

A WAYWARD WARD.

It is the business of the philosopher, as in the world known, to find law and order in even the most abnormal phenomena, to suggest, at least, an adequate explanation of every enigma. For what other purpose does he exist than to throw light on the surrounding darkness? He is a torch bearer to humanity's ignorance. If now and again, by reason of a pessimist temperament and defect of training, the rays he sheds around intensify rather than dispel the gloom, and cast shadows of Egyptian night across man's forward path, surely he construes his mission.

But the wisest head is sometimes puzzled, and the shrewdest explorer of the all-enveloping mystery is sometimes confounded. A problem presents itself which cannot be resolved by any of the familiar processes. The why of some suddenly needed fact is as inscrutable as the Sphinx of the Eastern desert. It was thus with Bernard Ralston.

Those who thirst for fame, as others thirst for gold, or coquettes for admiration, would have found much to envy in this young man's position. At an age when a student is as a rule supposed to be studying his parliamentary primer, and when a future general may still be writing under the salacious of a barrack room instructor, Bernard Ralston had been well placed into the front rank of philosophical thinkers. His book on "Instinct, Conscience and Reason" was read and criticised by the few, praised and avoided by the many. The noisy heterodox claimed him as a new and promising recruit; and so also, to the amusement of the colorist, did the stanchest maintainers of old landmarks. He was flattered, feted, and the lim of his season.

It was from this suddenly acquired distinction that his embarrassment had approached. The solicitors' letter that was the beginning of sorrows made this clear. It ran thus:

DEAR SIR:—We have to inform you that by the will of our late friend, Mr. Humphrey Power, you are appointed sole guardian of his only surviving daughter, Olive. As this may be in the nature of a surprise, we beg leave to quote the precise paragraph of the will: "And I hereby empower Mr. Bernard Ralston to act in every respect as the guardian of my child. I am sure that Olive can have no fitter or wiser protector, none better qualified to advise and to regulate her life; and should he, as I earnestly beg—accept and fulfill this charge, I give and bequeath to the said Bernard Ralston, over and above such reasonable expenses as he may have incurred on my daughter's behalf, the sum of \$5,000, to be paid by my executors on my daughter's twenty-first birthday, as a small tribute of my gratitude."

The young lady is a very considerable heiress, in her eighteenth year, and at present at a private pension in France. Further particulars will follow on your reply. We are, dear sir, Yours obediently, FANSHAW & FITCH.

The gift of the proverbial white elephant could have produced in no heart a greater consternation. What should a retired and solitary student, of serious pursuits and untroubled mind, answer to such a charge? If Cleothorpe Hall, so large, it by no means followed that he wanted more life within its bounds; and a girl in her teens, a mere child, as with the sage wisdom of five and thirty years he considered her? How could her presence by his fireside be harmonized with the quiet current of the life he elected to live?

Yet, the bait of five thousand pounds was a temptation. The glories of Cleothorpe Hall had been easily furnished through the improvidence of Bernard's father, and philosophy is not a particularly remunerative hobby to ride. Mr. Humphrey Power's legacy, if not precisely a fortune, would be an assistance in the keeping up of the restricted Cleothorpe establishment.

The matter was debated long and anxiously, and as the result Miss Olive Power arrived at the hall one sunny February morning. Slight of figure, winsome of feature, with merry, violet-tinted brown eyes, and lips continually parting in a pleasant smile over teeth of white pearl, Bernard Ralston was forced to admit that, if he was properly to protect his ward, his position might not prove a sinecure. Neither did it.

The girl's beauty attracted suitors; and as the blossoms of youth were in full bloom, and she was so open an secret in the country-side that Miss Power, as well as being lonely and a lovely young thing, was a richly dowered one. This brought the sometimes lugubrious voice of Prudence into reasonable accord with the claims of affection.

But Olive was not minded to be an easy captive for any of her wooers. With a woman's instinctive dexterity she kept them all at bay, and at twenty had escaped the necessity of as yet refusing any offer in formal and unequivocal terms. She was developing a taste for study which half-amused, half-irritated her guardian. One evening he playfully rallied her on her application to sundry big tomes in the library.

"I shall be accused of transforming a merry and bewitching young lady into a blue stocking—a disciple of my own dry as dust puritan," he said; "some one some day may have special cause to blame me, I fear."

A sudden blush came on the maiden's cheeks, and her glance fell. It was impossible that she should misinterpret Bernard's meaning. "There is Oswald Harbury to

think of," Olive's guardian was daring enough to add.

Two shining eyes were momentarily uplifted. Was the flash they gave one of indignation, of scorn, or merely of confusion at a betrayed secret? Bernard could not guess.

The nature of my employments can make no difference whatever, in any way that I can imagine, to Mr. Harbury," she answered. Then—it seemed to Bernard a strange transition—"Will you forgive me for asking a favor?" she went swiftly on; "I should like—oh, so much!—to help you in your work. Could I not copy out your notes or revise proofs sometimes?"

What philosopher could have successfully resisted the volunteered help of such an amanuensis? Not Bernard Ralston.

It was summer, three months later, that the date of this conversation. Olive's guardian was seeking his ward in her own boudoir, with a gloom upon his face and a depression of soul which defied his analysis. He had a message to convey and a proposal to informally submit which he had little doubt would be accepted. Oswald Harbury, the young owner of half Cleothorpe, had asked permission to lay himself and his fortunes at Olive's feet. He loved her, he said; he would do his best to make her happy.

"And I believe that he will. He has a heart to offer you and is a true-hearted, honorable gentleman. As your guardian, Olive, I am bound to give my sanction to the fair and promising suit. May I bid Mr. Harbury to come and plead his own case?"

He had spoken hoarsely and in a queer, far off kind of voice that he hardly recognized as his own. It was surely singular and must testify to an unsuspected weakness of character, that the prospect of separation from the ward originally received with so much doubt and dread should thus make havoc of his peace. He waited for the answer in a suspense that was positively harassing. At last the answer came.

"No, you may not," Olive said, "unless, indeed, you wish to get rid of me—to send me away. And not even then, for I cannot consent to marry a man whom I do not love."

Send Olive away! Was not every pulse in his body beating with fierce, unbidden joy at the verdict she had given? The measure of his recent terror was the measure of his present relief.

"That is a fear which my ward—my wayward ward!—never need harbor," he said, with a slow, broad smile; "she has brought too much sunshine into my lonely life for me to wish to lose her. But change is inevitable some day."

"Why?" a low voice murmured; and again came the mysterious illumination of Olive's eyes.

"Because, Olive—if for other reasons—the years of my guardianship will soon be at an end," he answered steadily, almost sternly. He must face the future resolutely, as befitted a teacher of his fellows.

And a few seconds later his quick nervous set was echoing in the passage without.

II.

An early summer vacation in Switzerland—when the ghastly Alpine flower should be at its love-lorn—had been the cherished dream of years to Bernard Ralston, and at last it was realized. A woman's hand had guided his steps thitherward. Olive Power had persuaded him to lay aside his work and make playmate of the sunny weather.

"You can finish your book on 'Vanity as a Force of Human Affairs' when you return, and the critics will all that the last chapters are the brightest," she said pleadingly. And when she added a slight involuntary expression of her own eagerness for the change, he surrendered. The trio—Miss Ralston, Bernard's sister and house-keeper, was Olive's chaperon—had now been from England a fortnight.

They had reached the Riffel and were thus enwrapped under shadow of the majestic (grim and uncouth, for variation of epithets.) Matter horn itself. Here Olive went into ecstasies. To watch the sunrise bathe the rugged, furrowed sides with waves of liquid light was an occupation of which she never tired. And then there was the Gorner Glacier to visit, the Gorner Glacier to see.

At the hotel there was peasant company, including a couple of young Americans, who swept the ordinarily reserved and cautious student forward into a participation in their own reckless adventures by the sheer force of enthusiasm. The three went off one afternoon on a quest for edelweiss. The gloom was thickening in gorge and pass and gray shadows were following the crimson sunset glow on the huge crags aloft before there was any sign of a return. The ladies grew uneasy. Stories of ancient and of awful peril were staples of the conversational life of fare in the hotel salon and inevitably exerted their influence on nervous minds. In this case the presentiment of evil was but too surely justified.

Two of the venturesome explorers returned weary and disheveled, but Bernard Ralston was missing. "We thought he was before us," explained Mark Croxford, the elder of the brothers. "We drifted apart among the boulders and icebergs of a glacier edge, and we looked for him to rejoin us at the lower end of the track. Not meeting him we supposed he had hurried away homeward."

A sudden chill had gone to many a heart in the little group of listeners. The thought of precipices and of their hidden and treacherous dangers was in every one's mind.

A search expedition was quickly organized and started.

"I hear steps behind," said the guide, halting on the first stage of the journey and prominently displaying his lamp.

"Why, it is Miss Power!" cried Mark Croxford in astonishment.

It was, indeed, Olive. With blanched cheeks and agonized eyes and dauntless resolution, she insisted on accompanying the seekers. It was at her request that Bernard Ralston had come to Switzerland. If he perished would it not in a sense be her fault? Better that her own life should have been sacrificed! To persuade the girl to return was useless—only a loss of precious minutes. With a muttered growl of disapprobation the guide was compelled to allow her to proceed.

Hours were spent in a vain pursuit. "Guide, is there any hope?" demanded a stalwart Cornishman, at last.

"I fear, none," he answered; "at the bottom of yonder chasm."

His words were cut short. A cry, half triumph, half fearful, slipped over Olive Power's bloodless lips.

"Listen! I hear a groan," she said.

A silence that might be felt prevailed.

"The wind across the glacier, miss," answered the leader, in sulky despair. "There is nothing for it but to go back."

"I will not," the girl declared, "until you tell me whose voice that is. Hark! It is no sound of wind!"

Again they listened, and again without result.

Mark Croxford gently laid his hand on Olive's arm. "Believe me you are mistaken, Miss Power," he said; "you do not suppose that any one of us would give up this search if the least chances remained? But the guide knows best."

And yet, as he uttered his melancholy remonstrance, there was a sound from over the neighboring ice-field hard to credit to even the most acute of Swiss breezes.

"There! surely you hear it now?" the girl said.

It only to make clear the girl's folly to herself, the quest was recommenced.

The quick ear of love had not blundered, after all. This time a chance gleam of the guide's lantern over a jagged precipice side revealed a dark form huddled against an inner ledge. It was Bernard Ralston, insensible from the effects of his perilous fall, and proving that he still lived only by an occasional groan.

"I beg pardon very humbly, Miss Power," Mark Croxford whispered.

"And they tell me, Olive, that I owe my life to you," the convalescent said, wheeled out on the broad mountain terrace of his resting place. "How shall I contrive to repay you, I wonder. Do you know—may, you cannot know. I had a dream this morning. After the doctor had left my room I dozed, and it seemed to me that—the dearest girl in the wide world—surely the bravest—came to my side and smoothed down the pillow—and—dare I whisper the words!—caressed my forehead. It was singular, was it not?"

Something in the poise of the averted face awakened a swift suspicion—a keen thrill of happiness. "It cannot be that—that it was not a dream?" he queried. "That my ward is willing to be still dearer to me by my wife?"

The young man was not without drama, the lovely crimsoned face was swiftly and momentarily upturned, as he had seen it twice before, and this time a look of ineffable content was mirrored thereupon.

"If you really desire so to extend your guardianship of your 'wayward ward,' mischievous accents answered.

And Bernard Ralston's sometime problem had become his dearest treasure. Love itself had taught love's lesson.

A Matrimonial Reception.

At a recent wedding reception in South Carolina a young lawyer begged leave to offer a new scheme of matrimony, which, he believed, would be beneficial. He proposed that one man of the company should be selected as president of this presidential should be duly sworn in, and he should be the sole communications that should be forwarded to him in his official department that night, and that each unmarried gentleman and lady should write his or her name on a piece of paper, and under it the name of the person they wished to marry, then hand it to the president for inspection, and if any gentleman and lady had reciprocally chosen each other, the president was to inform each of the result, and those who had not even reciprocated in their choice, kept entirely secret.

After the appointment of the president, communications were accordingly handed up to the chair, and it was found that 12 young ladies and gentlemen had made reciprocal choices, but whom they had chosen remained a secret to all but themselves and the president.

I was passing through the same place a few days ago, and was informed that 11 of the 12 matches had been solemnized, and that the young gentlemen of eight couples of the eleven had declared that their diffidence was so great that they certainly should not have addressed their respective wives if the above scheme had not been introduced.

An Historic Parallel.

Gen. Jackson had 119 electoral votes in 1828. Gov. Cleveland gets the same number in 1884. History repeats itself.

December on the Farm.

The Closing Year.—In this latitude the evenings of December are long enough to give the farmer ample time to review the labors of the past season and to carefully weigh each operation on the farm, and decide which has been a success and which a failure, and the cause of each. In our efforts for continuous progress our thoughts should be principally directed to the future, but it is well, at the close of the year, to carefully review the past, to determine our acts, but that we may learn those lessons that will assist us to a life of usefulness as well as of pecuniary success.

Before the year closes all old accounts should be settled up so that when the new year commences there will be no doubt as to which side the balance stands. There are many reasons why it is not desirable to have accounts of long standing; frequent settlements prevent misunderstandings, everything being fresh in the mind of the parties, any errors of accounts may be easily adjusted to the satisfaction of both parties; but when accounts are permitted to run several years, even if the account be correct, there is often a feeling that it is not, and as the circumstances relating to the charge may be forgotten, there is frequently a dissatisfaction which cannot be removed, and thus a coolness springs up between parties if it does not entirely sever their friendship. There is nothing like short accounts to keep up good friendship with parties who trade with each other except paying cash when the goods are delivered, which is a practice that should always be adopted whenever it is possible to do so.

Care of Stock.—December is a long and usually a cold month, and as the farm stock must rely almost entirely on the farmer for food and shelter, the good and successful farmer will make it his business to provide good comfortable quarters for all of his stock, and also feed them at regular intervals with good healthy food. While the sheep should be provided with quarters that will keep them perfectly dry, they should also be provided with plenty of fresh air and sunshine. Sheep had better be out in the rain than to be confined in a small tight building with no chance for ventilation. A long shed open to the south makes a good shelter for both sheep and cattle during cold and wet days.

In feeding farm stock it is very important to be regular, but in time of feeding and in the quantity of food given. A stock of cattle will come out in the spring in good condition with much less food, if regularly is observed in feeding, than if fed in an irregular manner. Good water is very important, and if it can be given twenty or thirty degrees warmer than the freezing point, it is better; if pumped from well it will usually be warm enough for ordinary use, but if the cattle have to drink from a pond where the ice has to be broken, it is too cold for cattle to drink all they want without chilling them, and requiring more food to keep them in good condition than if they had warmer water to drink.

The Ice House.—Those who have an ice house should see that it is in good order to receive the ice when it is thick enough to cut, for ice is a crop that should be secured with an eye to the future.

It is true, some winters a delay of a month would only be to get better ice, but we never know when such winters are coming, therefore it is always best to have the house and the cutting tools ready, so that work can be commenced at a moment's notice.

The Wood Pile.—Wood that has been cut in low wet swamps, should be hauled home as soon as the ground is frozen hard enough to hold up the team. If the wood can be got home early in the winter, it gives the farmer a chance to saw and split it into fire wood during his leisure hours. It is better to have the wood for home use prepared before the first of March, it will dry much better, and the farmer usually has more time before, than after March comes in.

Stading the Meadows.—December is frequently a good time to cover the meadows with a dressing of sand. Meadows that are covered with a poor quality of grass should be covered with sand two or three inches deep, and early next spring sow with Red Top and Timothy grass seed, but meadows that already have good varieties of grass on them, need not be covered more than half an inch in depth with sand, and if some grass seed be sown in early in the spring it will improve the crop of grass very much. To cover an acre of land three inches deep with sand is some labor, but the work can be done when the farmer has but little to do, and when done, it will greatly add to the value of his farm, and secure to him an increased amount of good hay.

If the farmers would pay a little more attention to their low land, which is now of but little use to them, the income of their farms would be very much increased, and that two with the expenditure of a very small amount of labor. We have often heard it remarked by intelligent farmers that a dressing of sand, followed the next year by a dressing of manure, was better than a dressing of manure every year. No doubt this is true of land run down deep. Grass to grow well must have some silica to strengthen the stalk, and the sand furnishes all that the plants need. Those

who bed their cattle with dry sand have a manure that is well adapted to grass land that is underlaid with peat.

Death of a Famous Baptist Evangelist.

Rev. Jobez Swan, a famous Baptist evangelist, died at New London, N. Y., last week. His age was 85. He was better known to the people of southern New England and New York State as Elder Swan, a title the Baptists were wont to confer upon their preachers years ago. Elder Swan was a native of Stonington. When the British fleet bombarded that place in 1814 he served as powder monkey to the cannoniers that defended the town. At 22 he was a licensed preacher, but, thinking himself insufficiently educated for his work, he determined to take a theological course at Madison University, then in its infancy. To reach the college he rode 250 miles on horseback. He had at that time \$100 saved from hard work, and a young wife, earnest and active as himself. They leased a cabin for \$9 a year and began housekeeping. Every Sunday while at college the young student rode twenty miles to preach before a congregation that paid him fifty cents a sermon. On other days he sold 37½ cents a day by work at feeling, freighting and cutting timber. In 1827 he was graduated.

In such a school of heroic self-denial he was fitted for the work to which, during the next fifty years, he applied himself with almost unexampled devotion. He was then settled over the Baptist church in Stonington, at a salary of \$250 a year, and there began an evangelical career more remarkable and successful, counting its known results, than that of almost any other American preacher. He kept Lorenzo Dow, or the equally famous Elder Knapp, with whom he was contemporaneous. Fifteen thousand persons have been converted under his preaching. In one of his earliest pastorates, covering a period of three years, he baptized 1,800 persons.

He was more than six feet in height, well proportioned, even in later years his tall form was but little bent. His voice was resonant and ringing, and his presence was impressive. He belonged to a class of preachers who believed in a personal God, a personal devil, and a raging hell. His sermons were extemporaneous, and he always referred to hell as a roaring furnace of fire and brimstone. He gave no thought as to what he should say.

It was as an exhorter that Elder Swan was at his best. The scenes at revivals instigated by him were almost indescribable. The great shouting, weeping throng, the rapid fire of his eloquence, his resonant pleadings with those "out of kingdom" to come into the fold, the glad hosannas of those who felt they were saved, the wails of those who believed they were lost, left an abiding impression. Many and many a time at these revivals has the Elder prayed two hours without a pause. He was ready to pray at all times—in the street, on the homestead, in the temple and in the calm. Sometimes he preached in his shirt sleeves, and in other cases he unbuckled the conventional trappings of the pulpit. But it was more in speech than in manner that his eccentricities appeared.

With him baptism at the font meant nothing, the baptismal rite was ineffectual, in his belief, unless the one to whom it was administered received it standing in the flowing waters, just as he believed the Lord and the disciples did ages ago. It mattered little to the elder what the season was, so long as it was baptism of him. He should have his hands upon any one who would unite himself to the Church. Often in the dead of winter, when cakes of ice were floating in the Thames river, and the country round about was white with snow, he walked waist deep into the frigid stream, and standing erect, severe and grand in the unfriendly waters, with impressive manner and a dignity fitting the sacred hour, conferred upon the convert the right to be a member of the Church, and the baptismal rite in what he believed was the one true Church. Thousands used to gather at the water side on such occasions and their tears and their silence bore witness to the solemnity of the scene.

The Elder was an original abolitionist, and all his life fought against him.

Tired Eyes.

People speak about their eyes being fatigued, meaning that the retina, after seeing, porting of the brain is fatigued, but such is not the case, as the retina hardly ever gets tired. The fatigue is in the inner and outer muscles attached to the eyeball and the muscle of accommodation, which surrounds the lens of the eye. When a near object is to be looked at this muscle relaxes and allows the lens to thicken, increasing its refractive power. The inner and outer muscles to which we refer are not in covering the eye, but in the object to be looked at. The inner one being especially used when a near object is to be looked at. It is in the three muscles mentioned that the fatigue is felt and relief is secured temporarily by closing the eyes or gazing at far distant objects. The usual indication of strain is a redness of the rim of the eyelid, betokening a congested state of the inner surface, accompanied with some pain. Rest is not the proper remedy for a fatigued eye, but the use of glasses of sufficient power to render unnecessary so much effort to accommodate the eye to vision.

Germany has forbidden the sale of patent medicines. The average German wants to live a little while.

The Origin of Silk.

(Dyer and Gilder Printer.)

If we put any trust in tradition, says an English journal, there is a legend that Tehin, the eldest son of Japhet, father of the Asiatic races, taught his children the art of preparing silk, as well as the arts of painting and sculpture. Be this as it may, it is certain that about 3,000 years before the Christian era a Chinese book, the "Ghon King," described silken cords which were stretched upon a musical instrument invented by the emperor Fo Hi. One of his successors, Chin Nong, reputed inventor of the plow, explained to his contemporaries what beautiful stuffs could be obtained by the cultivation of the mulberry tree, and about the year B. C. 2600 an empress, to whom a grateful posterity assigned a place in a celestial constellation, perfected the art of unraveling the cocoon and weaving. From that time silk culture had its principal seat near the northern portion of the Yellow River, in the province of Chan-Tong. There was introduced a silk for the royal household. Yellow was the chosen color for the emperor, empress and prince imperial, violet for the other wives of the emperor, blue for distinguished officers, red for those less conspicuous and black for every one else. In the book of rites, "Li Ki," the ceremonies performed at the harvest are carefully described. Even the empress did not disdain to gather the leaves of the mulberry with her own dainty fingers, and waded over the busy toilers of the cocoon. For a long time this invaluable industry remained the exclusive property of the Chinese empire, but about the third century, before the Christian era, a military expedition from China bore the results of its civilization to the startled occidentals. Silk became known in Persia and India, and was at last brought to Europe. The soldiers of Cæsar, B. C. 56, saw silk standards among the Parthians, and a few years later an immense caravan of silk protected the spectators in the Roman arena from the rays of the sun. From this time the Romans were always provided the beautiful textures which were the admiration of their legends. Yet silk was still the privileged possession of the rich, and in the time of Aurelian, who flourished in the third century, was valued at forty times its present value. The enormous price, when considered with the fact that there was at the time no commerce between Rome and the Orient, goes far toward explaining the great hoarding of treasure and jewelry which has since that time gone on in India. There is a dispute between tradition and history as to the period when the genuine cocoon was brought from China to Europe. Hew was the vigilance of the Celestials thwarted, since exportation of the silk worm from the Flowery Kingdom was forbidden under the severest penalties? One account states that in A. D. 552, monks sent to Kothian by Justinian, succeeded in bearing away their booty concealed in stalks of bamboo. The legend says that once upon a time, when Kothian did not yet possess the precious honey, the king of one of the provinces sought and obtained a daughter of the Chinese emperor in marriage. Before quitting her native land she hid the seeds of the mulberry and silk worms' eggs in her hair, where it would escape the vigilance of the custom officers on the frontier. When she reached her new home she planted seeds of the mulberry in order that suitable nourishment might be provided in the leaf for the worms.

A Happily Averted Calamity.

"Well, dear, you'll be glad to know that frauds have been discovered."

"Where?"

"Oh, everywhere—all over."

"I don't believe a word of it."

"It's a fact, my dear. Mr. Everts—"

"Don't mention Everts to me. It's a mean, base invention of the enemy. I tell you, John, Cleveland's elected, fairly elected, and I won't hear one word against it."

"But, my love, won't you listen to reason? A fair count—"

"Don't talk to me about a fair count. The count has been fair enough. What's the matter with the count? Who counted on?"

"The count has been wrong."

"How is it wrong?"

"Well, there's been swindling somewhere. Butler votes have been given to Cleveland."

"I won't have it, Mr. Smith. It's a trick. I'm a Democrat and I'm going to see Gov. Cleveland inaugurated if I die for it."

"If I were you, madam, I would listen to reason."

"Who wants reason? I tell you, John, it's no use, the Republicans have been fattening on the spoils for the past 24 years, and the poor Democrats have got to get a chance. Don't talk to me."

"But suppose Mr. Blaine is elected?"

"I don't care whether he's elected or not. I know he's not elected."

"But how do you know?"

"Because Cleveland's elected."

"You're mistaken, madam, and you'll find it out."

"Sir, do you observe that broom stick reclining gracefully in your corner? If that fine man, Grover, is tricked out of this election I'm going to smash all the crockery in the Republican party, and don't you forget it."

On to Taylorsville.

(Charlotte Democrat.)

There is good prospect of completing the projected railroad from Statesville to Taylorsville. It will be a continuation of the road from Charlotte to Statesville, known as the Atlantic, Tennessee & Ohio Railroad.

Tobacco in North Carolina.

(American Farmer.)

Tobacco is grown in eighty-seven of the ninety-six counties of North Carolina, but it is a staple in perhaps not more than a dozen of these. Rockingham, Person, Caswell and Granville counties constitute the flower of the tobacco belt, each raising in 1879 about 4,500,000 pounds, and this year the crop in each of one is these is estimated at 5,000,000 to 5,250,000. The whole acreage of the State in 1882 was 64,482, and it is estimated that at least 70,000 acres are in cultivation this year. The whole tobacco crop in 1882 amounted to 32,276,792 pounds. All the leading authorities now agree that the crop of 1884 will approximate 65,000,000 pounds. But the best feature in the raising of the tobacco there is that North Carolina leads the tobacco States in the average prices obtained for the leaf. As shown by the census the average price paid for North Carolina tobacco is \$14.10 per hundred pounds. Deducting \$9.33, the actual cost of production there, a net profit of \$4.77 is left for the producer. The White Sulphur Springs, Ohio yields an average profit of only \$4.30, while Pennsylvania gives \$4.13, Connecticut \$3.89, Wisconsin \$3.53, New York \$3.12, and so on down the list. The annual profit to the North Carolina farmer of more than fifty one per cent. would indicate that the growing of tobacco is the most profitable agricultural work done on a large scale in America.

Training of the Young.

A remark was made in one of the papers read before the recent Woman's Congress in Baltimore suggests an interesting argument in favor of the kindergarten. It is well known that, in its development, each new born being passes through very much the same stages that his ancestors have been through. Even after birth the growth of the child's intelligence simulates the progress of the human race from the savage condition to that of civilization. It has been shown by Preyer, and others who have studied infant development, that a faculty which has been acquired by the parents at the first stage is late in making its appearance in the child. Now, reading and writing are arts of comparatively recent achievement. Savage man could reap and sow, and weave, and build houses, long before he could communicate his thoughts to a person at a distance by means of written speech. There is, then, reason to believe that a child's general intelligence would be best trained by making him skillful in many kinds of manual labor before beginning to torture him with letters, and the moral to be derived is, that primary instruction should be instruction in manual dexterity, and that reading and writing could be learned with pleasure and with ease by a child who had been fitted for taking them up by the right kind of preparation. The argument is a novel one, and it certainly has some plausible.

The Rooster as a Democratic Emblem.

(Cincinnati Enquirer.)

"Why, when, and where was the rooster adopted as the emblem of Democracy?"

The question has been asked a thousand times in the last week. It has been suggested, no doubt, by the great number of the bird since the 14th day of November.

In 1840, after the Harrison campaign, there was great doubt as to how Indiana had cast her vote. The situation was similar to that in New York to-day in every respect. An editor named Chapman conducted the Democratic news paper at Indianapolis, and, as is often the case in boasting over a victory, his editorial rejoicing over the result was termed "crowing." In a day or two, when some of the back counties were heard from, it seemed his crowing had been pre-nature, and the Whig organ came out giving late returns showing Democratic defeat, and in the head line was the expression,

"Crows, Chapman, crows."

This was intended as a taunt, and must have been felt, for a few more counties yet to hear from again turned the tables, and showed that the Democrats had won. It was then that the rival editor hoisted at the head of his column a magnificent rooster, and printed under it the words "We Crow."

It made a palpable hit. The passion for roosters spread, and from that day to this the bird immortalized by the Hoosier has been the emblem of Democratic success.

Too Much Slang.

(Baldwin Times.)

In these days of social, moral, and educational reforms, there is one thing that should engage the attention of parents and teachers, and that is that the language of the growing ones in about the home circle. There is too much slang used, the result of too little attention as to the use of good and bad language. Grammarians seem to have been made for ornament, not use. The abbreviations used by the youth of to-day are abominations that should be wiped out. There is great need for such a reform in the parlor, the store—in fact, in every place where the young most do congregate.

How to Keep Meat.

Meat is much better for family use, when at least one week old, in cold weather. The English method of keeping meat for some time, has great merit. Experts say, hang up a quarter of meat with the cut end up, being the reverse of the usual way, and the juice will remain in the meat, and not run to the cut, and dry up by evaporation. It is worth a trial, and when made it will be continued.

Light on a Great Tragedy

Subscription—One year \$1.50; six months 75 cents; three months 50 cents. Advance payment required. Paper dropped at the expiration of subscription in all cases.

ADVERTISING RATES—One inch insertion \$1.00; for each subsequent insertion 50 cents. For circulars, must contract for special rates in order to get the benefit of such rates. Address JOHN R. HUSSEY, Editor and Proprietor.

GREENSBORO, N. C., DECEMBER 11th, 1887.

OFFICIAL VOTE FOR PRESIDENT.

The entire vote cast for the electoral tickets of the several parties is shown in the following table:

STATES.	Cleves.	Blaine.	But.	St. John.
Alabama	1,000	1,000	250	650
Arkansas	1,000	1,000	250	650
California	1,000	1,000	250	650
Colorado	1,000	1,000	250	650
Connecticut	1,000	1,000	250	650
Delaware	1,000	1,000	250	650
District of Columbia	1,000	1,000	250	650
Florida	1,000	1,000	250	650
Georgia	1,000	1,000	250	650
Idaho	1,000	1,000	250	650
Illinois	1,000	1,000	250	650
Indiana	1,000	1,000	250	650
Iowa	1,000	1,000	250	650
Kansas	1,000	1,000	250	650
Kentucky	1,000	1,000	250	650
Louisiana	1,000	1,000	250	650
Maine	1,000	1,000	250	650
Marshall Islands	1,000	1,000	250	650
Massachusetts	1,000	1,000	250	650
Michigan	1,000	1,000	250	650
Minnesota	1,000	1,000	250	650
Mississippi	1,000	1,000	250	650
Missouri	1,000	1,000	250	650
Montana	1,000	1,000	250	650
Nebraska	1,000	1,000	250	650
Nevada	1,000	1,000	250	650
New Hampshire	1,000	1,000	250	650
New Jersey	1,000	1,000	250	650
New Mexico	1,000	1,000	250	650
New York	1,000	1,000	250	650
North Carolina	1,000	1,000	250	650
North Dakota	1,000	1,000	250	650
Ohio	1,000	1,000	250	650
Oklahoma	1,000	1,000	250	650
Oregon	1,000	1,000	250	650
Pennsylvania	1,000	1,000	250	650
Rhode Island	1,000	1,000	250	650
South Carolina	1,000	1,000	250	650
Tennessee	1,000	1,000	250	650
Texas	1,000	1,000	250	650
Vermont	1,000	1,000	250	650
Virginia	1,000	1,000	250	650
Washington	1,000	1,000	250	650
West Virginia	1,000	1,000	250	650
Wisconsin	1,000	1,000	250	650
Wyoming	1,000	1,000	250	650

Total—1,000,000; 1,000,000; 250,000; 650,000.

In the event the Union ticket contained the names of Cleveland and Hancock, the result would be different. In the event the Union ticket contained the names of Cleveland and Hancock, the result would be different. In the event the Union ticket contained the names of Cleveland and Hancock, the result would be different.

Cleveland's plurality is 61,659, in an aggregate vote of 10,000,387.

The largest ever polled. The increase over the vote 1880, however, is only \$28,417, or about nine per cent., whereas the ratio of increase in 1880 over 1876 was more than nine and one-half per cent.

The total vote in 1880 was 9,204,428, there being 307,206 votes for Weaver, the Greenback candidate; 10,305 for Dow, Protectionist, and 707 scattering. It will be seen that Butler has polled less than half the votes given for Weaver four years ago, and while the Protectionist vote is increased by 110,747, the whole of the "side show" vote is less than it was in 1880. It amounts to no more than 2.83 per cent. of the aggregate, against 3.5 per cent. four years ago.

It has frequently happened—as in the case of Taylor, Buchanan, Lincoln and Garfield—that the candidate receiving a majority of the electoral votes has fallen short of a majority of the popular vote, but it has never happened, except in the case of Hayes, that a candidate has become President without at least a popular plurality. Garfield had a plurality of about 7,000, receiving 48.26 per cent. of the entire vote, while Hancock received 48.25 per cent. Cleveland has 467,311 votes more than Hancock, or 48.91 per cent. of the entire vote while Blaine gains only 395,634 over Garfield, giving him 48.26 per cent. of the whole. Blaine, it will be perceived, has exactly the same per cent. of the popular vote that Garfield had. The change has been made by a greater ratio of Democratic gain and the concentration of a portion of the scattering vote upon the Democratic candidates.

—During Cleveland's Presidential term, four members of the Supreme Court will have passed the statutory or retiring age of 70 years. Chief Justice Waite, born November 29th, 1815; Mr. Justice Miller, born April 5th, 1816; Mr. Justice Field, born November 10th, 1816; Mr. Justice Bradley, born November 17th, 1815.

—The capstone of the Washington monument was placed in position last Saturday with appropriate ceremonies. The monument was commenced years ago, under Democratic auspices, and it is fitting that its completion marks the restoration of the Democracy to power.

—The electoral colleges of all the States met last Wednesday and cast 219 votes for Cleveland and Hendricks and 182 for Blaine and Logan. These are the figures the PATRIOT published the morning after the election.

—Wonders never cease. St. John polled 30,000 votes in the whiskey guzzling State of Kentucky.

1. No Girl Taking.

2. No Napping.

3. No Star Bontism or Whiskey Ringism.

4. No Bickeringism.

5. No Junketing at Public Expense.

6. No Kitchen Cabinet.

7. No Hypocrisy in the White House.

8. No Humbug.

Not to Attend the Opening.

The President has notified the managers of the New Orleans Exposition that it will be impossible for him to leave Washington to attend the opening of the exposition on the 16th instant, but that he hopes to be able to visit the exposition during the month of January.

The Western District Attorneyship.

(Special Correspondence, Patriot.)

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8th.—I met

at Mr. Winston to-day, in company with Geo. Sharpe and Chas. W. Ward, two of President Arthur's New York friends. They are both here as the President's guests. The circumstance looked suspicious, and a subsequent conversation with Winston showed that it was not an accidental meeting.

"Oh, yes," said Winston in reply to a question about the status of the District Attorneyship, "my name will go into the Senate tomorrow. The thing is settled, and will be settled these many days. I will be the next District Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina. How long it will last, the Lord only knows. Maybe 'til March and maybe longer. There are a number of Democratic applicants and it may take Mr. Cleveland until next December to decide between them."

When Winston's name will be sent to the Senate tomorrow, it does not appear to be entirely confident about the final result.

The Cabinet Question Settled.

(Correspondence, Patriot.)

WASHINGTON, Dec. 9th.—I have

just returned from Albany, whither I went several days ago, to accept of an invitation to consult with President Cleveland about his Cabinet. I found him pensive and care worn. He looked thoughtful and moody, and seemed nervous and fidgety. His face brightened when, after some necessary conversation, I frankly told him that I could relieve him of all trouble about his Cabinet. Evidently he was closely

proceeded. Once the timbers were put together and joined, in voluntarily I was asked to go to New York to see Mr. Cleveland and to see Mr. Butler. The Butler vote given in the table for the straight ticket, in Vermont the Butler vote was based on the Republican and cannot be distinguished. In West Virginia there is 2 Butler votes on the Republican ticket, who are about 900 ahead. The vote given in the table for the straight ticket.

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

Such parts of the President's

message as are of general interest are herewith given.

THE TREASURY.

It appears that annually for the past six years there have been coincided, in compliance with the act of February 28th, 1878, more than twenty-seven million silver dollars. The number outstanding is reported to the Secretary to be nearly one hundred and eighty-five millions, whereof but little more than forty millions, or less than twenty-two per cent, are in actual circulation. The mere existence of this fact seems to me to furnish of itself a cogent argument for the repeal of the statute which has made such fact possible. But there are other and graver considerations that tend in the same direction. The Secretary avows his conviction that unless this coinage and the issuance of silver certificates be suspended, silver is likely to find no other way to become a sole standard. The commercial disturbance and the impairment of national credit that would be thus occasioned can scarcely be overestimated. I hope that the Secretary's suggestions concerning the withdrawal from circulation of the one dollar and two dollar notes will receive your approval. It is likely that a considerable portion of the silver now encumbering the vaults of the Treasury might thus find its way into the currency.

The President's message provision for the surrender of the treaty ratifications and approves the Secretary's other recommendations on coinage. He also recommends the passage of the Senate bill allowing the issue to national banks of notes to the full face value of the deposited bonds.

INTERNAL TAXATION.

In my annual message of 1882 I recommended the abolition of all excise taxes except those relating to distilled spirits. This recommendation is now renewed. In case these taxes shall be abolished the revenues that will still remain to the government will, in my opinion, not only suffice to meet its ordinary expenditures but will afford a surplus large enough to permit such tariff reduction as may seem to be advisable when the results of recent revenue laws and commercial treaties shall have shown in what quarters those reductions can be most judiciously effected.

FOREIGN TRADE.

One of the gravest of the problems which appeals to the wisdom of Congress for solution is that of certainment of the most effective means for increasing our foreign trade and thus relieving the depression under which our industries are now languishing. The Secretary of the Treasury advises that the duty of investigating the subject be entrusted in the first instance to a competent commission. When fully recognizing the considerations that may be urged against this course, I am nevertheless of the opinion that, upon the whole, no other would be likely to effect speedier or better results. That portion of the Secretary's report which concerns the condition of our shipping interests cannot fail to command your attention. He emphatically recommends that as an incentive to the investment of American capital in American steamships the government shall, by liberal payments for mail transportation or otherwise, lend its active assistance to individual enterprise that declares his belief that foreign carrying trade must remain in the hands of foreigners. One phase of this subject is now especially prominent, in view of the repeal by the act of June 26th, 1884, of all statutory provisions arbitrarily compelling American vessels to carry the mails to and from the United States. As it is necessary to make provision to compensate the owners of such vessels for performing that service a ter April, 1885, it is hoped that the whole subject will receive due consideration that will lead to the enactment of such measures for the revival of our merchant marine as the wisdom of Congress may devise.

FOREIGN COMMERCE.

The language of the message upon the extension of our foreign trade is as follows:

In the course of this communication reference has more than once been made to the policy of this government as regards the extension of our foreign trade. It seems proper to declare the general principles that should, in my opinion, underlie our national efforts in this direction. The main conditions of the problem may be thus stated: We are a people apt in mechanical pursuits and fertile in invention; we cover a vast extent of territory, rich in agricultural products and in nearly all the raw materials for successful manufacture. We have a system of productive establishments more than sufficient to supply our own demands. The wages of labor are nowhere else so great. The sale of living of our artisan classes is such as tends to secure their personal comfort and the development of their higher moral and intellectual qualities that go to the making of good citizens. Our system of tax and tariff legislation is yielding a revenue which is in excess of the present needs of the government. These are elements from which it is sought to devise a scheme by which, without unfavorably changing the condition of the workingman, our merchant marine should be raised from its enfeebled condition and new markets provided for the manifold fruits of our industrial enterprises. The problem is complex and can be solved by no single measure of innovation or reform. The countries of the American continent and the adjacent islands are for the United States the natural markets of supply and demand. It is from that we must do to produce in sufficient quantity, and it is to them that the surplus productions of our fields, our mills and our workshops should

flow under conditions that will equalize or favor them in comparison with foreign competition.

COMMERCIAL REFORM.

Four paths of policy seem to point to this end.

First, a series of reciprocal commercial treaties with the countries of America shall foster between us and them an unimpeded movement of trade. The conditions of these treaties should be the free admission of such merchandise as this country does not produce in return for the admission free or under a favored scheme of duties of our own products, the benefits of such exchange to apply only to goods carried under the flag of the parties to the contract, the removal, on both sides, from the vessels so privileged of all tonnage dues and national imposts, so that those vessels may ply unhindered between our ports and those of the other contracting parties, though without infringing on the reserved home coasting trade; the removal or reducing of burdens on the exported products of those countries coming within the benefits of the treaties, and the avoidance of the technical restrictions and penalties by which our intercourse with these countries is at present hampered.

Secondly, the establishment of the consular service of the United States on a liberal footing, thus permitting the relinquishment of our consular fees, not only as respects vessels under the national flag, but also as respects vessels of the treaty nations carrying goods entitled to the benefits of the treaties.

Thirdly, the enactment of measures to favor the construction and maintenance of a steam carrying marine under the flag of the United States.

Fourthly, the establishment of an uniform currency basis for the countries of America, so that the coined products of our mines may circulate on equal terms throughout the whole system of commonwealths. This would require a monetary union of America, whereby the output of the bullion-producing countries and the circulation of those which yield neither gold nor silver could be adjusted in conformity with the population, wealth and commercial needs of each. As many of the countries furnish no bullion to the common use of our own mints might thus be utilized and a step taken toward the general recoinfection of silver.

PROTECTION AND FREE TRADE.

To the accomplishment of these ends, so far as they can be attained by separate treaties, the negotiations already conducted and now in progress have been directed, and the favor which this enlarged policy has thus far received warrants the belief that its operations will ere long embrace all, or nearly all, the countries of this hemisphere. It is by no means desirable, however, that the policy under consideration should be applied to these countries alone. The healthful enlargement of our trade with Europe, Asia and Africa should be sought by reducing tariff burdens on such of their wares as neither we nor the other American States are fitted to produce, and thus enabling ourselves to obtain in return a better market for our supplies of food, of raw materials and of the manufactures in which we excel. It seems to me that many of the embarrassed elements in the great national conflict between protection and free trade may thus be turned to good account—that the revenue may be reduced so as no longer to overtax the people, and that protective duties may be retained without becoming burdensome, and that our shipping interests may be judiciously encouraged, the currency fixed on a firm basis and, above all, such a unity of interest established among the States of the American system as will be of great and ever increasing advantage to them all. All treaties in the line of this policy which have been negotiated or are in process of negotiation contain a provision deemed to be requisite under the clause of the Constitution limiting the authority of Representatives to originate bills for raising revenue.

THE CIVIL SERVICE.

On the 29th of February last I transmitted to the Congress the first annual report of the Civil Service Commission, together with the several executive department communications from the heads of the government, respecting the practical workings of the law under which the commission had been acting. The good results therein foreshadowed have been more than realized. The system has fully answered the expectations of its friends in securing competent and faithful public servants and in promoting the economy of the government. The appointing officers of the government have been relieved of the pressure of personal favoritism and from the labor of expounding the claims and pretensions of rival candidates for public employment. The law has had the unqualified support of the President and of the heads of the several departments and the members of the commission have performed their duties with zeal and fidelity. Their report will be shortly be submitted and will be accompanied by such recommendations for enlarging the scope of the existing statute as shall commend themselves to the Executive and the commissioners charged with its administration.

FATALITY SHOT AT A CANDY STORE.

On the night of Dec. 2th near Danville, Va., John Cunningham, colored, was shot by Guy Donohue while trying to prevent the latter's entrance and that of another colored man named Thack Montgomery to a candy store which the two last named were not invited. Cunningham died the next morning. Donohue and Montgomery escaped and have not since been heard of.

—The court house and jail at Williamson, Martin county, were destroyed by fire last week. The court papers and dockets were all burned. Two prisoners were saved from jail. The fire is supposed to have been incendiary origin.

North Carolina Electoral College.

(Raleigh Observer—Dec. 4th.)

Yesterday a distinguished audience assembled in the Senate chamber. Not less than 200 were present, among them being some of the most prominent men in the State. The scene was a most impressive one. The occasion which gathered so fine an assemblage was the meeting of the electoral college of the State, and the casting of the votes for President and Vice President of the United States.

Quite a party of ladies graced the occasion with their presence and from the galleries smiled approval of the proceedings. A few minutes past the stroke of 12, Hon. W. N. Smith, chief justice of the State, stepped to the clerk's desk and leaning against the railing held a sheet of paper in his hand. Hon. J. B. Batchelor called over the names of the electors, in groups. The first four were Messrs. John N. Standley, W. H. Kitchin, W. H. Lucas and Donnell Gilliam. These gentlemen stepped to the desk, facing the chief justice, and standing there took the following oath: "We do, each for himself, solemnly swear that we will support and maintain the constitution and laws of the United States and the constitution and laws of North Carolina not in consistent therewith, and that we will faithfully discharge the duties of electors of President and Vice President of the United States for the State of North Carolina. So help me God." After taking this oath each elector kissed the Bible and signed his name to a certificate of the fact. The second party so sworn was composed of Messrs. C. W. McClammy, R. B. Glenn, A. W. Lowland and B. H. Bunn; the third party of Messrs. Reuben M. Brayer, M. H. Justice and R. C. Puyser.

Col. Staples on taking the chair spoke at some length, and with rare eloquence.

Gentlemen of the Electoral College:

The star of the republic is still over the executive mansion at Albany. A sweet calm rests upon the bosom of this storm swept continent. The great billows of political dissension have subsided, and on the retiring clouds, arching the horizon, is the bow of promise and of peace. Well may the high priests of liberty and shepherds of the faithful exclaim, "Peace on earth, good will to men," and "All hail! the night of our captivity is ended, and day cometh with the morning." Our hands have been silent as they hang upon the willow, but now let their strings be struck with the chords of national music. Let the wild, sweet melody of Dixie commingled with the martial strains of Hail Columbia, make the anthem of our rejoicing, and let thanksgiving and praise go up from the hearts of the people to the Giver of all good, for this great deliverance from the hands of our oppressors. The past is behind us, with all its memories. The future is before us, with all its hopes. Let both inspire us to patriotic endeavors and high achievements. The recent election is at once a revelation and a revolution. A revelation to those who were so strongly entrenched in power that they thought money was greater than patriotism; that party was above country, and that it was impossible for the people to drive them from their paradise of spoils. A revolution—in that hereafter "public office will be regarded as a public trust," and the "book will be opened for examination." Thirteen great States of the Union that have been excluded from a full participation in the affairs of the government for nearly twenty years, will again be permitted to have a voice in the councils of the nation and the flag which floated from the mast of Perry's ships on Lake Erie, as well as in the smoke of Old Hickory's guns at New Orleans, shall be now, as it was then, the flag of one people, and our government and our union shall endure forever.

Let us then turn our faces to the morning. Let us make confessions of our unbelief, out of our battle-bred and our battle-blood. Let us, with its sword and shield, its sufferings and desolations, be remembered only for the good it teaches. Upon the graves of all the slain from Gettysburg to Shiloh let us write—"Our Brother." For are they not all Americans? Were not they all valiant in life? And are not they all in death immortal?

We rejoice that we come to the discharge of so patriotic a duty, a duty which has for its object the restoration and preservation of our institutions, and the promotion of the peace and happiness of our whole country. We have distinct recollection upon us of the duty in history—the privilege of voting for a gentleman for the Presidency whose civic triumphs exceed in brilliancy the military achievements of the great Napoleon; whose high devotion to public trusts; whose great integrity of character, and singleness of purpose in the discharge of every duty, make him the peer of his illustrious predecessor, the great Washington.

Welcome, then, this hour of high noon, when the people may claim as their own Cleveland and Hendricks. For they come not to the sword to destroy, but with the song of the harvest upon their lips, bowing in humble submission to the constitution of their country and its laws, realizing that all sovereignty is of the people.

At the conclusion of his speech Col. Staples appointed Messrs. Alfred Rowland and Donnell Gilliam secretaries. The president then declared the college duly organized for business, and announced that the next matter to be transacted was the nomination for a candidate for the President of the United States.

W. H. Kitchin in a telling speech nominated Grover Cleveland for President. He was unanimously elected.

Thomas A. Hendricks was nominated for Vice President by B. H. Bunn, and was unanimously elected.

Mr. Bunn was elected messenger.

to take the official returns to Washington.

The certificates were signed by the eleven electors. The president announced that a pen had been sent him by Lieut. Gov. James L. Robinson, being the same pen with which the certificates of the election of Tilden and Hendricks were signed. He sent it now so that the certificates of the election of Cleveland and Hendricks might be signed therewith.

This terminated the interesting and remarkably impressive ceremony, which will not be forgotten by those who were so fortunate as to see it.

[And what a farce!]

Conference of the Church.

This body completed the business of its Annual Session at Hickory Grove, Chatham county, Dec. 2nd. The following are its appointments for the year:

President—R. H. Willis.

Albany—To be supplied.

Roanoke—F. M. Totten.

Tar River—W. L. Harris.

Halifax—S. W. Coo.

Littleton—E. A. Wilson.

Granville—W. C. Kennett.

N. Granville—D. A. Fishel.

Henderson Station—to be supplied.

West Tar River—S. P. Harris.

LaGrange Mission—W. E. Swain.

Orange—R. R. Michaux.

Alamance—G. W. Bowman.

Randolph—W. W. Amick.

Cedar Falls—D. A. Higbill.

Asheboro—Geo. E. Hunt.

Greensboro—T. F. McCallench.

Gulford—J. R. Ball.

Halifax—J. R. Ball.

LEAP-YEAR.

(Harper's Bazar.)

SCENE—a brightly lighted room. Dramatic person—the modern young man two young girls. He, gentlemanly and good looking, perhaps beyond the average, leaning in a not ungraceful attitude against the mantel, with his back to a large mirror. They, on a low divan at the other side of the room, alternately listening and replying to his remarks, or whispering to each other at some apparently irrelevant but amusing subject.

"Yes," he said, a little defiantly, and with a slightly heightened color, since his first remark had been received with a peal of laughter—"yes, I would like to know what it feels like to be refused. I'd ask some girl just for the fun of hearing her say no, if I dared."

"Try us! try us!" O most irresistible Adonis! cried the elder of the two, with a mocking smile, springing to her feet and making him a low courtesy. The girl's dark hair loosened and fell with the sudden motion, the brown eyes were brimming with mischief and merriment, and the flushed cheek looked very inviting.

"I have a great mind to kiss you, since you've said, by way of answer, 'One's cousin doesn't count.'"

The two "cousins," so called, were a pleasing contrast to each other—the dark-eyed, merry Kitty Glen, and her fair, blue-eyed friend and cousin Mary Neale. Neither was, strictly speaking, cousin to Herbert Raymond, Kate being a step-sister, and Mary only a cousin's cousin; but as she had been on terms of brotherly intimacy, especially with the former, the pleasing fiction was always maintained, and Herbert felt himself at liberty to criticize the sayings and doings of either, to object to this or that man of their acquaintance, and to act generally in a very brotherly manner, while he had been persuaded from wearing many a favorite necktie or pair of gloves by Kate's railery or Mary's gentle protest.

The talk on this particular evening drifted to other subjects, and soon the whole matter faded from the young man's mind. Not so from that of the two girls, who, with heads bent together in council, were busy devising a plot against him. Time, however, must be allowed to elapse ere they carried it into execution, as they did not want to be immediately accused of being the authors.

So Herbert walked with Kate, and rode, talked, or sang with Mary, all unconscious of any designs upon him; and, truth to tell, he was beginning to find in the hours spent with his blue-eyed "cousin" a new charm. To "chaff" with Kate was great fun, but the quieter times spent with Mary, and even the silent moments, seemed to fly with incredible rapidity. No body surely ever had such sunny golden hair, such sweet little ways, as "Cousin Mary," he began to think, as he watched—and studied her more closely; and now and then he fancied (or was it only fancy?) that his sudden or unexpected appearance brought a deeper shade to that rose-tinted cheek, a new brightness to the lovely eyes. At least it was a delusion it was a very pleasant one, and he did not feel disposed to put it away from him.

Among the list of Herbert's acquaintances was a very pretty young widow who had been a belle before marriage, and who was now the less fascinating now that she was again free. Report said that her marriage had not been a happy one, but whether or no that had been the case she did not seem disposed to be in haste to resume matrimonial letters, though supposed to have had already several opportunities of so doing.

In the course of acquaintance Kate knew Herbert to have received notes from her, and rightly guessed that he was familiar with her writing. The arch letter selected this Mrs. Peto, then, as one of the unconscious victims of this conspiracy, and obtained possession of one of her notes from a lady friend, and with considerable skill imitated the penmanship and style.

Another letter purported to come from a Miss North, whom Herbert had once or twice met and expressed an admiration for, but who had not seemed to reciprocate it; and one each from Mary and Kate completed the list. Was it by accident or design that the last never reached its destination? Mary's enthusiasm over the practical joke seemed somewhat to have waned, and it required more than one reminder from Kate to induce her to fulfill her part of the compact, while, in fact, at last Kate wrote the note which Mary signed and addressed.

Three letters lay side by side at breakfast on a morning, besides one or two business documents, and as his interest in the post office was not usually very extensive, he gave a surprised little whistle.

The first letter he took up was in an unfamiliar hand, and he read as follows:

"My dear Herbert Raymond:—I reply to you at once to the proposal received from you. No, sir, a slight acquaintance as ours justifies nothing of the sort, and you will pardon me if I signalize it as bordering on the impertinent. My father allows no visitors to our house save those whom he himself invites, and I fear would be very angry were I to show him your letter. I beg, therefore, that you will drop the matter. I assure you it is not a very pleasant one to me.

Yours, coldly,

"CATHERINE NORTH."

Much mystified and not a little nettled, Herbert laid down the letter and took up the next, which ran:

Bread-Winners, who, after the demise of her spouse, had two closets to hang up her dresses in instead of one, and never saw a man again that she liked well enough to give up that luxury for. I like occasional visitors, but don't care to see too much of the sterner sex. If your feelings were more entangled than I suspect they are, I might beseech you not to hang, shoot, or drown yourself; but I fancy the danger is very trifling. Indeed, I have seen so many broken-hearted men recover and grow stout that I have become skeptical about the ill-effects of a rebuff. Doubtless you would like me to say how deeply my feelings were touched by your offer, how it kept me awake at night, and all that sort of thing; but I am a good sleeper. So, my dear child, my answer is No. Sometimes I think a colossal fortune might tempt me, (I love to be cradled in the lap of luxury,) but again I am sure that even that would be in vain. Doubtless there are half a dozen maidens sighing and dying for you; my advice is to go to them and be consoled.

"Yours, sincerely,

"LAVINIA PETO."

Herbert finished, and then burst into a laugh as he recalled a certain evening Mary, Kate and he had spent together. Here, then, was the explanation. But surely that was Mrs. Peto's handwriting. Had those mischievous girls really let her into the secret? How was he to find out? How pay them back in their own coin? He then glanced over his business documents, and finally took up the last letter. How had it escaped him that it was Mary's writing? He hesitated, and held it a moment ere opening it.

"DEAR HERBERT" (began Mary),—"I am so sorry, and so afraid of hurting your feelings. It was ever so kind of you to want me, but—don't do that to me, but I don't see how I can help it. Please forgive me, and let us be good friends as ever—won't you? I can't bear to say no to any one I like so much as I do you. Oh, I am so sorry! Do let me be always your friend."

"I never take 'no' for an answer from you, sweetheart," was his unspoken thought as he laid down the letter—strange to say, a little pained, even though he realized it was but a joke. He hastily finished his breakfast, and taking a pen scribbled off a reply to the last. The others he would settle with Kate, whom he felt to be his real author, later.

"DEAREST MARY—It is with a feeling of grievous disappointment I undertake to reply to your epistle. My trembling hands almost refused to perform their office when, with a mingled sense of hope and fear, I tore the covering from your anxiously expected letter. I will not weary you with the tale of the sleepless hours and the alternate extremes of joy and despair that I experienced. It matters not. You have crushed a faithful heart; and though oceans and continents may lie between us, as presently they will, yet undying affection for you will ever reign in my bosom. Farewell, then, adored one, and may you never feel a hundredth part of such sorrow as your cruel words have caused.

With some satisfaction he read over his note, and then resolved on the policy of silence; he would not even go to see them for a while. That would be more aggravating, he knew, than any revenge he could devise. It would be, and was, a hard thing to carry out, but he stuck to it manfully, though never had the days seemed so long, or the evenings so hard to dispose of. Meanwhile the conspirators waited, and Kate at least enjoyed her own little joke very much. Then came Herbert's letter to Mary; which both shared and laughed over.

But as day after day passed and no Herbert appeared, Mary began to feel seriously troubled, and even got to the point of shedding a few secret tears. Could it possibly be that he was really hurt at anything she had said? Really taken it seriously? And on, dreadful possibility! If by any chance he were going away without saying good-bye! This last idea was too much, and she could no longer resist the temptation which prompted her to write to him:

"HERBERT—If you care for me one particle, come back! I don't know what I have said or done to hurt you, but I can't bear your silence and absence."

A little startled, but overwhelmed with a sudden rush of joyful feelings, she answered the summons in person. He did not wait for persuasion, but took her in his arms as she glided into the room. "Thank you a thousand times, sweetheart," he said, smiling at the word as he bent to kiss her. "Leap-year has made me the happiest of men."

"Leap-year?" she said, a little breathless and bewildered. "Oh, I never thought of that! It's all a joke."

"Well, it's no joke that I've got you now and mean to keep you, leap-year and every year. Cousin Mary," he said, with a happy laugh. "We'll refuse or accept Kate together now."

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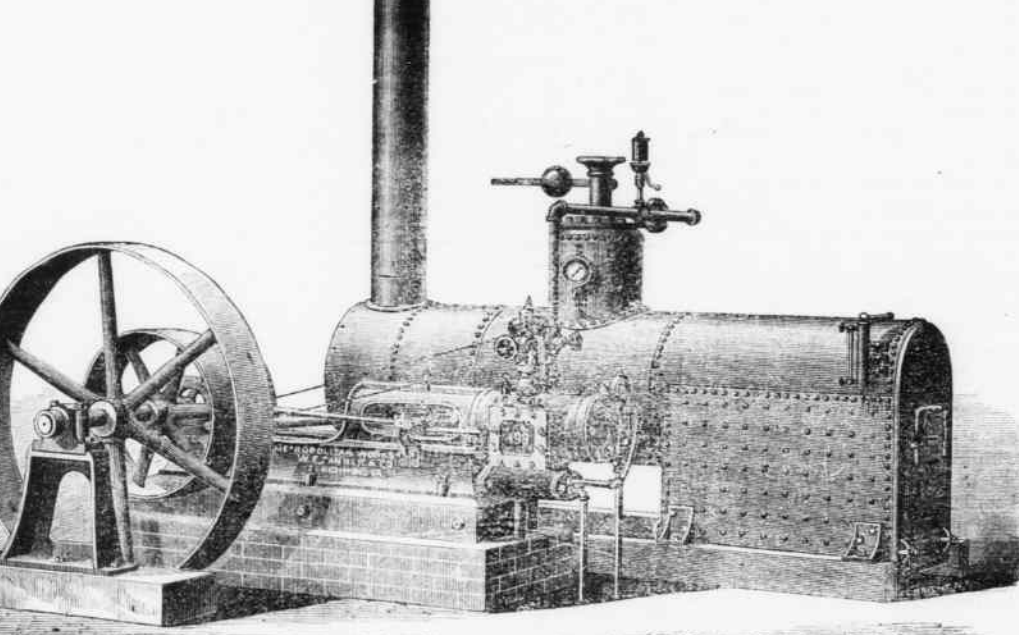
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