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A distinguished authority was asked, the other day, what was the proper number of a good working committee. The reply was: "Three—

"Quartz at Dawson" will not be as attractive a cry to the prospector as it would have been a year ago.

A critical rather than a confident attitude toward immediate if not final results should mark American thinking.

It will be a good day for the country when there grows up an assumption that the politician is naturally high-minded, though conditions may at times cause him to act questionably,

The naming of postoffices after military heroes has been a fad since the outbreak of the Spanish war, and is now beginning to die out; but after Deweys, Roosevelts, Schleys and Shafter's had dotted the Union, a flippant Texas town with an admiration for the Rough Riders turned up a short time ago with a request that its postoffice be named "Teddy," which, after due deliberation, was done.

Peter the Great was once very neatly caught in a trap by a jester attached to the court. The jester was noted for his cleverness in getting himself and his friends out of difficulties.

Little Dick—Uncle Richard, what is bric-a-brac? Uncle Richard—Bric-a-brac is anything you knock over and break when you are feeling for matches in the dark.—Puck

Wild boars still abound in some parts of Morocco, one hunting party having lately killed over 100 in one week.

PRISONER OF WAR.

"No rent again this month? This is the third time it has happened within the half-year. I'll go there myself and get the money, or I'll know the reason why."

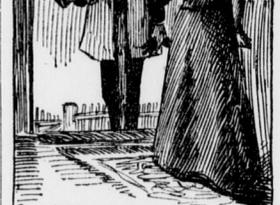
Matthew Deane was in particularly bad humor this raw December morning. Everything had gone wrong. Stocks had fallen when they ought to have risen—his clerk had tipped over the inkstand on his special and peculiar heap of paper—the fire obstinately refused to burn in the grate—in short, nothing went right, and Mr. Deane was consequently and correspondingly cross.

"Jenkins!" "Yes, sir." "Go to the Widow Clarkson's, and tell her I shall be there in half an hour and expect confidently—mind, Jenkins—confidently to receive that rent money. Or I shall feel myself obliged to resort to extreme measures. You understand, Jenkins?"

"Then don't stand there starin' like an idiot," snarled Mr. Deane, in a sudden burst of irritation, and Jenkins disappeared like a shot.

Just half an hour afterward Matthew Deane brushed the brown hair just sprinkled with gray from his square yet no unkindly brow. Putting on his fur-lined overcoat he walked into the chilly winter air fully determined, figuratively, to annihilate the defaulting Widow Clarkson.

It was a dwarfish little red brick house which appeared originally to have aspired to two-storyhood lot, but cramped by circumstances, had settled down into a story and a half, but the windows shone like Brazilian pebbles, and the doorsteps were worn by much scouring.



"I HAVE CALLED TO SEE YOUR AUNT."

would never have thought of classing her among the beauties, with shining black hair, blue, long-lashed eyes, and a very pretty mouth, hiding teeth like rice kernels, so white were they.

Miss Mellen rose with a polite nod, which was grimly reciprocated by Mr. Deane.

"I have called to see your aunt, Miss Mellen." "I know it, sir, but as I am aware of her timid temperament, I sent her away. I prefer to deal with you myself."

Mr. Deane started—the cool audacity of the damsel in gray, with scarlet ribbons in her hair, rather astonished him.

"I suppose the money is ready?" "No, sir, it is not."

"Then, Miss Olive, pardon me, I must speak plainly. I shall send an officer here this afternoon to put a valuation on the furniture, and—"

"You will do nothing of the kind, sir." Olive's cheek had reddened and her eyes flashed portentously. Mr. Deane turned toward the door, but ere he knew what she was doing, Olive had walked quietly across the room, locked the door, and taken out the key—then she resumed her seat.

"What does this mean?" ejaculated the astonished "prisoner of war."

"It means, sir, that you will now be obliged to consider the question," said Olive.

"Obliged?" "Yes—you will hardly jump out of the window, and there is no other method of egress unless you choose to go up the chimney. Now, then, Mr. Deane, will you tell me if you—a Christian man in the nineteenth century—intend to sell a poor widow's furniture because she is not able to pay your rent? Listen, sir!"

on, "of your doing kind actions when you were in the humor of it. You can do them, and you shall in this instance. You are cross this morning—you know you are! Hush! no excuse; you are selfish and irritable and overbearing. If I were your mother, and you a little boy, I should certainly put you in a corner until you promised to be good."

Mr. Deane smiled, although he was getting angry. Olive went on with the utmost composure.

"But as it is, I shall only keep you here a prisoner until you have behaved, and given me your word not to annoy my aunt again for rent until she is able to pay you. Then, and not until then, will you receive your money. Do you promise? Yes or no?"

"I certainly shall agree to no such terms," said Mr. Deane, tartly.

"Very well, sir; I can wait."

Miss Mellen deposited the key in the pocket of her gray dress and sat down to her copying. Had she been a man, Mr. Deane would probably have knocked her down; as it was, she wore an invisible armor of power in the very fact that she was a fragile, slight woman, and she knew it.

"Miss Olive," he said, sternly, "let us terminate this mummery. Unlock that door!"

"Mr. Deane, I will not!" "I shall shout and alarm the neighborhood, then, or call a policeman."

"Very well, Mr. Deane; do so, if you please."

She dipped her pen in the ink and began on a fresh page. Matthew sat down, puzzled and discomfited, and watched the long-lashed eyes and faintly tinged cheek of his keeper. She was very pretty—what a pity she was so obstinate!

"Miss Olive!" "Sir!" "The clock has just struck 12."

"I heard it." "I should like to go out and get some lunch."

"I am sorry that that luxury is out of your power."

"But I'm confounded hungry." "Are you?" "And I'm not going to stand this sort of thing any longer."

"No!" How provokingly nonchalant she was. Mr. Deane eyed the pocket of the gray dress greedily, and walked up and down the room pettishly.

"I have an appointment at 1." "Indeed! What a pity you will be unable to keep it!"

He took another turn across the room. Olive looked up with a smile.

"Well, are you ready to promise?" "Hang it, yes! What else can I do?"

"You promise?" "I do, because I can't help myself."

Olive drew the key from her pocket with softened eyes.

"You have made me very happy, Mr. Deane. I dare say you think me unwomanly and unfeminine, but indeed you do not know to what extremities we are driven by poverty. Good-morning, sir."

Mr. Deane sallied forth with a curious complication of thoughts and emotions struggling through his brain, in which gray dresses, long-lashed blue eyes and scarlet ribbons played a prominent part.

WOMAN'S WORLD.

FARMING FOR WOMEN.

How Our English Sisters Are Becoming Scientific Agriculturists.

The "advanced" English woman does not hesitate to carry out many kinds of work, which are not yet popular with her American sisters. Among other things she not only farms with a vim and energy very astonishing to non-English women, but she regularly and scientifically qualifies herself for farming by a course at one of the agricultural colleges for women, which thrive in England.

The students at the agricultural colleges come from almost all grades and ranks of society, and the education provided for them is both thorough and varied. All about flower, fruit and vegetable growing, butter and cheese making, mushroom, bee and tomato culture they learn, and they must be well up in both theory and practice before they are entitled to the college certificate.

The cost of taking a thorough course at one of these agricultural colleges, with board or "residence," ranges from \$350 and upward for each year, and the length of time spent in study varies according to the quickness and capabilities of the students themselves, as well as of the number and intricacies of the branches undertaken.

The students, according to the public announcements sent out by the college, are not expected to perform the heaviest or laborer's work upon the college lands, which are theirs to experiment upon under proper direction, but it would seem from a report lately published by the warden of the Lady Warwick Hostel, Miss Edith Bradley, that at this establishment at least the students, all of them women, do "till the ground" literally as well as metaphorically.

"Since the term ended in the last days of June," says this personage, "our regular students have been leaving in small detachments, as the weeks of the practical work came to an end. The last to go were some four or five who were intrusted with the making of an outdoor mushroom bed. Turning the manure occupied three weeks, and then the spawning could not be done until the proper temperature was reached. A careful record will be kept of the time and expense incurred in making this bed, which will be put against the amount realized by the sale of the mushrooms. In this way the students will gain practical experience in one of the most profitable of the lighter branches of agriculture, with a view to specializing in it later."

Commonplace People. A woman who entertains a great deal tells me that she is heart, brain, nerve and soul weary of clever people, and she longs to know somebody who neither writes, sings, recites, toots, fiddles, nor even has ideas. She even proposes a toast to the stupid people who do not intrude, and to those who, while not stupid, often pretend they are, for the sake of the quiet and peace they know you will appreciate.

Cleverness runs in families nowadays. Even the household baby is hauled out at deadly night hours to do his little turn, and the grandmother of the family is clever. Ah, a rare and satisfying person to meet is the family woman who is not clever; who makes no pretensions to cleverness; who has not prepared a paper on any of the burning questions of the hour.

For the sake of the workers in the great world downtown, let me quaff the cup to the health of the woman who is satisfied to stay at home and mend the stockings, and make pie and doughnuts and jelly-cake—make anything, in fact, provided she is contented while she is doing it. Probably she doesn't talk a great deal, and doesn't mind if you do not, and doesn't cherish it up against you if you do not hear what she is saying, even if you seem to be listening and are looking right at her. What a dear, restful soul she is! She knows good old tried-and-true remedies for ailments, and she doesn't even ask whether you want specifics for your ills or not, but she just claps them on, or pours them in, and bustles around and bangs up things, and tells

you that you'll be better in the morning, and sure enough you are, dead unselfish prophet that she is!—Harper's Bazar.

Cording is Used on All Accessories.

Cording is a more elaborate process and is now especially in vogue for yokes, collars, cuffs, belts and revers. Instead of the fine or heavy cords that were once used in rows between rows of machine stitching, a slightly stiff featherboning is used, and put on with a machine attachment which keeps the work even and avoids all pulling. The prettiest of yokes show cording in a rounding form, lower in the centre, with a ruching of mousseline on the edge—a fluffy effect for one with a flat chest. In cording the filler must be of a fair size to show in distinct ridges, which is the beauty of all cording.

Sewing on a button seems a simple task, but it is one which many women do in a wrong way. A button used as a trimming needs but a few stitches, as it is simply tacked on, while one used as a fastener needs strength and loose stitches enduringly put in. No button fastens well that is sewed closely to the dress. Use twist, and wax it so that a few stitches will suffice. Do not sew on a button so that the stitches disfigure the lining. A tailor puts his stitches through the upper cloth only, pointing the needle back and forth, not up and down—a process which is easily learned. A button is either for use or ornament. If for the latter purpose it should be unique in shape or design.—Ladies' Home Journal.

Garments For Slender Women.

Anxious to preserve the slenderness of their figures, many women will suffer actual discomfort, or even risk great danger to their health from cold, rather than wear heavy, bulky garments. Shetland underwaists, to be worn next the redingote, or rather overdress, are especially designed for this class of people. These garments are knitted loosely in pure Shetland wool. They are exceedingly warm, though so fine and light, and the waists are made with a high neck and long sleeves. They can be worn under a close-fitting bodice without materially increasing the size. They can be found at any of the stores which make a specialty of fine hygienic wool underwear. They are rather high in price, but a pair of these waists merely for outdoor wear will last all winter. They can be had in black, white and gray wools respectively. Rather than pay the price, many women substitute a ribbed wool undershirt, which they wear under a light-weight cloth jacket.

How Women Dress in Siberia.

Common-class women in Siberia wear shawls or kerchiefs on their heads, while the rich women wear no head covering whatever. A traveler recently returned from that part of the world says that a Russian woman who is otherwise trim and modern in dress will go about with her hair dishevelled to the point of the Indiferent. Less attention is paid to the head and feet than to other parts of their toilet.

"It is odd enough to see them" says this same writer, "defying dripping decks and muddy roads in the thinnest of hellish slippers, while the breezes play havoc with the loose tresses of their hair. Their shirt waists is a feminine terror, with a broad turnover collar, fancy cuffs, cotton bows, many buttons and numerous frills, in place of the natty American shirt waist."

A Fur and Velvet Season.

The winter is to be decidedly a fur and velvet season. Entire gowns are made of these materials, lightly lined with silk or satin alone, to remove all bulky effect, and skirts and coats of Persian lamb or Caracut—the fine, soft Astrakhan—are the height of fashion.

Gleanings From the Shops.

Black velvet bows for the hair with pipings of white satin. Exquisite novelties in beaded and jeweled purses and bags in small sizes.

Gown of net, cloth or velvet showing guipure lace in festoon applications. Watch fobs of black ribbon with seal, monogram or rich jewel pendants.

Net, chiffon and narrow lace frills edged with effective Tom Thumb fringe. Muff chains composed of alternating links of gold and enamel flower designs.

Silver bangles for young girls, upon which some favorite quotation is inscribed. White Brussels net embroidered with light green chenille and pearl sequins.

Many styles in tortoise shell, amber, jet and Parisian rhinestone coiffure ornaments. Pannet velvet in pompadour colorings for waists, guimpes and other trimming purposes.

Lace gowns effectively trimmed with deep white chenille fringe or narrow bands of fur. Evening gowns of chenille dotted net relieved by bands of cream lace in bayandere pattern.

Medici collars of sable and other fur finished with long stoles of plaided chiffon or rich cream lace. Large assortments of high class novelties in reversible cloths for driving coats, capes and ulsters.

Redingotes and newmarkets made of black or light-colored folds trimmed with machine stitched folds and deep revers. Chinchilla and sable toques trimmed effectively with tulle rosettes in combination with birds, wigs, paradise aigrette and violets.—Dry Goods Economist.

SOUTH AFRICA'S PLAGUES.

At Bulawayo Boots Devoured by Ants—The Rinderpest.

"South Africa imports hides, wool and mohair, and the ranchman would revel in riches were it not for the various pests that decimate his flocks and herds. The most deadly one is the rinderpest, a cattle plague which in the last ten years has been slowly creeping from Central Africa southward, leaving a wake of whitened bones. In traveling through Natal I saw fifty oxen lying dead about a spring where they had tumbled one after the other, so suddenly had the disease attacked them. It was almost impossible then to get an untimed piece of steak at a restaurant, though the proprietor resented any such charge, and a plethoric German traveler who called in, a loud tone for 'roast rinderpest' in the railroad cafe at De Aar Junction, Cape Colony, had to be picked up in fragments. Dr. Koch and other eminent specialists tried in vain to stop this plague. The country is now recovering from it slowly.

"Another pest is the tsetse fly, an insect resembling our common house fly, but three times as large. Its bite will kill a horse, cow or any other domestic animal in about ten days, but, strange to say, does not affect a wild animal or a human being. A less dangerous but more troublesome pest is the white ant, which is about one-quarter of an inch long and ubiquitous in many parts of the country. They live under the ground, and can only be routed by killing the queen, which sometimes reaches the size of one inch in length. This insect is particularly harassing in Rhodesia. At Bulawayo my traveling companion inadvertently left his boots on the floor after turning in at night, and he arose next morning to find the uppers carefully separated from the soles. 'Lucky you didn't leave your clothes on the floor,' was the hotel keeper's only consolation. These ants will eat through anything but metal, and for that reason much of the building is done with corrugated iron. The ant hill is one of the conspicuous landmarks in traveling over South Africa."—Ainslie's Magazine.

Some Remarkable Freight Outfits.

All the reminiscent veterans of the plains love to dwell nowadays on the wonders of the freight outfits of the early sixties, when the transportation business for them was at its height. An ox-team freight train consisted of twenty-five wagons. Several trains used to move together, making a stream of ox teams and wagons more than half a mile long. Sometimes a freight train would be a mile long, consisting of 500 ox teams, 120 wagons and about 180 men. The earlier wagons were large and carried from fifty to sixty hundred pounds of freight, but later still heavier wagons, with oval white canvas or loose cloth tops, called prairie schooners, came into use; each wagon being loaded with from three to three and one-half tons. The goods were protected with two or three sheets of ducking. Some wagons had peep holes in the sides from which the freighters looked out, ride in hand, when a band of savages was menacing the train.

Each wagon required six yoke of oxen for motive power, and twenty or thirty head of extra oxen always accompanied the train to supply the place of those that were lost or crippled. The custom of trailing a wagon came into use in later years. In camping the wagons were arranged in a circle side by side, with the tongues outward, and a log cabin extended from the hind wheel of one wagon to the fore wheel of the next one, thus making a solid pen.

Sacred White Peacocks at the Zoo.

Sacred white peacocks are the star attraction at the Central Park menagerie in New York City. The long-armed gibbon, known as the missing link, which has held the place of honor at the park zoo, will take a back seat. It is said there are only two white peacocks in America. The strange peacocks have been a part of a circus in Cincinnati. Superintendent Smith heard of them and arranged for an exchange. Cape buffaloes are a rarity in this country, but the menagerie has several of them and no freak peacocks. The circus man finally consented to let the peacocks go to New York City and to take in exchange one of the cape buffaloes. The white peacock is the albino of the peacock family, and only a very few of them are found outside of their native country, India, where they are considered sacred.

Material For His Play.

A fourteen-year-old boy marched busily up to the doorkeeper and asked to be allowed to see the Moliereux trial. The attendant told him he was too small, and pushed him back. "But I've got some important business," he said, resentfully. "Important business?" "I'm writing a play, sir, and the fourth act is a murder trial just like Mr. Moliereux's."

"Get out, you—"

"Why do you let Mr. Scott, the Englishman, in, and Mr. Bronson Howard and Mr. Klein, the actor?" "Wait till you are as big as they are."

"Well, wait till you see my play," snapped the applicant for admittance, and stalked haughtily up to the elevator.—New York Commercial Advertiser.

The Meanest Men.

Some of the meanest men in the world are the fellows who stop in front of a newsboy, pretend to feel for a cent with which to buy a paper, sneak a glance at the headlines which gives them all the news they want, and then refuse to buy, saying, "Just had one."—New York Press.

A COMICAL WORLD.

"Such a comical world," said the Funny Man.

And he laughed, "Ha-ha! He-hel! How people can keep from laughing aloud is really a mystery to me."

"Now the sun arises in early morn, And that is so funny to me; Why it doesn't wait till people are up Is funny as funny can be."

"And the moon and the stars prowl around at night When the people are all in bed; And he laughed, 'Ha-ha! He-hel!' And shook from his toes to his head."

"Why, the brooks are always running down hill, And (which seems so funny to me), They never climb back, yet never run dry; Which is funny as funny can be."

"And another thing that is comical, too, The rivers run into the sea; But it never runs over or taller gets, Which also seems funny to me."

"And the higher you climb up the mountain-tail, And the nearer the sun," said he, "The colder it grows, and that, too, I'm sure, Is funny as funny can be."

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And he laughed, "Ha-ha! He-hel! How people can keep from laughing aloud is really a mystery to me."

JINGLES AND JESTS.

Sillicus—"A woman's troubles are always extreme." Cynicus—"Yes; shoes and hats."

There is a chance for some genius To spend his days in clover By inventing cloth for overcoats That will fade alike all over.

"I may have wheels," said the driver of the van, "but I move in the best society."—Philadelphia Evening Bulletin.

Hoax—"Salary been reduced, eh? That's hard luck. Made you feel mad, didn't it?" Joax—"No, but it made me feel cheap."

I fear he will not rise to fame; He has indeed a studious bent, But all with ease may read his name: Whene'er he signs a document.

Maudie—"Have Bella and Jack had a new quarrel?" Lena—"Oh, no!—but they've patched up their old one till it's about as good as new."—Puck.

The Amiable Plutocrat—"But riches do not bring happiness." The Unamiable Pauper—"But I ain't lookin' for happiness. All I want is comfort."—Indianapolis Journal.

Judge—"Have you anything to say before the court passes sentence?" Prisoner—"Well, all I've got to say is, I hope you'll consider the extreme youth of my lawyer, and let me off easy."

Little Edgar—"Pa, what's a lineal descendant?" Pa—"He is generally some one who is trying to get through the world on a reputation somebody made before he was born."—Chicago Times-Herald.

"I see by the newspapers," remarked Reader, "that the miners in the Klondike are sending out appeals for wives." "Is that so?" ejaculated Honnypeak, in an eager whisper. "They can have mine."

"You are not opaque, are you?" sarcastically asked one man of another who was standing in front of him at the theatre. "Faith, an' O'm niot," replied the other. "It's O'Brien that O'iam."—Chicago News.

Each man is apt to deem, we're told, That fellowman his friend, Who never asks to borrow gold, But has some he will lend.

They were engaged, "Life," she said, as she arose from the piano stool, "will be one long, sweet song after we are married." "That settles it, then," firmly responded her lover, as he picked up his hat and took his departure.—Ohio State Journal.

"As I understand it," says Mrs. Gazzam, "by the wireless telegraph system the messages go right through the air we breathe." "Yes, that is correct," assented Mr. Gazzam. "Then a person who has just filed a message in the telegraph office may swallow his own words on his way home."—Harper's Bazar.

The Feminine Observer. Women desire sympathy; men prefer help.