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The new star in Perseus has diminished to the third magnitude. It evidently needs a new press agent.

With a navy already about equal to the combined navies of any other two powers, Great Britain has ordered work begun during the present year on three battleships, six armored cruisers, two third-class cruisers, ten torpedo boat destroyers, five torpedo boats, two sloops of war and five submarine boats. That Hague disarmament agreement seems to have acted like a movement to reduce the cotton acreage.

The bicycle may pass, but it will pass only when the cycle of human development which produced it has run its full course and the people that made it marvelous in human annals have passed away forever. For, looked at from any point of view, whether from that of service or pleasure, or the result of human thought and skill, or adaptation to popular needs, the bicycle stands to-day as the consummate achievement of our mechanical development.

Several particularly pathetic cases within the last few months have been the cause of reviving the old agitation in England for the modification of the law which requires that the sentence of death shall be pronounced in each case of a woman convicted of infanticide. This law is regarded by the majority of thinking Englishmen as a crude and cruel relic of those days when in the early part of the last century persons were condemned to death for stealing a few cents' worth of candies or flowers. For many years no woman has been sent to the gallows for this crime; in fact, the term of imprisonment is being continually lessened. But in the matter of the pronouncement of the death sentence, there is absolutely no discretionary power given to the presiding justice. Knowing full well that the Home Secretary will change the sentence to a comparatively short term of imprisonment, still he must go through the ghastly form of sentencing her to be hanged by the neck until she is dead. As those interested in the proposed reform say, this is merely a form of exquisite torture, as cruel as it is unnecessary. An empty formula, it is contrary to all the modern notions of justice.

Lafayette's Rose-Leaf Bed.
Mrs. Sarah H. Bradford, mother of the wife of Admiral Crowninshield, tells an amusing incident of Lafayette's visit to New York in 1824, which almost became a tragedy for the hero.

Some of the society belles and their smaller sisters, among them Mrs. Crowninshield, resolved that he should have a bed of roses to lie on, and for days before his expected visit they busied themselves gathering rose leaves, and, having filled a white silk sack with them, conveyed it to the house at which he was to spend the night.

When, however, the Marquis made his appearance next morning he was suffering with influenza of the most pronounced character. With French tact he endeavored to ignore his condition, the horrid concomitants meanwhile proclaiming it, and the anxiety of his friends being equally hard to silence, the truth of the matter was gradually revealed. Lafayette was subject to a malady known as rose cold, and the odor of the flowers tortured him. In an effort to escape from it he rolled himself in a blanket upon the floor, it pursued him, and the draughts from the doors aggravating the situation a cold was the logical sequence.—Philadelphia Record.

At least one co-operative colony—that located in Dickinson county, Kansas—seems to be thriving. It was formed three years ago and has made money from the start, clearing \$1,842 last year. The colony has a ranch, a general store, a bank and an insurance feature.

London has 630 acres of docks; Liverpool, 560 acres.

A Need Satisfied.

BY VIRGINIA LORING.

I lacked five years of my two-score-and-ten, and was living alone in the snug little house left me by my father, just on the outskirts of London. The house, a few valuable articles of plate and some £5000 constituted all my worldly goods. I kept them all under my own personal surveillance. Of banks I had my own opinion, and I knew a far safer place for my little hoard than intrusting it to strange and perhaps dishonest men.

I was sitting one afternoon in my pretty little drawing room, revolving in my mind the improvement a little paint and wall paper might be, and at the same time unwilling to expend the necessary sum, when my neat little maid-servant announced that a gentleman had called to see me.

I took a hasty glance in the mirror to convince myself that my hair was in order and my cap-ribbons on the proper angle, when his shadow darkened the threshold.

I glanced up; I fear I blushed. His dark eyes were fixed so penetratingly upon me that mine fell beneath their glance. I had caught but a passing glimpse of the handsome face and tall, manly form, but dared not look again.

"You will pardon me, madam—" he began.

"Not madam," I interrupted; "Miss Loring."

"Miss Loring," he repeated after me. "I ventured on the madam, because I thought it could not be possible Miss Loring could have been permitted to retain that prefix she so evidently prefers."

Presumptuous it may have been in a stranger, but spoken in a low, musically modulated voice, it did not present itself to me in the right light.

I instantly tried to remember all the heroes I had read of in the romances I procured from the library, and to determine which one of them he most resembled.

There was one great void which heretofore had always existed in my life—a romantic adventure.

Singular as it may seem, I had never had one. My heart began to palpitate as I thought that possibly the need would now be satisfied.

"I almost hesitate to make known to you the cause of my visit, lest you should regard it in the light of an impertinent intrusion," he continued; "but in passing by your house, I noticed the upper room in your back-building, which is peculiarly adapted for a studio. I am an artist, and in search of just such an apartment, for which I am willing to pay a most liberal price. I shall occupy it only during a few hours each day. If Miss Loring will not accede to my request, will she not at least pardon it?"

He bowed low and deferentially before me. My brain was in a whirl. What could his proposition mean? Had he seen me and made this a pretext to know me? I could not tell. I dared not trust myself as yet to give a decided answer.

"I will think the matter over," I said, and I fear there was a slight tremulousness in my tone. "If you will call tomorrow I will let you know my decision."

"I will leave you my card, then," he replied, drawing his cardcase from his pocket, and placing a delicately engraved card on the table. "I am quite willing to pay a pound a week, and if you accede to my request, I shall consider myself indeed your debtor."

I rose and courted as he bowed himself out. A pound a week! It was munificent. I need no longer study ways and means as to paint and wall paper. I should be able to do all that I had planned, and more. Why, then, should I hesitate? Why had I not said yes at once? Perhaps he never would return.

My heart sank at the thought, to a depth no mere pecuniary loss could have entailed upon it.

Had this stranger, then, made an impression upon that susceptible portion of my anatomy? He looked younger than my real age—but what of that? Doubtless I looked far younger than my years.

At the last taking of the census I had given my age as 28, and, further than a slight elevation of his eyebrows, the census taker showed not the slightest surprise. I thought afterwards the movement was a nervous affection, and was sorry that I had not proposed a specific cure.

I took up the card from the table. It bore the name of Algernon Vernon. Algernon! I might have known he would possess such a name!

I tried in vain to rivet my wandering thoughts upon the latest romance. Nothing its pages contained equaled this new and absorbing element in my life. All my doubts concerning my resolve had fled.

On the morrow I would accede to Mr. Vernon's request. Not even the neighbors could find food for gossip, inasmuch as he would occupy the room only during a few daylight hours.

But why had he selected mine? The houses on either side of the street were of the same construction. Evidently he had a motive other than appeared on the surface for wishing to gain an entree into my humble abode.

Next day found me in a state of nervous agitation lest he should disappoint me; but there was no occasion for it.

Promptly on the hour of the day preceding he arrived, and I made known to him my acquiescence in his proposition; but this time he drew a chair before the fire at my request, and we had quite a social and very pleasant chat.

He would not remove all his artist belongings at present, he said. He was engaged on one work which particularly occupied him, and which he hoped to finish in time for the Royal Academy; after that he might have a request to make of me. Had I ever been told by artists that my profile was a study?

Ah, he meant, then, to ask me to paint my picture! What a triumph over that horrid Williamson girl, who had said that one day, not far off, my nose and chin would meet! Evidently she did not understand true art.

I have such a trick of blushing, I never can get over it. I blushed now, and murmured that any request Mr. Vernon might make I was sure I would be but too glad to comply with.

Then he rose to go, but before doing so he placed a one-pound note in my hand.

"Invariably in advance, Miss Loring," he said, almost apologetically. "It is a rule from which I never deviate."

The next day he came. He brought with him nothing but the picture on which he was at work, his paints and easels, and one or two wooden models.

Of course I never intruded upon him at his work, but he grew into the habit, as he passed the open door of the sitting room, to drop in and talk with me.

One afternoon, when he had lingered over his painting longer than his wont, and seemed more tired, I asked him to stay and take a cup of tea with me.

I could not but see how gladly he consented. Of course did my guest all honor. With my own hands I drew the old heirlooms from their covers and placed them on the table. With pardonable pride I ushered him into the room.

"Are you not afraid to live alone, Miss Loring," he asked, "with so much valuable silver?"

"Oh, no!" I answered; "I keep it in a safe built in the wall, and sleep with the key under my pillow. No one would think of looking for it there."

And then I went on to explain to him my horror of banks, and how much of my worldly goods I preferred to have under my personal supervision.

"It is not safe," he insisted. "I wish I had the right to refuse to allow you to run such risk."

With what tenderness he uttered the last sentence! To what was it the prelude? It must not come upon me too suddenly. I could not bear the fullness of its ecstasy, but I no longer doubted what for long I had suspected—Algernon's heart was mine.

As he bade me good night he held and pressed my hand. I fear my head, in spite of the injury to my cap, fell one brief instant on his manly shoulder. I heard something like a sigh; then he tore himself away. I was again alone.

The next day I did not see him on his way to the studio. Two men were with him, so he could not stop. They were rather rough-looking men—evidently models. Shortly after one of them passed down the stairs and went out. Then Algernon came.

"Where is your visitor?" I asked.

"They have both gone," he said.

I thought it strange I had not seen the other man pass, but soon Algernon's presence made me forget all else; only he seemed distraught and ill at ease.

Perhaps I had been too cold, too distant, and so had wounded his noble heart. I silently swore to throw off the mask of maiden modesty, and show him more of the true heart which beat but for him. Before, however, I had gotten my courage to the point, he had gone.

I sat alone for two, perhaps three hours, until the twilight fell. Then a sudden desire assailed me to go up and look at the progress of his work. I had not seen the picture since the day it came, and he had been with me a fortnight.

Softly I opened the door. The picture was on its easel, covered with a cloth. The cloth I gently raised, but I could discover on the canvas no change. Doubtless, lost in thought of me, Algernon had striven in vain to pursue his art.

I sank into a chair and gave myself up to sweet reverie, when suddenly I started. A loud and violent sneeze sounded close beside me. I sprang to my feet and looked about the room. It was empty, save for the two wooden models and myself.

One of these models Algernon had evidently been copying, since he had dressed it in the brigand hat and coat he kept for that purpose, and which he once had shown me.

A great terror assailed me; I searched every corner of the room. In vain—I could discover nothing.

At last I went out, but taking the key from the door I locked it behind me. On my way down stairs I caught a glimpse of Jenny's (my maid of all work) young man, escaping through the back door.

I did not approve of followers, but Jenny was so good and faithful that I sometimes had to shut my eyes to the somewhat frequent visits of the young butcher, who evidently intended her to share his lot. Somehow my recent fright made the presence of a man, even the butcher, a thing to be desired.

"Tom!" I called. He came back, bowing awkwardly. "I don't mind if you stay to tea," I said. "I had a little fright just now, and I'm nervous. I'd feel better to know you were in the kitchen, within call."

"Thank ye, miss! but I can't stay tonight, and ye needn't be nervous, for I'm just after seeing Mr. Vernon looking out of the studio window."

"Mr. Vernon has been gone two hours," I said.

"Well, certainly it was some one else in the studio, for I certainly saw a man's head by the window when I came in, a half hour ago."

His assertion made me doubly nervous.

"It is very strange," I said; and then I told him what had happened.

"Let me go up and look, Miss Loring," he suggested.

Consenting, I led the way, but stood back that he might enter alone—Jenny meanwhile bringing up the rear.

It was now quite dark. Tom struck a light. The room was silent and empty.

Had some ghost been playing us tricks? Doubtless if Tom had had only my story he would have been at once satisfied that my imagination only was at fault. As it was, he looked about him puzzled and perplexed. Suddenly he made a spring forward.

"Don't, don't!" I cried. "You will disturb the model!"

But too late. He already had clutched it by the throat, and, to my intense consternation and amazement, it, too, became endued with animal life.

For a few moments the two struggled for the mastery, Jenny and I meanwhile screaming at the top of our lungs; but before the police arrived Tom had bound the man's hands, and stood triumphant over his prostrate form.

He soon made piteous confession. It was not his fault. He had been hired to open the door at midnight to Mr. Algernon Vernon, and was to assist in carrying off the booty.

"Mr. Algernon Vernon?" I gasped.

The fellow smiled a hideous smile.

"Yes, miss," he said. "His real name is Jake Brown, however. He said there'd be no trouble in fooling the old woman, and that he had a sure thing of it."

The old woman! I would almost rather they had taken my silver and my bonds. Algernon! Algernon! Still my heart echoes the desolate cry! Still it is empty! Jake Brown! What was basest slander on the part of his accomplice, whose term of imprisonment has just expired.

Algernon escaped detection; but I have the wooden models and the unfinished painting (judges pronounce it a chromo) to recall the one romantic episode in a old maid's life.—Saturday Night.

QUAINT AND CURIOUS.

In Japan poor children have labels with their names and addresses hung around their necks, as a safeguard against being lost.

Congress is said to contain one member who is opposed to all legislation on the ground that there are already too many laws in existence. He favors repealing laws already existing.

Elongated ear-lobes are considered a mark of beauty in Borneo. Girls with this feature reaching down to their elbows are not uncommon.

The British Medical Journal says that a valuable ram, the property of a grazier in New South Wales, lost its front teeth, and being unable to nibble satisfactorily, was slowly dying from semi-starvation. The services of a dentist were secured and artificial teeth were inserted so successfully that the ram is now thriving as well as ever.

When General Wolfe fell on the plains of Abraham, before Quebec, in the war known to Americans as the French and Indian war, the regiment with which he had long been identified, the Forty-seventh Loyal North Lancashire regiment, went into mourning, and has not abandoned it in the nearly a century and a half since. The officers still wear black blended with their gold braid.

In India, China, Japan and adjacent countries are about 400,000,000 people who rarely eat meat; yet they are strong, active and long lived. Darwin is authority for the statement that the Andean natives perform twice the work of ordinary laborers, and subsist almost entirely on a diet of bananas.

The Isar river is one of the curliest of Munich, Bavaria. It is chiefly noted for running rapidly and for being nowhere near the battlefield of Hohenlinden, the poet to the contrary notwithstanding. It is a river sometimes white as milk, at others green as grass, and it is probably the only river of its size in the world which has no boats on it. Nor may one bathe in it on account of the swiftness of the current. Its principal use seems to be for people to drown themselves in; but it also serves a real purpose, because its waters are diverted to flush sewers.

After performing this service the waters run as babbling brooks in the city park and are utilized by the washerwoman for laundry purposes.

Restoration of the Moose.

Thirty years and more have passed since the kingly moose was driven, through lack of proper protection, from his grand ancestral home in the forests of the Adirondacks; and now, after this long lapse, the royal exile is about to be reinstated in his ancient domain. No project will be watched by sportsmen with keener interest; nor has there ever been a movement set on foot relative to the wild game which means so much to so many.—Field and Stream.

PROBLEMS OF THE RICH.

THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH BESET THE AMERICAN MILLIONAIRE.

Keeping Up a Big House—A Modern Philanthropic Movement Which Has Placed a Burden on the Wealthy Man of Today—Yankee Millionaire the Best.

There is nothing—not even books and constitutions—that gives us a clearer and quicker insight into the political and social conditions of a time or country than do the manners and habits of rich men. Throughout Europe some hundreds of years ago, when a man had accumulated great wealth he at once built himself a strong castle, with a moat around it, in order to protect himself from the attacks of his neighbors. The development of lawful government has no more striking illustration than that to be found in the gradual change from this style of architecture to that which marks the palatial abodes of wealth today.

It still occurs that a man's house is the surest indication of the extent of his wealth. From the earliest times men of great riches have had to exercise considerable ingenuity in expending their incomes. Few men are content to be secretly and unobtrusively rich. The pleasure of possession breeds the desire for display, so the wealthy man of today puts his money into tangible visible property, that people may see and envy. And his buildings, open to the world in all their beauty and magnificence, form, probably, the best illustrations of the good of civilization and the omnipotence of law and government.

But, relieved from the bane of power that formerly went with wealth, and with his greater freedom and liberties, it can hardly be said that the rich man of today has reason to be happier than he was in the Middle Ages. He owes vast duties to the public. The modern philanthropic movement has laid heavy burdens upon him. The ethical writers and the clergy watch his expenditures closely, and for his errors he is censured publicly and without mercy.

American fortunes are now the greatest in the world, and the American millionaire is far more interesting than any other millionaire, because he faces so many new problems. Our rich men may be divided into many classes. The men who have by their own efforts mastered millions, and who go on working with unconquerable energy, are apt to be looked upon first as great men of business. Those who retire after a life of hard work to do deeds of philanthropy form another class.

The most interesting from an ethical standpoint are those who find leisure and luxury in their wealth. It is the member of this latter body—we know it ordinarily as society—who faces the unique problem of how, when and where to spend his money.

In Europe when a man comes of age and to an inheritance of wealth he finds settled for him the kind of house he shall live in, the number of servants and carriages he shall keep, and the extent to which he shall entertain. He inherits his duties. His caste is settled for him and he knows exactly what is expected of him.

The American has few established precedents. He must be his own model. He may have one servant or 50. He may build mansions at Newport or on the Hudson or live quietly at a hotel. He is at the task of modeling his own sphere. When the desire for display seizes him he builds houses.

The direct personal expenses of the working American millionaire are often astonishingly small. His greatest expense is the maintenance of his great household. This he meets by handing a blank check book to the housekeeper. The wives of millionaires are usually free from the worries of the great establishment, which are shouldered by a capable and experienced woman who receives a big salary. She has charge of the house and the army of servants and is responsible for every detail in the management of the establishment.

The expenses entailed in running the home of a modern millionaire are vast. In many private American mansions the kitchen, storage rooms and systems of service are as complete and extensive as similar departments of a great hotel. Fortunes are expended in furnishings, and the annual cost of table linen alone aggregates thousands of dollars. The feminine portion of a millionaire's family are almost invariably "in society," and the expenses of entertaining form a vast amount annually. Money is spent lavishly on every side and excellent prices are paid for everything.

The modern Social trust is one of the most beneficial to mankind and to trade generally. The love of luxury grows with wealth, and the fast yachts and special trains of the millionaire of today outdo in point of pure enjoyment the great equipages of the time of the Roman Empire.

Notwithstanding all that has been said against him the American millionaire is the best type to be found in the history of wealth. Almost always he illustrates the success of hard work. And what is more important, his munificence and public spirit is something new in the history of the world. Colleges, schools, hospitals, museums and libraries owe him much. The statement that he does only a duty might be answered by a reference to his prototypes abroad. Among them his deeds of charity and philanthropy are without parallel.—Philadelphia Record.

A Jeweler of Humboldt, Neb., is said to have built for his own use an automobile which weighs but 149 pounds.

FACTS ABOUT ASPHALT.

Where It Is Obtained—Its Origin and Commercial Use.

The dispute between two rival American corporations over the possession of La Felicidad, an asphalt lake in Venezuela, has caused especial interest in what an asphalt lake is like and how asphalt is mined and shipped to market. Asphalt, or asphaltum, is the solid form of bitumen. Bitumen is a generic term which is applied to a variety of substances, ranging from natural gas, naphtha, petroleum and mineral tar to asphalt. The asphalts of different localities vary greatly in composition, shown by their chemical reactions. Nearly all are amorphous and have the general appearance of pitch, melting at about the temperature of boiling water. Asphalt, it is thought by scientists, has resulted from the hardening of the naphtha and petroleum elements, through oxygenation and evaporation.

One of the most interesting asphalt beds in the world is the pitch lake in the state of Bermudez, Venezuela. This valuable deposit was unknown to American capitalists until 1888, when an American engineer, Ambrose Howard Carner, received a title to the property from the Venezuelan government. This he sold to the New York and Bermudez company, which is closely allied to the so-called asphalt trust, of which General F. V. Greene is president. The several square miles which are included in the concession obtained has in the last 13 years been steadily improved. The company has cleared the Maturin river to navigation, so that deep sea craft from all quarters of the globe can run in from the Caribbean sea past the British possession of Trinidad and inland to the docks of the company at Guanoco.

The town of Guanoco is the river terminus of the Bermudez company's railroad. Here are hundreds of native Venezuelans, working under the eye of an American superintendent. The raw asphalt is brought from the lake, five miles distant on flat cars, and shoveled into the holds of the vessels. At Guanoco this operation is much simpler than at Trinidad, where lighters are necessary because of the long shelving beach of the harbor. The railroad follows an old Indian trail, which led from the river to the shores of the pitch lake. The surface of the lake is so hard that for some distance from the shore it supports the weight of a loaded train. As one looks over the surface of this great deposit he at first sees nothing of a striking or unusual nature. He views only a black plain, resembling anthracite coal, or flint, upon which are groups of natives working with picks and shovels.

Closer examination, however, shows that portions of the surface are soft like tar, where the asphalt is sticky and bubbling. Asphalt is distinguishable from anthracite not only by its form, but because it is soluble in bisulphide of carbon and benzole. These pitch pools resemble somewhat the hot springs of the Yellowstone region. They slowly cool, and become hardened after many years. As at Trinidad, they vary in depth. Some of them have never been fully sounded, and are thought by the natives to extend into the bowels of the earth.

Asphalt is used largely in the manufacture of cements. It is mixed with a petroleum residue to render it plastic, and is then tempered with one-seventh its weight of sand. It also forms one of the most durable waterproofing materials known. For roofing purposes it is mixed, while hot, with fine gravel, or is absorbed by thick rolls of felt paper.

Asphalt is found in many countries. In Vera Cruz, Mexico, near the village of Molocan, is a mountain largely composed of asphalt. The deposits at Seyssel, France, and at Val de Travers, Switzerland, consist of limestone impregnated with bituminous matter, which, when heated, crumbles to a powder. After it has been pounded into molds and is cooled it resembles the original rock. Over 1000 miles of the streets of Paris have been supplied from these two localities.

Stayed Home for Thirty Years.
Erastus Hall is 65 years of age, and lives in an old-fashioned dwelling 15 miles west of here, on the Danville and Springfield turnpike, in Washington county, Ky., and, remarkable as the statement may seem, he has not crossed the threshold of his own residence for 35 years, notwithstanding he had always enjoyed the best of health. He was born of wealthy parents and received a substantial academic education. His father was the owner of a great many slaves before the war, the most notable of whom was "Uncle Henry," who still lives at the old homestead with the secluded son of his former master. Erastus Hall was a sober, industrious young man, and taught two or three terms in the public schools of Washington county.

During the closing days of the civil war his father and mother both died, and considerable property was left as his share of the estate. Among other property inherited by him was the old homestead of his mother.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Self-Paying Conductors.

A Washington traction company reports that its system of allowing the conductors to retain from their daily receipts the amount of their daily salaries, as well as that of their motormen, is working quite satisfactorily to the men and the company alike. Each conductor in making up his daily report deducts a sum sufficient to cover his own and the motorman's salary, so that the company is thus relieved of the expense and trouble of making up a large payroll.