

eight o'clock that evening, he found Miss Hannah's misive on his study table. He read it through, with dismay and astonishment.

"Poor little creature!" he exclaimed, "who could have been capable of so cruelly deceiving her? I did not think she had an enemy, her life is so blameless and noble. What shall I tell her? How shall I explain matters to her?"

He read the letter over again, and was impressed by the modesty and gentleness which pervaded it.

Walking up and down the room, perplexed at what had recently occurred, and vexed at being in such a false position, Dr. Astley suddenly thought of Gertrude. This was the night he had set for calling on her, and deciding his fate. He had little doubt that her reply would be a favorable one, and yet here he stood as good as engaged to poor little Miss Hannah of Rose Cottage.

He drew his handkerchief from his pocket; and, as he did so, a piece of crumpled paper fell to the floor. Thinking it might be of importance, he picked it up and opened it.

As he read it, his face grew very grave and sad, and his lips were sternly compressed. For an instant he could not remember where or how it had come into his possession; and then he recollected the sudden gust of wind that had hurled it into his face the night before.

Was it fate, I wonder, which made the wind blow from the open window of Gertrude's bedroom this scribbled sheet, and fling it into the doctor's face? For on the paper was a rough draft of the love-letter Miss Hannah had received, and on the reverse side, scribbled with many quills and flourishes, the names of the two young girls who had planned to mortify the little old maid.

"And to think, but for this crumpled piece of paper, and what it contains, that I might have married that girl!" mused the doctor. "The whole plot is clear to me now; and, instead of loving Gertrude Lorrimer, I thoroughly despise her. How could she stoop to this?"

Then he threw himself into an easy-chair, and abandoned himself to thought.

The result was, that he rose to his feet an hour later, with a smile on his face, donned his overcoat and hat, and left the house, going in the direction of Miss Hannah's cottage.

Gertrude saw him from her window, where she was keeping watch; but she did not know his thoughts, or she would not have laughed and clapped her hands so gleefully.

"Poor little thing!" thought the doctor, as he saw the light in Miss Hannah's parlor window. "She is expecting me, of course. Well, her tender, generous heart shall not suffer through me, and I shall do all I can to make her happy."

Miss Hannah opened the door for him, and then shrank timidly back; but he put both his strong arms around her, and drew her to his breast.

"My arms are your shield, and my breast is your resting-place forever, dear Hannah," he murmured.

"O, Leonard!" she replied, "if I can only make you happy. But I am so old and so faded—"

"You are mine now, and I won't allow my property to be depreciated," was the doctor's answer.

The surprise and chagrin of Gertrude and Nettie can well be imagined; but they had only themselves to thank for the strange result of their heartless, unmaidenly, wicked hoax, that might have resulted in driving so sensitive a soul to lasting shame or even death itself.

They never learned from Dr. Astley or his wife that it was surmised who had written Miss Hannah's love-letter; for the doctor never spoke to either of the girls again, but passed them with only a cold and formal bow; while his wife never knew, to the day of her death, that her love-letter had not been a genuine one. That cruel knowledge was kept from her by her husband; for Dr. Astley had learned to love his wife most tenderly and truly, and under his care and kindness she grew rosy and bright again as in her youthful days.—She no longer denied herself nourishing food and beautiful clothes, for she was surrounded by peace and plenty.

As for the doctor's handsome house, it became a different place. Mrs. Beck's reign was over; and, under the supervision of a mistress who studied the comfort of all, the servants gave no trouble whatever and Dr. Astley often mentally blessed the day on which Miss Hannah received her bogus love-letter.

A Cheerful Wife.

BETTER than gold to a man is a cheerful wife. But he must do his part toward making her cheerful. It is easy enough for a man to marry a happy woman. But the bride expectant, when she thought how happy she would

be, never contemplated the picture of a husband coming home cross as a bear and going to bed without speaking to her; she had never thought of the long evenings when he wouldn't come home at all, or bringing some one home to dinner without warning or preparation; of his awful profanity over so trifling a matter as the gas bill.

She had no idea, in fact that there could be anything but happiness in married life, and she had determined to be happy and to distribute her happiness among those about her.

It is not often her fault is she doesn't succeed. Men, as a rule, do not exert themselves to secure their wives' happiness.

They know that it requires a constant and a great effort to possess property and be secure in its value in the midst of constant commercial changes.

The cheerfulness, the happy, hopeful character which every woman displays at the beginning of marriage is not so easily lost as a fortune; it requires but a small share of the attention, and yet so often does not get that little share.

Therefore a word to the girls in this connection is in order; beware of a man who doesn't know enough about cheerfulness to understand its value in daily life. Such a man would improve the first opportunity to grind the cheerfulness out of his home, to frighten a sunbeam into a shadow, and then wonder what is the matter.

Such is no better than no husband at all; and when you want a husband go find somebody else—somebody who will give you at least some chance to be happy far into the life beyond the honeymoon.

Infidelity and Crime.

THE New York "Evening Post" says: "We believe it to be susceptible of demonstration that the late extraordinary increase of crime, an increase more palpable every day, crowding with its record the columns of the public prints and sickening the soul with its endless detail and novelty of horror, is largely due to the growth of materialism, or what is termed infidelity; and that mainly in reaction from the skeptical drift of the time lies the path of the wholesome reform. The fruit of unbelief among the upper or wealthy classes is sensuality. Those classes get to worship instead of their Maker, the pleasures of the moment. They bow down to rich food and fine clothes and enervating amusements. They make goddesses of women who possess mere physical beauty. Their hearts are set on yachts and race-courses and theatres and operas.—What is given, in a word, to gild or soften life, to lend grace and sparkle and color to the plod and monotone of existence, such persons make its sole object and aim.

"Thus they become of the earth, earthly, and all that is spiritual and exalted dries out of their souls. One after another the Commandments are broken as they stand in the way of desire, and a shameful ruin is left at last in place of what might have been a perfect temple: a shattered and sated voluptuary in place of a nobly perfected human being.

"Among the poorer and less educated ranks of society the cant and poison of living only for the day is even more directly disastrous. The rich can gratify their passions without, as a rule and in the legal sense, coming in conflict with the rights of others. But the needy, unrestrained by any fear of future account, and thinking only to eat and drink since to-morrow they die, drive straight on crime. That this is no idle assertion can be abundantly proved. A careful survey of murderers, suicides and other great felonies committed in the chief cities of the United States during the last ten years shows that a heavy fraction of the perpetrators were atheists or free-thinkers. These unhappy persons, persuaded that life is the be-all and the end-all here, imagine that in their calculations they can jump the life to come. A collection of the letters or other papers left by criminals when anticipating death shows a fearful number of instances, some of which many readers will recall, of absolute disbelief in the existence of a God or in any reckoning for wrong done in this life to be exacted in a future one."

The Shields-Lincoln Duel

General Shields once had a difficulty with Abraham Lincoln which resulted in preparations for a duel. Shortly after his return from the Mexican war, a newspaper in Illinois, where he lived, published an article which displeased him very much.

He called upon the editor; said it was offensive and insisted upon knowing the author.

The editor asked time to consider, and meanwhile consulted Mr. Lincoln, informing him that the writer of the article was a young woman.

"Oh, I'll settle that," said Lincoln.—"Tell Shields I am personally responsible for it."

This was enough for Shields, and he immediately challenged Lincoln to mortal combat.

Bronze words were chosen as the weapons most likely to place them on equal footing. The proceedings were conducted with great secrecy, and in order to have the amusement to themselves a brushwood copse was chosen for the encounter. But friends had followed unobserved, and came up in time to catch the belligerents in the act of clearing a space for the fight by hewing down the brushwood with their swords. The ludicrousness of the thing was soon made apparent, and the affair ended in good humor.

A Night in a Haunted House.

A NEIGHBORING city is just now in the throes of a ghostly sensation. It appears from the accounts which we receive that a week or two since an advertisement was put in one of the papers offering a large pleasant room for rent at exceedingly low terms. To all who called to look at the room, the proprietor candidly explained that the reason it was tenanted and was offered on such low terms was that for about six months past it had had the reputation of being haunted, and no one had since been found who would occupy it more than one night.

Mr. Rufus Kinloch, a young lawyer, scoffed at the story, and rented the room for a year. On the first night that he spent in it, a little before twelve o'clock he awoke suddenly with a strong and strange feeling that some one was near him. Just then his clock struck twelve, and simultaneously with the last stroke a heavy body, as if from the ceiling, fell with a heavy thud upon his breast, clasped him tightly with a cold and clammy pair of arms. Young Kinloch, as soon he could partially recover from the paralysis produced by the sudden surprise and terror, began a desperate struggle to free himself. Over the bed they wrestled and tumbled, whence they finally fell to the floor. Kinloch felt that it was life or death with him, and he strained every fibre in his body to shake off his invisible foe. He could plainly hear his breathings, which were regular and not apparently increased by the struggle. Its breath swept into his face as chilly as an air current from a mountain cave. Its body, which he could feel, was without a thread of clothing, was evidently in the shape of a man's, but was as cold and rigid as a corpse. The only sound which came from it was an occasional low, sepulchral laugh, which almost froze Kinloch to the bone. In his wild efforts to cast it off Kinloch knocked a table over. The matchbox fell and scattered its contents over the floor.—Kinloch, with one hand, immediately seized a match, but just as he struck it, and before it could blaze up, the thing, with another laugh, wrenched itself away. In an instant Kinloch had the gas lit, but his visitor had entirely disappeared. The doors were all locked and the windows all fastened, just as he had left them on going to bed. He examined the ceiling and the walls, but could not discover the slightest sign of ingress or egress. Then he looked in the glass, saw that his hair had not turned white and sat up with the gas burning the rest of the night. Next day he carefully and thoroughly examined the room, and is prepared to swear that no human being can get admittance to it except through the windows. The succeeding night, which was that on Monday last, notwithstanding his experience already, he resolved to make another attempt to solve the mystery. Placing his pistol, a candle and a box of matches on a table within reach of his bed, he turned off the gas and lay down. Not once did he think of sleeping. Finally the clock began striking twelve. Again, as it finished, the mysterious thing dropped from above on the breast of Kinloch, and clasped him in its embrace. Wrapping one arm around it with a death-like grip, with his disengaged hand Kinloch grasped a match and struck it. The thing, which seemed to have a horror of light, made one violent effort to leave, and then, as the match flared up, lay panting, passive and conquered. Kinloch deliberately lit the candle, held it over his prisoner, and saw to his amazement that it was—a nightmare.—Rocky Mountain News.

The Story of an Invention.

Rather more than a hundred and fifty years ago, a potter named Astbury was making a journey on horseback from Staffordshire to London, and while stopping at Dunstable he had occasion to ask aid for a weakness in the eyes of his horse. Having made known his wants to the hostler of the inn at which he was staying, the latter undertook the asked-for assistance, and this he did by taking a piece of flint, calcining, or burning it to powder in the fire, and blowing some into the horse's eyes. It is said that the change produced in the flint by burning, from a black stone to a white powder, at once struck the potter with a brilliant idea. "Would it be possible to produce white flint ware

harder and more durable than white ware made entirely of clay? The idea appears no sooner conceived than it was carried out. Collecting some flints from the neighborhood of Dunstable, Astbury took them with him to Staffordshire, and the result was thoroughly satisfactory, and indeed more than realized his expectations, for powder of calcined flint, mixed with pipe clay, was found to produce a most excellent ware. Thus a new branch of the art of pottery was at once established and took deep root.

Good Breeding.

ONE of the sure tests of good breeding is a thoughtful regard to the convenience of others in a crowd. An illbred man or woman will stop in a church aisle to talk to a neighbor, at the close of the service, without stepping aside to allow those who are behind to pass on unhindered. And the same fault will be shown in blocking the passage-way of a railroad car, while gathering up luggage from the seat, on arriving at a station; or in standing in the doorway of a public hall or place of business; or in taking more than one's share in a street-car, or on the sidewalk, or at a street crossing, or in an exhibition hall, or at a ticket office. A person of true refinement and of really good breeding will have others in mind while with others. The average refinement in any crowd or gathering of people is plainly marked by the ease with which all get along together. Twenty persons of good breeding can find comfortable sitting or standing room in a car, or hall, or street, and be good-natured all the time, when ten ill-bred persons would be jostling each other ill-naturedly. And this is more than a matter of good breeding. It involves a regard for the rights as well as the comfort of others. It is selfishness which makes one willing to block a passage-way for one's own convenience, when others want to move on. It is dishonesty which leads one to take more than his or her share of time or space, while others are waiting for their turn, or are waiting their place. Whoever would be counted well-bred or refined ought to have this truth always in mind; so ought all those who would be, and do right. Children ought to be trained to a proper course in this regard. They and their parents ought to learn to keep out of other people's way, when other people are entitled to the way.

A Lump of Soft Coal.

For years no one had supposed that a lump of soft coal, dug from its mine or bed in the earth, possessed any other purpose than that of fuel. It was next found that it would afford a gas that was combustible. Chemical analyses proved it to be made of hydrogen.—In process of time, mechanical and chemical ingenuity devised a mode of manufacturing this gas and applying it to the lighting of buildings and cities on a large scale. In doing this other products of distillation were developed until, step by step, the following ingredients are extracted from it:

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A Sudden Change of Mind.

Miss Green and Mr. Neemier stood at the chancel rail in a Roman Catholic church at Delphos, Ohio, in the presence of a large wedding assembly. The marriage ceremony was smoothly performed to the point where Miss Green was asked if she would take Mr. Neemier to be her husband.

"No," I will not," she responded.—The priest was thoroughly confused, and put the question again, whereupon she declared that she had changed her mind, but would give no explanation. Of course the ceremony was not concluded.

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