been noticing for some time the care father took in his toilet, when he went out on business."

"But an old maid, Jim!" said his sister. "A woman probably full of freaks and fancies. It is all very well for you and Harold, but I have to be with her, at home, all the time."

"Only three months, my dear," returned Jim. "Remember my future brother-in-law comes home to-day, and that you will soon be a blushing bride. Rather a bad day for his return, though," he added, looking over the hammock at the landscape before him, half hidden by the heavy veil of rain.

"I do not think I ever knew it to pour harder."

"Yes," assented Gertrude, meditatively. "That is my one consolation. If it were not for Dick, I would go out and hunt for the position of a governess to-morrow."

"Which you would be quite incapable of filling," interpolated her brother, sotto voce.

"For I haven't the patience to put up with an old maid's quips and cranks." "Fshaw!" said Harold, who had not yet spoken. "I think an old maid far preferable to a widow. She will probably be so grateful to father for marrying her that she will behave very decently. Generally an old maid's chief fault is romancing about her former fers, and Mrs. Foster will probably not do that, now she has really had one."

"That is so," chimed in Jim. "Whereas a widow is always resurrecting her dear defunct, whenever his substitute does anything to displease her. Oh! undoubtedly, things might be worse."

"Yes," returned Gertrude, "but how can a man with a heart full in love again so soon, anyway?"

"Maybe she was his first love, from whom he was separated by a misunderstanding," said Harold, putting his hand over his heart sentimentally.

"Hello! The rain has stopped—and there comes a lively stable carriage. How dramatic! Rain stops. Enter hero! Come along, Jim, we would not be here to embarrass the greetings of two young and loving hearts." He disappeared through the door while Jim slowly followed, in his lazy, languid way, saying: "Tell Dick I will see him to supper."

By this time the carriage had entered the gates and was coming rapidly up the long avenue that led to the house. The Fosters prided themselves on their well-kept grounds, especially the drive from the lodge gate to the house, which was bordered on either side by maple trees.

They gave a delightful shade during the summer months, and their gorgeous foliage in the fall made the Foster place the glory of the neighborhood.

But neither Richard nor Gertrude thought of the maples as he was driving under them that afternoon. He had been abroad two years his only thought was that, at last, he was really to be with his fiancée once more, while she forgot her father's second marriage in the joy of seeing her lover again.

But, after they had been together an hour or two, Gertrude remembered the letter, and her face fell.

"Oh, Dick!" she said, "father is married again. I received a note just a few minutes before you came, telling me about it. He said he should be home in a few days, and wanted me to have everything done to make her home-coming pleasant."

Dick looked grave—then replied: "Well, it will be only for a little time but," cheerfully, "I will take you away, right off, if you like."

Gertrude laughed. "Oh! I guess I can support her presence a few weeks, but isn't it dreadful—for a man to get married a second time?"

"Awful," he returned, with conviction. "Then, after a second's pause: 'I mean as a rule; of course there are exceptional cases. That reminds me,' he added, 'you have heard me speak of my Aunt Marion?'"

"The aunt who, you say, has redeemed the race of old maids in your estimation?" asked Gertrude.

"The same," he answered. "Well, mother wrote me some time ago that she was going to be married. I suppose I shall hear all about it to-night, when I go home. You know, he continued, "a great many years ago Aunt Marion fell in love. She was boarding in the country at the time, and, although he reciprocated her affection, they had not confessed their mutual attachment, when her dearest friend came to board at the same place. This young lady also was fascinated by the same gentleman, and began to think how she could supplant my aunt in

his estimation. She had recourse to strategy; told numberless falsehoods to both of them, and managed, in a short space of time, to provoke a quarrel between them.

"Aunt Marion was very proud and sensitive, sought no explanation from her william admirer, trusted her friend, and lost her lover."

"In a year or two she heard of their marriage, which opened her eyes a little, and caused the girlish friendship to be broken off. Two years ago she received a letter from this woman, who, it seems, was dying, confessing the whole truth. She also left an explanation for her husband, which he found when she was dead. After awhile, Aunt Marion, acceded to the widow's repeated entreaties to be allowed to call—and in a few months they were engaged. I guess my prospective uncle made the other woman a good husband, but he did not really love her, for his wife wrote that he had never forgotten his first love, and only married her in gratitude for the sympathy and tenderness she showed when telling how my aunt had deceived him. I think," continued Richard, "that I would never have made known the truth, if I had been in her place. But I suppose the voice of conscience gets very loud in the presence of death. It was a tardy reparation, though."

"Dick, what is your aunt's name?" asked Gertrude, abruptly.

"Why the same as my mother's," he answered, somewhat astonished at the question; "Moore. Marion Moore. Pretty name, isn't it?" he added. "Too pretty to change, I think. Why, Gertrude, what is the matter?"

"For the girl had grown deathly white, and did not seem to hear his last remark."

"Nothing," she said, at last, making an effort to recover her self-possession, "only your aunt is—my stepmother."

"What!" ejaculated Richard. "Aunt Marion your stepmother! It cannot be—and yet—I never knew her lover's name, never heard it. Is that her name, Gertrude? Are you sure?"

"Here is my letter; you can read for yourself," she answered, faintly. He saw there was no mistake and wondered how in the world he could recall his words.

"I am sorry, Gertrude," he said, at last. "Of course you know I never would have told you had I dreamed of such a thing. I dare say I exaggerated. I never heard Aunt Marion say anything about it. All my information came

from her sisters, who did not like your—her friend. Just forget all about it, Gertrude."

Gertrude was weeping as if her heart would break, but as he finished speaking she handed him her ring without looking up.

"What is that for?" asked Richard, agast. "It did not mean to hurt you; surely, you are not going to punish me like that, when I offended so unintentionally?"

"No," sobbed Gertrude, "it isn't that, only I shouldn't think you would want to marry the daughter of such a mother."

Richard laughed, as he took the ring and placed it on Gertrude's finger again.

"What a silly child you are!" he said fondly. "It wouldn't make any difference to me if every relative you had was in the penitentiary. You would not be responsible for their sins. Besides, I suppose your mother thought she had every right to try and win your father. He was not engaged to my aunt, you know, and they say, all is fair in love and war. So think no more about it—and we will never mention it again."

Gertrude never did mention it again, but she thought about it many times; and when Mr. Foster brought his wife home, he found everything arranged to his liking.

He had said to her: "The boys will be all right, and if Gertrude does not treat you well let me know."

"Never, James," replied Mrs. Foster, "for you might be tempted to tell her the history of the years that are gone, and children should reverence their mother's memory, which I doubt if she could do, knowing all."

But there was no trouble. Gertrude treated her stepmother with the utmost respect and courtesy, and behaved in such a way that Mrs. Foster actually dreaded the girl's wedding day.

As she watched the carriage that contained her nephew and his bride drive down the maple avenue, now resplendent in its autumnal coloring, she sighed—then turned toward her husband, who was standing near. "I never thought to have loved Louisa's child so well," she said.

Stub Ends of Thought. With some of us hope never comes to the full bloom. The tears that come easy go easy. Trust is the strongest link in the chain of association. Not one time in a million are a man's tears dishonest; what may be said of a woman's is different. Everybody would be perfect if everybody else thought so. Matrimony is love's eye-opener. Gossip is the bullet in the gun of idle curiosity. Honesty is not contagious. It's a long way around to reach Heaven by some churches.—Detroit Free Press.

IN WOMAN'S BEHALF.

WOMEN IN THE TREASURY.

Their Efficient Work as Clerks, Accountants, and Counterfeit Detectors.

A little over thirty years ago not one woman was employed in the United States treasury. To-day there are six thousand women on the roll. Then Gen. Spinner was treasurer. He had been a bank clerk, and as such had discovered that his own clerks could.

He accordingly suggested to Gov. Chase, then secretary of the treasury, that a woman be allowed to try her hand at the government's shears.

He selected Miss Jennie Douglass, who was both brawny and bright, and gave her a pair of shears that would cut the length of a sheet with a blow. One day's work settled it, and the male clerks employed in clipping bank notes gave place to women. With this success to encourage him Gen. Spinner, in October, 1863, secured the nomination of seven women as money counters.

Two of these are still employed in the treasury. The women detectors of burnt and counterfeit money are claimed to be the most expert in the world. This is the most unquestioned reputation of Mrs. W. A. Leonard and Mrs. E. G. Brown.

According to phrenologists, form, color, and distance are strongly developed in Mrs. Leonard. The record shows that this unrivaled counterfeit detector has handled in three years \$2,000,000,000. In one day no less than \$12,000,000 passed through her hands. From \$300,000 to \$400,000 is the daily average. Although Mrs. Leonard has been married a second time during her treasury service, she was not allowed to resign, because she was considered "invaluable."

In 1873 Mrs. Brown began counting fractional currency, but when the identification of burnt money became a separate department she was made its chief. After money has been identified by a detector and paid by the government the detector must bear any loss which has been sustained through her mistake. Mrs. Brown's infallibility may be judged from the fact that, during her whole thirty years of service, she has had to refund only 25 cents. Her work is the most interesting in the redemption division. All mutilated bank notes are sent to the treasury accompanied by a voucher, drawn up by a notary, certifying how the money was injured. Notes burned to a crisp, notes that have been partly digested by animals, money that has been gnawed into bits by mice, rotted by damp, or turned into pulp by water, all pass through Mrs. Brown's hands. If there is anything left to identify she is sure to succeed.

By means of a piece of glass the size of a bank note, marked into twenty-four squares, the face of the bill is determined. If sixteen of these squares can be covered by the mutilated bill, the whole value is paid; if less than sixteen and more than twelve, half the value; if less than twelve, it is rejected entirely. Twenty-two dollars found in the nest of a mouse were recently sent to the treasury in a condition that defied recognition by the naked eye. Mrs. Brown went to work with a microscope, and patiently sorted out the pieces, 14,465 heads of commercial houses, 153,000 public school teachers (based on the census of 1880). Here is an army of women depending upon themselves for support and probably taking care of others. Any talk of relegating these women to a life of dependence is mere foolishness. The question to consider is how best to adapt this new factor to existing conditions, or how to shape the conditions to the best interests of these wage-earners and the commonwealth.—N. Y. World.

SHORT NOTES. The School Board of St. Paul, Minn., has fixed the scale of wages for the teachers of that city regardless of sex.

The degree of LL. D. has been conferred on Miss Helen Shafter, president of Wellesley college, by Oberlin college, of which she is a graduate.

A Texas woman, Mrs. Richard King, owns one of the largest ranches in the world. There is nothing she can not tell you about cattle. The ranch is near Corpus Christi, and contains 700,000 acres.

Miss LILLIAN MORRIS, an English phenomenon, has the power of retaining in her memory hundreds of complex figures, and of multiplying, deducting, and adding at the same time any of the cross figures.

Mrs. MAGNUSSEN, of Iceland, one of the delegates to the suffrage congress, said in her paper before the members of that body that the women of Iceland did not claim the suffrage, but that it was being thrust upon them by the men.

Miss LAURA M. ULSEN, of Virginia City, has been admitted to practice before the courts of Nevada by the supreme court. She passed a very creditable examination and was highly complimented by the judge, who has never admitted a woman before to the Nevada bar.

Mrs. GRAPTON ROSS, an English woman, has invented a tool for killing obnoxious weeds in gardens. It is in the form of a hollow piercer, through which poison is conveyed to the very heart of the root of a stubborn weed, causing it to shrivel up in a very short time.

WOMEN have led in the progress of the ceramic art since our last great exposition. The Rockwood ware of Cincinnati and the gold China of Miss Healy, of Washington, are the great novelties in their line at Chicago. Miss Healy's process is the cause of much argument and envy by European porcelain makers.—Harper's Weekly.

Three women who have achieved distinction as hunters are Lady Hope-town, wife of the governor of Victoria who has been killing deer in Australia; Mrs. Alan Gardner, who has been making a record in India for hunting cheetas, shooting and spearing panthers, and sticking pigs; and Mrs. R. H. Tyeacke, who, with her husband, has shot the largest number of bears ever killed in one season in Kulu, in the central Himalayas.

GRAVE AND GAY.

Words with Death.

Death! Death! and still louder, Death! I heard a voice call: Death! How could I know but the voice and call were a threat for me!

How could I think to give up my strong and happy breath— How could I bear like the black and pitious dead to be? Death! still the voice cried: Death!

Death, O cold pursuing Death! for a little pass me by. Leave me a little more, good Death, to the glad and early day: There are those waiting, weary; to the weary ones draw nigh! I give, O I give rare ransom to pass the other way! Death! be merciful, Death!

Death, O my friend and my brother! gentle and wise one, thou! I am waiting weary to meet thee, here in the thick of the Death!

Friend and dearer than brother! I am longing for thee now. I have known enough of the sadness called by the living ones' life. Yea, come as a friend now, Death!

Ah, thou art passing; cruel! still must I toil and wait? Oh, but spare to the mother the child that clings to her breast! Brother, my day is waning; my year it is waxing late.

Cruel! O spare! Ah, greetings and gratitude!—Now to my rest; Death, thou art good now, Death! I am glad my Death!

—Springfield (Mass.) Republican.

Now or When? In the wall of an ancient minister, In a rare old English town, From one of its outer towers A dial looked down.

Whereon appears a legend, And thousands of passing men Have read in the centuries' ebb and flow Its warning—"Now or When?"

Still dwellers within the city, And strangers from lands afar, As they on the striking motto, "Now or When?"

Be it born or not even— By those words none fail to heed The present is yours; that only is certain—"Now or When?"

That others who've been in person May the dial quail behold: Shall yet its message ponder; His story here is told. Hast thou sought thou wouldst accomplish By deed or voice or pen? This moment is thine; no other Art thou promised—"Now or When?" —Rev. Philip B. Strong, in Golden Days.

An Undisciplined Farmer. I met a jolly farmer in a lovely western vale, A man of fertile fancy that was never known to fail.

Who, when I told of halibutes seven ounces full in weight, Said he had seen twelve-ounce ones back in eighteen sixty-eight.

And when I spoke of fish I'd caught, in certain foreign rills, That measured twenty-seven feet from narrow to gills.

He said, with brow unruddled and a manner frank and free, That he had caught them twice as long in eighteen sixty-three.

And then I spoke of having met a fellow in Berlin Whose mouth was large enough to get three large potatoes in; Whereupon he wished Jim Hankinson—his cousin—was alive; He'd seen him hold six apples in his mouth in sixty-five.

It seemed to make no odds to him how I'd exaggerate; He'd always go one better; so I thought that I'd narrate How with an ass's jawbone did the mighty Samson slay.

Ten thousand of his foemen—just to see what he would say. He listened most intently, with an ever-broadening smile, As though he were a person that had never heard of guile.

And, when I'd done, he told me that he knew my tale was true, For Samson's self had told it him in eighteen sixty-two. —Harper's Bazar.

Love and Hard Times. I said: "The times are hard, and bread is dear when work is not, And sad, indeed, is poverty, and lonely is its lot.

And faint the gleam of silver is, and far the gleam of gold; The chilly winds are blowing, but the hearth at home is cold."

Then one climbed up and twined her arms—her little arms, so white as graduate.

Around my neck, and softly said: "I love papa to-night!" And as she cuddled close to me—the winsome little wife!

The times were hard no longer, for her love had made me rich! —Frank L. Stanton, in Atlanta Constitution.

The Dinner Horn. When I hear the dinner horn, Ain't I glad that I wuz born? Oh, that holler tootle-toe, How it thrills a fellow through!

Talk about yer simphonies, Now, I tell y' what it is, Angel's harps don't stand a show With that horn begins to blow.

Don't quit the peasy plow Kind of mighty sudden, now, When I hear the welcome sound Echoin' from the woods around!

Cos't he bustin' 'taters sweet, Jes' like warmed-up snow to eat! And then fritters thick and brown—Feller hates to let 'em down!

Get up, Sorrell seems ez though Hosses' walk is mighty slow. H. that, boys! quit droppin' corn—Don't ye hear the dinner horn? —James Buckham, in Detroit Free Press.

A Philosopher and His Family. His mind was in a perpetual spasm About the cause of protoplasm, And w'en 'twas caused he longed to know Just what it was that made it grow.

He longed to know just what it was, And 'twas the problem of his life And 'twas the problem of his life And 'twas the problem of his life.

Just what was Chaos made of, and Upon what ground did Chaos stand? He wished to know what it would be When in the shape of nebulae;

And what was nature's underpinning 'Fore it began in the beginning?

He longed to know how it began, The much-debated Fall of Man, What language Eden's old snake talked! And if it wuz landed high an' dry Had Eved's old apple hung too high?

He tried to find some one to tell Of the "lost tribes of Israel," And 'twas the problem of his life To find out who was Old Cain's wife, And just how much the world would gain Had Abel lived, instead of Cain.

But his coarse neighbors wished to know How his poor old wife could sew Enough to buy him clothes and food, And feed seven children—hungry brood.

They were dull-minded creatures, so They thought they longed to know, —Sam Walter Foss, in Boston Globe.



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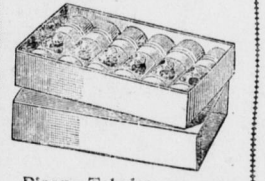
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