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Hail to the Roma Mercedes! It is a strange name for a ship of the American Navy, but we are getting highly cosmopolitan in these days.

There is no perfection of circumstantial evidence that might not possibly be over-set by the truth if the truth could be reached. This must be so while human judgment remains fallible. And as long as that limitation is conceded there will always be brave men who will say that a fellow man shall not suffer the extreme penalty of the law on circumstantial evidence. The steadily increasing belief that it is wrong to hang people on circumstantial evidence is a worthy sign of advancing civilization.

It should not be forgotten that there are likely to be two sides to Chinese exploitation. China is undoubtedly possessed of vast natural resources, some of which have been worked for ages, but with the careless or wasteful methods of semicivilized peoples. When these vast natural riches are systematically developed by foreign capital and engineers the other side of China's trade extension may become perceptible. It is, for instance, claimed that the iron and coal deposits of China are the greatest in the known world; the supply of labor is undoubtedly a vast one, and it needs but little prophetic acumen to point out that some day China will figure as a great competitor in many lines of industries in the markets of the world, says Bradstreet's.

The story every one would wish to be true is the latest one of an alleged discovery of the elixir of youth by a Missonri physician. The absurdity of the claim is, however, the only element of interest that invites a passing notice. We are not informed how this wonderful fluid is obtained other than that by some mysterious, unintelligible and roundabout process it is extracted from the glands of the goat. In fact, the more we are likely to guess what it actually is the less we may be inclined to believe what it can really do. Nature has an unalterable law of progressive growth and consequent decay. The various resulting evolutionary changes in our flesh and bones must go on as surely and relentlessly as time itself. There is, alas! no alchemy that can convert ashes into fuel, no trick that can turn back the clock to recall the lost day.

A Wagoning Tailor.
The other Monday a thirty tailor, for a small fee after much haggling, informed a miserly undertaker about the sudden death of a Miss Polly Grey, whereupon the "grave" man hurried to the bereaved cottage, and, entering obsequiously, said to an elderly female: "Excuse me, lady, but I'm very sorry to hear about the unexpected demise of your lodger, Miss Polly Grey. Er—I'm an undertaker, and I've called to ask if you'll permit me to conduct the interment." For a moment the woman seemed puzzled, then stepping to a side table, she smilingly replied: "Well, mister, you can only think as it's that good-for-nothing, 'ard up' husband o' mine what's took yo' aboard Polly's sudden end. On'yhead, you're welcome to th' funeral job. This is the corpse," and she pointed to a cage containing the dead grey parrot.—Belfast Whig.

A Jury's Queer Verdict.
An English jury once found a watch thief guilty, but recommended him to mercy because it was really very hard to say whether he had taken the watch or not.

On the Wrong Track.
"Always think before you speak," murmured the loquacious Philippine philosopher, who was being intrusted with a flag of truce. "You want to forget about that proverb while you are attending to this business," said the general. "Just you say 'surrender' as quickly as you can. If you stop to think they'll give us another whipping in the interim."—Washington Star.

An English Eccentricity.
"Isn't San Tomas an English town?" asked Van Braam. "Of course not," replied Dinwiddie. "It's a Philippine town. What made you ask if it were English?" "I noticed that the 'h' had been dropped."—Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph.

LOVE.

What is love? A leaven;
Sound and scent and sight,
Tongue and taste of heaven;
Fervent making light
This dull world of ours,
Where the heavy hours
Weigh down life and mirth,
Mingling of the ideal
With the human real;
Blend of heaven and earth,
Bringing fearful gladness,
Wild delightful sadness,
Floating happy madness,
Pleasurable pain,
Foolish earthly passion,
Wise eternal fashion,
Love will e'er remain!

—Pail Mail Gazette.

THE BROKEN VASE.

By O. R.



TILL it poured, and if a rainy day is depressing among the cups and copes of the country, how infinitely more so it is upon Gotham's Broadway, where only a strip of leaden sky frowns down between the rows of buildings, and the cab wheels splash up cataracts of black mud over the few luckless passengers who hasten by, cloaked, hooded and umbrellaed.

Not a very promising beginning for poor Mildred Erskine—for this was her first day in business.

Business! And Mildred Erskine had been a millionaire's daughter once.

"I mustn't think of these things now," said Mildred to herself, as she crossed the threshold of Messrs. Tape & Sparkle's great "Fancy Emporium," as it was phrased, in glittering gilt letters above the shop door. "I'm a working girl now, glad enough of the chance to earn my daily bread."

And with throbbing heart she hung her coarse straw bonnet and black shawl in the dark little room, which was devoted to the twenty other girls who stood behind the counter of Tape & Sparkle.

A little ferret-eyed man, with a bristly head of hair and a complexion that looked as if he had been out in a rain of freckles, stepped forward as she emerged.

"You are to take charge of the cut-glass and Parian marble counter, Miss Erskine," he said, briskly rubbing his hands. "If you need any information come to me for it. I—beg your pardon," as she sank gasp and trembling into a chair, "but that is against our rules."

"What is against your rules, Mr. Lacy?"

"Sitting down. Don't look business-like. Ain't the proper thing in an establishment like ours."

"But there are no customers in at present."

"Can't help that," said Mr. Lacy, feeling his stubby red beard. "Discipline must be kept up, Miss Erskine."

And so Mildred, wearied with her long walk to the shop, and faint with a vague feeling of dread and uncertainty, stood leaning against the counter, inwardly wondering how the other girls could giggle and laugh so under their breath when Mr. Lacy's back was turned, and Mr. Sparkle, a pompous bald-headed man, who sat in a private office at the back of the store, was engaged in his accounts.

Involuntarily she shrank back, coloring scarlet, as a gay party alighting from a close carriage at the door swept into the store.

"Have you alabaster vases?"

The careless, insolent tone, the defiant hauteur of the young girl's manner stung Mildred to the quick. Surely, in the halcyon days of her prosperity, she never had addressed a sister woman like that.

"I—I am not sure," she falteringly answered. "I will inquire."

"Pshaw!" cried out the girl, turning to her companions. "Let's go to some one who understands her business."

"Stop!" said a deep, calm voice—how Mildred started as it fell on her ear. "Here are alabaster vases. Will you tell me the price of this one?"

Yes, it was Gerald Avenel—the man she had waltzed with at Saratoga years ago—the man who had stood with her on the moon-lighted beach at Long Branch, when she was a jeweled heiress—the cynosure of all eyes. He did not know her now—she was glad of that; but, somehow, it cut her to the heart thus to realize how changed she was.

But, as he lifted his eyes to her face, a sudden dream of recognition flashed into them.

"Miss Erskine. Am I mistaken?"

"You are not mistaken, Mr. Avenel," said Mildred, with forced calmness. "The price of these vases is seven dollars."

"They told me you had gone to Europe as governess to an English family," he ejaculated.

"I did go," said Mildred, "but they preferred a French governess, and I returned by the next steamer. Can I show you anything more?"

As she sat down the vase with trembling hands the girl who had first spoken turned away.

"I don't like these things," she cried, impatiently. "Horrid stiff designs, only fit for a restaurant!"

She caught up her gloves as she spoke, and in the same second a delicate little Parian statuette—Apollo, with bent bow and Grecian face—crashed to the marble floor.

Mr. Lacy advanced, with a face purple with repressed wrath, to pick up the fragments.

"Ten dollars, Miss Erskine," he uttered in a low tone. "Of course you are responsible. Our young women always expect to make good what they break. It's one of the rules of the store."

"Mr. Lacy," cried Mildred, breathlessly, "I did not break that. It fell when the young lady caught her gloves."

"It was your fault, then, for not seeing that it was properly secured," said Mr. Lacy, craftily, for, of course, it was his business to affix blame, not to the wealthy customer, but to the defenseless shop girl, who had no one to take her part. "You are responsible for this counter. And Tape and Sparkle expect these little things to be settled at once."

Mildred grew pale. Ten dollars! As far as she was concerned, he might have said ten hundred. She had just risen from a long and expensive bed of sickness, and beyond the fifty cents that was to pay for her dinner and carfare, she had not a penny in the world.

Gerald Avenel stood quietly by the counter, while Flora Watson guiltily arranged her furs and settled her bonnet strings, affecting to be ignorant of the colloquy going on. For it was Flora's hand that had precipitated the statuette to the floor and she knew it perfectly well.

"Will she be base enough to let the other girl suffer for her fault?" he thought. "If so, it is a revelation of her character of which I had never dreamed before."

But Miss Flora did not mean to spend any unnecessary money. She disliked Mildred first, because she was pretty; secondly, because Gerald Avenel seemed to be interested in her, as an old acquaintance; thirdly, because she was a shop girl, earning her living by her own hard work.

"Come, Mr. Avenel," said she, impatiently. "I don't see anything to suit me here. Let us go."

"Not yet," said Gerald, composedly, opening his porte-monnaie. "Not until I have paid for the statuette which you knocked down."

Flora burst into tears.

"It wasn't my fault," she cried. "I couldn't help it. And I wish I had never seen the horrid thing. Come, Aunt Libbie, let's go home."

"I will put you in the carriage," said Gerald Avenel.

"But you are coming, too, Mr. Avenel?" said the disconcerted matron.

"Not at present. Perhaps I will come around this evening for a little while."

So he shut them into the handsome, claret-colored brougham and watched them drive away before he went back to the store.

"Flora," said Aunt Libbie, almost indignantly, as the horses moved away, "what made you behave so like a petulant school girl? You've lost him now. A man never can endure a display of temper like that! You may depend upon it, he will never propose to you now."

Meanwhile, the unconscious subject of Aunt Libbie's harangue had returned to the counter, behind which Mildred no longer stood.

"Where is Miss Erskine?" he asked, with the innate air of superiority and command which belonged to him as by a gift of nature. Mr. Lacy involuntarily cringed before him.

"She's gone to put on her things, sir," he said. "Miss Erskine is discharged!"

"Discharged?"

"Yes, sir. Wouldn't pay for the figure she broke," Lacy glibly answered.

"Your statement is erroneous in two particulars," said Gerald, calmly. "In the first place, it was not she that broke the image. In the second place, you have already been paid for it out of my purse."

"Much obliged to you, I'm sure," said the smirking Mr. Lacy. "But it's our invariable rule always to make the young women responsible for their own counters. It teaches 'em to be careful, sir, you see!"

Gerald Avenel turned away with a sneer before whose fiery scorn, Mr. Lacy could not but wince in spite of himself.

"It will teach me to avoid such a den of cheating and villainy for the future!" he said, as he left the elegant, marble-floored "Emporium," thereby depriving Messrs. Tape & Sparkle of one of their best customers.

But he lingered outside until the grey, slight figure crossed the threshold.

"Mildred!"

How she started. "Mr. Avenel! I thought you were gone."

"I waited for you. I have no umbrella—neither have you. Where are you going? What do you propose to do?"

"I am going home—if you can call a fourth-story back room home. I propose to starve," with a forced laugh. "For, really, I know not what else to do."

"Mildred, will you take my advice? We were old friends once, you know?"

What is it? she asked, half turning her face away from him.

"There was a man once asked you to marry him. He was perhaps a little abrupt—you were young and capricious. You said no. Would you say otherwise, if, having loved you well and truly all this time, he were to ask you a second time?"

"But he would not?" she faltered.

"He would. He does. Mildred, will you be my wife?"

"Yes!"

And then she told him how, all these years, she had regretted her first answer.

"For I hardly knew my own heart then, Gerald. Only—I was too proud to call you back!"

And that rainy day was the last of Mildred Erskine's soul-isolation.

Walnuts grew originally in Persia, the Caucasus, China, North America and Europe.

TALES OF PLUCK AND ADVENTURE.

Saved His Master's Life.

In "Will Animals I Have Known," Mr. Ernest Seton Thompson relates a terrible experience. He had gone out alone to a remote district on his pony to inspect some wolf-traps. In one of them he found a wolf, and having killed it, was engaged in resetting the trap, when inadvertently he sprang the next one, and his hand was caught in the massive steel jaws.

"I lay on my face," he says, "and stretched out my toe, hoping to draw within reach the trap wench, which I had thrown down a few feet away. Wolf-traps are set in fours around a buried bait, and are covered with cotton and fine sand so as to be quite invisible.

"Intent on securing the wench, I swung about my anchor, stretching and reaching to the utmost, unable to see just where it lay, but trusting to the sense of touch to find it. A moment later there was a sharp 'clank!' and the iron jaws of trap No. 3 closed on my left foot!"

"Struggle as I would, I could not move either trap, and there I lay stretched out and securely staked to the ground. No one knew where I had gone, and there was slight prospect of any one's coming to the place for weeks. The full horror of my situation was upon me—to be devoured by wolves, or die of cold and starvation. My pony, meantime, stood patiently waiting to take me home.

"The afternoon waned, and night came on, a night of horror! Wolves howled in the distance, and then drew nearer and nearer. They seized upon and devoured the carcass of the one I had slaughtered, and one of them, growing bolder, came up and snarled in my face. Then there was a sudden rush, and a fight among the wolves.

"I could not see well, and for an instant I thought my time had come when a big fellow dashed upon me! But it was Bingo—my noble dog—who rubbed his shaggy, panting sides against me and licked my face. He had scattered the wolves, and killed one, as I afterward learned.

"Bingo! Bingo, old boy! Fetch me the trap wench!"

"Away he went, and came dragging my rifle, for he knew only that I wanted something.

"No, Bingo—the trap wench!"

"This time it was my sash, but at last he brought the wench, and wagged his tail in joy that it was right. With difficulty, reaching out with my free hand, I unscreeved the pillar nut. The trap fell apart and my hand was released, and a minute later I was free.

"Bingo brought up my pony, which had fled at the approach of the wolves, and soon we were on the way home, with the dog as herald, leaping and barking for joy."

NEWS AND NOTES FOR WOMEN.

Crepe Effects in Style.

The crepe effects are to have another season of favor in the gaiters, grenadines, silk, and wool semi-transparent materials used for waists, guimpes, yokes, fichus, entire toilets, and sleeves. Deep crinkles are popular, and many of the inexpensive batistes, organdies and muslins are gaufered. Pink, yellow and green are favored tints in all transparent goods, ranking next to white and black in popularity.

A Wheelwoman's Gaiter.

A new idea for the wheelwoman's comfort comes from England. It is a gaiter that is made in a long strip of cloth, and is to be put on as a bandage wound around the ankle and leg and adjusted to the comfort of the wearer. It is known as a spat-puttle, and is made in navy blue khakee, black and mixed cloth. There is a footpiece to fit over the instep; this is held in place by a strap that passes beneath the hollow of the foot, and the rest of the cloth is wound about the ankle in overlapping folds and fastened by means of straps and buckles. As the spat-puttle can be tightened or loosened to suit the wearer, it forms a convenient kind of gaiter.

A Girl's Way to Make a Living.

"What some New York girls won't try to do to make a living isn't worth trying," said a small boy, brother of one of the New York girls who is trying to make a living. She had told him she was going to paint quills for summer hats. Painted quills are the very latest touch, and the girl in question is painting quills for so much a dozen. For golf hats and all sorts of sporting hats for women, and even men, she has brown, blue, black, or white quills, and paints them in polka dots of the same shade, in tennis-raquets or golf-sticks crossed, huntmen's horns or foxes' tails, cricket-balls, etc.—any emblem which is ordered or which suggests itself to her as appropriate.—Harper's Bazar.

The Summer Hatpin.

The summer hatpin and the sailor hat have arrived. The latter is very rough as to straw, very narrow as to brim and very low as to crown. It is becoming to most faces. The summer hatpins are of gold and silver in the shape of oars, bearing the name of one's favorite college in colored enamel. Flag hatpins with the college cry on the flagstaff are pretty.

The usual sporting pins, tennis-raquets, golf clubs, etc., are again to the fore, and handsome enameled plaques to match the enameled bell buckles are used as hatpin heads. They are about an inch square or smaller and show a swimming girl, a yachting girl in natty costume, a Narragansett girl with parasol and flowery hat or a hunting girl in pink coat taking a fence on her bay mare.

Nurse of a Hero.

Mrs. Amanda Looney, familiarly known as "Auntie" Looney, the old nurse of Brigadier-General Funston, has been discovered residing on West Main street, at Springfield, Ohio. She is the proudest woman in the city because her "boy, Freddy," is now a Brigadier-General and is being talked of by the whole world for his brilliant and fearless work in the Philippines. She took care of him when the family lived at New Carlisle. She says that when he was quite small he showed unusual ability for a child. He was a good boy, but full of life and grit. His father was lieutenant in the Sixteenth Ohio Battery, under Captain Russell O. Twist. "Auntie" Looney was secured by Captain Twist to cook for him during the war. She was afterward brought to New Carlisle by Lieutenant Edward Funston, father of Brigadier-General Funston.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Separate Waists in Vogue.

Separate waists almost might be called that, because, unlike other phases of fashion, they do not pass out of date. But that is a fanciful supposition, and the separate waist continues to be an engaging garment, which may or may not be worn with a particular skirt.

"There are no two alike in the better grade of blouses," said the saleswoman, "and no general description gives any idea of their beauty. But you might care to mention two in particular which are made in the best style. One is from taffeta the color of ripe wheat, made with five overlapping scallops, edged with white satin cord. Vandykes of the wheat-colored taffeta are finished with Irish point lace. And the same desirable lace, made up with white Liberty chiffon, is draped in fichu effect at the corsage.

"Pastel pink taffeta, done with four clusters of tucks in front, and a vest of the taffeta finely tucked is another lovely blouse to slip on with pink skirts or white ones, either, as you fancy. Nothing is smarter than the necktie which matches the waist, whether silk or linen." Beach tulle hats are favored with separate waists.—New York Press.

Woman's Noblest Vocation.

"Good housekeeping is easy housekeeping, and if a woman wears herself into shreds and tatters keeping house the case is proven against her," writes Elen Waterson Moody in the Ladies' Home Journal. "It is precisely in her ability to guard against this contingency that the housewife shows herself not only a good executive officer but as well a woman with ideals and a sense of proportion—one who does not forget that housekeeping is a means to home-making, not an end in itself—the most perfect administration

The Style of the Corset.

The popular corset this season is a cross between the style of five years ago, when an exceedingly long waisted and high bust effect was the proper thing, and last year's fancy for corsets, which were little more than exaggerated girdles. The present corset is longer, but it is still very easy above the waist. The old high corsets look very much like high, tight-board fences in comparison. There are several corsets with devices for securing especial snugness over the hips. Probably this is an outcome of the craze for sheath-fitting skirts, but it is a move in the right direction. The corset, when it is perfected, will not be so good a subject for the anatomists and edicts of ministers and the tirades of weary women as it has been in the past. The Russian Minister of Education is said to have forbidden the pupils in the public schools to wear corsets before the age of confirmation. This wouldn't be a bad idea if somebody would force those children to stand and walk and sit right. Maybe they can do that sort of thing in imperial Russia just by issuing a few edicts to cover the case. In democratic America we have had to fall back on the corset. Of course there is Assemblyman Daggett, of Bear Creek, who would legislate on the subject. But the corset seems to be a match for all comers and is in a fair way to have in the most liberal sense, all mankind in its clutch.—New York Sun.

Gossip.

In Portugal married women retain their maiden names.

Miss Brandon is still, at the age of sixty-two, as industrious as ever.

Nineteen women brave the dangers of wilds and forests as trappers and guides.

Women journalists in the United States number 888, with 2725 authors and literary persons.

Queen Victoria's annual trip to and from Scotland alone costs her close on \$32,250 a year.

Miss Charlotte Kinney, of Syracuse, N. Y., is said to be the only woman drummer in the world who sells wagons.

Wilkesden Parish in London is the first to have a "lady" beadle. She is Mrs. Kendal, who has been the sexton of the church for many years.

Four million women in the United States earn their own bread. They have invaded all occupations, and one-third of all persons engaged in professional services are women.

Mme. Loubet, mother of the new President of France, is a typical peasant woman who, at the age of eighty-six, manages her farm at Marsanne, on which her distinguished son was born.

Mrs. Margaret Deland is probably the best mountain climber in New England. When she finishes the book she is now at work on she will visit Switzerland and try her mountaineering skill on some of the Alps.

The Emperor of Germany has bestowed on Frauclen Johanna Mestorf, the curator of the Kiel Museum of National Antiquities, the title of "professor." This is the first time in Prussian history that the predicate has been conferred upon a representative of the fair sex.

Miss Florence Nightingale kept her eightieth birthday a few days ago in her London home. Though in feeble health, Miss Nightingale is still able to pursue many of her old interests, as nurses, hospital authorities and sanitary reformers all the world over, and specially in India, can bear witness.

Gleanings From the Shops.

Hats trimmed with wreaths of orchids.

Many short coats of silk and lace combined.

Many plaid ribbons in narrow and sash widths.

Reversible golf cloth, plaid inside and plain out.

Broad showings of silk poppies in matching shades.

Many narrow-tucked parasols in most brilliant hues.

Strong displays of golf and tennis cloths and accessories.

Much fancy materials for separate waists, corded, plissed and otherwise elaborated.

White duchesse lace parasols in very open patterns applied upon white mousseline.

White warp print silks with shadowy floral designs arranged in various-width stripes.

Silk remnants rolled lengthwise with paper straps and rubber bands to prevent wrinkling.

A vast array of bows, stock collars, ties and chemisettes made of thin summer materials and lace.

Spanish turbans showing a black jetted brim, a profusion of plaited tulle trimmings in light colorings and sweeps of paradise aigrette.—Dry Goods Economist.

Daring Rescue at Sea.

About the most brilliant achievement in the rescue line during a storm at sea," remarked a Lieutenant of the United States Navy, "was by my old friend, Ensign L. K. Reynolds, on the Atlantic, in 1885. I don't remember the name of the ship he was on, but it was during a fierce gale that they overtook an Austrian bark, which was flying signals of distress. As I said before, a hurricane was raging and lashing the sea into mountains. Although the captain and officers were exceedingly brave and humane men, they could see no hope of rendering aid to the doomed ship under such conditions. Reynolds, however, begged the captain to allow him to make the attempt; and permission being granted, he called for volunteers. 'Jack,' with all the impetuosity of his nature and his love of danger, quickly responded to the call. After great difficulty the life-boat was successfully launched and succeeded in reaching the bark. Two trips were made, in which every living soul was saved. Before leaving the doomed vessel the last time, however, Ensign Reynolds got together a pile of combustibles and set fire to the derrick, after which he jumped into the sea and was with great difficulty rescued by the boat's crew.

"On hearing of this great act of daring assistance to his subjects, the Emperor of Austria decorated Reynolds, and invited him to become His Majesty's personal guest for a week; and," concluded Lieutenant Eaton, "he said he was treated most royally."

Wonderful Nerve.

Captain Evans, of the Iowa, in his contribution to "The Story of the Captains for the Century," speaks of the wonderful nerve and courage of a boatswain's-mate named Trainor, shown at the destruction of the Vizcaya. The boat of which Trainor was acting-coxswain was lying near the stern of the burning cruiser, and most of the Spanish sailors crowded on her upper deck aft had been persuaded to jump overboard, and were thus saved. Three remained, however, holding on to the rail, with their bodies hanging over the side of the almost red-hot ship. Trainor was heard to say, "We must save them men somehow," and without orders he jumped overboard, swam to the side of the Vizcaya, clambered up to the deck at the imminent risk of his life, kicked the three men overboard, took a header himself, and succeeded in rescuing all three of them. The water was full of sharks snapping and tearing at the Spanish dead and wounded. Trainor was afterward promoted at the request of his captain.

An Unwashed Hero.

Among the melancholy applications for "leave to presume death" in the Stella disaster, off the coast of England, was one touching in its revelation of a deed of heroism. The applicant was a Miss Baker, whose father, a major, had gone down with the vessel. Both were about to perish when the father made a piteous appeal to a boatload of passengers, who were leaving the side, to find room for his daughter. One man, of whose identity there is absolutely no trace, instantly stepped back to the ship, and allowed the lady to take his place. As the boat cleared the side, the vessel went down, carrying with it the girl's father and her unknown rescuer. How beautiful! how unutterably sad! His anonymity seems somehow to enhance the heroic grandeur of his death. Nothing would have been gained by knowing his name. A man capable of such a deed wants no mortuary honors, nor the local habitation of a monument. He belongs to the infinite of greatness, and his fitting grave is the sea.—London Daily News.

Origin of a Town's Name.

The town of Shakerag, Mo., got its queer name some years ago through the fact that the people living there were so poor in those days that whenever a family began to make preparations to move its members had so little personal property that all they had to do was to shake out a few old rags, fold them up and put them in the wagon before starting.

A Brave Man.

"That is one of the bravest men I ever knew," said General Rosecrans, pointing out his Inspector-General, Arthur C. Ducat. "I saw him coolly

tered in a low tone. "Of course you are responsible. Our young women always expect to make good what they break. It's one of the rules of the store."

"Mr. Lacy," cried Mildred, breathlessly, "I did not break that. It fell when the young lady caught her gloves."

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"Come, Mr. Avenel," said she, impatiently. "I don't see anything to suit me here. Let us go."

"Not yet," said Gerald, composedly, opening his porte-monnaie. "Not until I have paid for the statuette which you knocked down."

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"Not at present. Perhaps I will come around this evening for a little while."

So he shut them into the handsome, claret-colored brougham and watched them drive away before he went back to the store.

"Flora," said Aunt Libbie, almost indignantly, as the horses moved away, "what made you behave so like a petulant school girl? You've lost him now. A man never can endure a display of temper like that! You may depend upon it, he will never propose to you now."

Meanwhile, the unconscious subject of Aunt Libbie's harangue had returned to the counter, behind which Mildred no longer stood.

"Where is Miss Erskine?" he asked, with the innate air of superiority and command which belonged to him as by a gift of nature. Mr. Lacy involuntarily cringed before him.

"She's gone to put on her things, sir," he said. "Miss Erskine is discharged!"

"Discharged?"

"Yes, sir. Wouldn't pay for the figure she broke," Lacy glibly answered.

"Your statement is erroneous in two particulars," said Gerald, calmly. "In the first place, it was not she that broke the image. In the second place, you have already been paid for it out of my purse."

"Much obliged to you, I'm sure," said the smirking Mr. Lacy. "But it's our invariable rule always to make the young women responsible for their own counters. It teaches 'em to be careful, sir, you see!"

Gerald Avenel turned away with a sneer before whose fiery scorn, Mr. Lacy could not but wince in spite of himself.

"It will teach me to avoid such a den of cheating and villainy for the future!" he said, as he left the elegant, marble-floored "Emporium," thereby depriving Messrs. Tape & Sparkle of one of their best customers.

But he lingered outside until the grey, slight figure crossed the threshold.

"Mildred!"

How she started. "Mr. Avenel! I thought you were gone."

"I waited for you. I have no umbrella—neither have you. Where are you going? What do you propose to do?"

"I am going home—if you can call a fourth-story back room home. I propose to starve," with a forced laugh. "For, really, I know not what else to do."

"Mildred, will you take my advice? We were old friends once, you know?"

What is it? she asked, half turning her face away from him.

"There was a man once asked you to marry him. He was perhaps a little abrupt—you were young and capricious. You said no. Would you say otherwise, if, having loved you well and truly all this time, he were to ask you a second time?"

"But he would not?" she faltered.

"He would. He does. Mildred, will you be my wife?"

"Yes!"

And then she told him how, all these years, she had regretted her first answer.

"For I hardly knew my own heart then, Gerald. Only—I was too proud to call you back!"

And that rainy day was the last of Mildred Erskine's soul-isolation.

Walnuts grew originally in Persia, the Caucasus, China, North America and Europe.