

**Afterward.**  
We know not the sweetness of rest  
Until we have shivered with pain,  
June's roses seem all the more fair  
After Winter's cold darkness and rain.  
We know not the jewel to prize  
Until we have counted the cost -  
We know not how deeply we love  
Until the loved we have lost.  
We know not how dear was that form,  
Till stilled by the ravishing breath.  
We know not how sweet was that voice  
Until it is silent in death.  
Life's sunshine seems all the more bright,  
When shadows its splendor have crossed -  
We know not how deeply we love  
Until the loved we have lost.  
—New York Advertiser.

### A GENUINE HERO.

A sky of opal and gold, a deep trellised veranda, a novel, and a hammock slung at the most comfortable of angles. With these conditions it was scarcely strange that Haleyon Hartford swayed delightfully between dream-land and the real world that June afternoon, with the fleecy gold of her hair, all guileless of pin or comb, and the bell sleeves, falling enchantingly away from her round white arms, while one trim slipped foot hung from the edge of the hammock.

"Haleyon! Haleyon! Where are you?"  
It was one of those exasperating voices which, once having been sweet, had now a vibrant jar to its tones, painfully akin to shrillness.

Haleyon frowned a little and raised herself on one elbow.

"Oh, Aunt Hal, don't scream! I was just in such a dream of delight."  
"Well, you should have answered, then!"

Aunt Hal came out of the wide, shady hall with an effusive swing of her draperies, and seated herself in a bamboo chair close to the hammock.

She was comically like her niece—at least, as much as a woman of 38 could be like a maid of 18. There was the same yellow luxuriance of hair, but harsher, drier and suggestive of dye; the same pink and white complexion, artificially heightened; similar features, cruelly sharpened by the inexorable hand of time, and teeth just one degree too white and regular to be real.

The white dress she wore was painfully trying, and she was compelled to use gold-rimmed eye-glasses as she held up a letter to the view of her niece.

"What has happened?" drowsily demanded the latter, lifting a pair of blue eyes, fringed with dark lashes.  
"The strangest thing!"  
"Another offer of marriage?" hazarded Haleyon, settling on the unlikely thing which could, in her opinion, happen.

"How did you guess?" with a little exultant cackle. "Exactly. The dear, foolish lad—and he so much younger than I! Why, he couldn't have been 21 when he went to Bombay, and I was at least 30 then—"  
"Thirty-five, Aunt Hal," said Haleyon, the mercenary.

"Was it as much as that? Well, he seemed desperately in love, then; though of course I never took any notice of the child. But I suppose in that country of blackamoors one can't help thinking about all the women one has ever known at home; and he has written me two or three letters—"  
"Has he?"

Haleyon sat straight up in the hammock now. Her blue eyes glowed. The heat had brought a flush to her cheek which all Aunt Hal's carmine saucers could not rival.

"But I never told you," said the elder beauty, "because I remembered that there was a sort of boy and girl affair between you and Charlie Besson, when you were at boarding school, and I thought you would be nettled. And here's the proposal at last, dear—with his photograph enclosed."

"Jealous, poor darling!" thought Aunt Hal, with a thrill of pity. And she said:  
"Well, of course one can't help those things happening to one, and your time will come soon, dear, never fear."

"It's a good thing," she added to herself, "she does not know anything about dear old Judge Flostrov. There's a difference in age, if you please, and the old pet is so infatuated about me! An old man's darling or a young man's slave—which?"

While Haleyon thought on her side:  
"The silly goose! He has done it now! He has been making love to Aunt Hal, thinking he was courting me. Oh, I thought he knew her name was the same as mine. Didn't she stand godmother to me at St. Chrysoline's and give me a coral and bells and an endurable christening robe? And now he has actually proposed to her! Well, if he is the man I take him to be, he'll stand by his colors, cost him what it may. A man who could walk up to the cannon's mouth at Bay-Bonona surely won't shrink, even from Aunt Hal. And I'd rather have a portrait for my husband!"

And Haleyon turned her face toward the pillow, and eyed great sparkling tears like dewdrops.

"So you're back again, Lieutenant? Beg pardon, I'd order said Colonel. I do suppose," said the old cab driver at the station, whom Charlie Besson had remembered ever since he was a child.

"Well, I declare, I shouldn't hardly have known ye! And come home to be married, eh?"  
Besson bit his lips, but he laughed carelessly. Jonas Hopper was a privileged individual, like the court jester of old.

"How do you know, Hopper?"  
"Oh, I know, Miss Hartford, she's been getting ready to be married, this long time," said Jonas, hoisting the Colo. "I brought on the back of the wagon. And dressmakers and milliners they will talk, you know, though I'm told Miss Hal took great pains to hide it."

"Did she?" (Aside: "The darling.")  
"And a fine woman she is, Colonel," officiously added Jonas, as he pushed in the last iron-clamped trunk. "A very fine woman, considerin' her age. I wonder she ain't married long ago."

Col. Besson opened his sleepy black eyes wide.  
"Why, man, who in the world are you talking about?"  
"Why, Miss Hal Hartford, to be sure."  
"Miss Haleyon or Miss Halliana?"  
"There ain't no Miss Halliana," said Jonas. "They're both the same name; but we call the aunt Miss Hal and the niece Miss Haleyon. My daughter she's lady's maid there, and I'd order know, if any one does."

"And which of them is it that is going to get married?" breathlessly queried Besson.  
"Why, the old 'un, in course! Beg pardon! I hurriedly added Jonas. "I mean Miss Hal. Folly she tells me there are twenty-four different gowns ordered, let alone the jackets and parasols and ten-button kid gloves fit to make your hair stand on end."

"And Miss Haleyon—the young lady," cried the Colonel—"she is engaged, too?"  
"Not as any one knows on. That all, Colonel? Got your telescope bag? Then we'll better be movin'."

Col. Besson pondered seriously all the way up to Hartford Col. Besson, oblivious of Jonas's incessant stream of talk. Could it be possible? No, that was utter nonsense! And yet—  
He strained his eyes as he approached the house. Surely golden-haired Haleyon would be there, smiling, to meet him!

But no. In her place stood a middle-aged chambermaid, rouged and powdered, with hair gleaming meretriciously, and teeth just a size too large for a thin-lipped mouth.  
In one hand she held his love-breathing letter, in the other his photograph. And during that second his heart sank like lead.  
He did not know—ah, how much more difficult would it have been to bear had he known!—that Haleyon Hartford's eyes were surreptitiously watching him from the honeysuckle-garlanded casement beyond.  
"Dear Charles," the elderly damsel said, "you are here at last."  
He set his teeth, drew one long breath, and allowed her to slip a caressing hand through his arm and lead him into the house, muttering some hoarse acknowledgement of her courteous smiles.  
"I've brought this upon myself," he thought, "and I must endure it."

The lady is not to blame—no, she is not to blame."  
"He is a hero," Haleyon thought—"yes, a hero."  
And then she burst into a passion of tears and ran upstairs to her own room.

"But now I've got you fairly here," hissed Aunt Hal, more determinedly youthful than ever. "I'm really afraid, dearest Charles, that there's a great disappointment in store for you."  
"Oh?"  
The young man had sat down in a rather listless manner. Aunt Hal held on to his hand, still all teeth and smiles.

"And I may as well tell you at once," said she, "that I'm engaged to Judge Flostrov of the Superior Court. Of course, if I had known of your attachment in time, there's no saying—"  
"Oh, pray don't let me interfere with any existing arrangements," said Besson, jumping up eagerly. "Perhaps, under the circumstances, you will let me have my photograph back."

Just then there came a ring at the door below as the maid announced:  
"Judge Flostrov, miss, if you please."  
Before the slow and ponderous steps of the approaching visitor could reach the room, Aunt Hal thrust the photograph into Besson's hand.

"A-hem-m-m!" sonorously coughed the liminary of the Superior Court.  
Aunt Hal tripped smilingly forward.  
"I should see you, Judge," she cooed. "This is my old playmate, Col. Besson, just arrived from India. I have say, Colonel, you'll find Haleyon somewhere about the house."  
"Disposed of in short order," muttered Col. Besson. "Great heavens! what have I done to deserve such luck?"

Two hours afterward the young lovers sat on the veranda, watching the evening star rise over the hills, while the Judge's basso profundo voice still rolled in the sitting room like distant thunder.  
"But wasn't it a narrow escape?" gasped the young Colonel, holding the girl's slim hands in his.

"Would you really have married her?" Haleyon asked.  
"As a gentleman there was no escape for me under the circumstances."  
"But would you really have married her?"  
"Yes, I would!" with sternly set teeth and knitted brows.  
"Then I'll marry you, Col. Besson," whispered Haleyon, "because you are a genuine hero, and because," with an arch glance, "I really think you need a wife to take charge of you."

"After the episode of today," said Col. Besson, "I really think I do."  
**Needle and Thread Plant.**  
That there are more wonders on the earth, in the sea, "beneath the earth," and in the sky above it than ever Horatio imagined is a well known fact which that worthy's most ardent admirers will not attempt to deny. Take, for instance, the famous needle-and-thread tree. Imagine such a luxury and the delights of going out to your tree and plucking a needle threaded all ready for use! Odd as it may seem to us, there is, on the Mexican plains, just such a forest growth.

The "tree" may not exactly be a tree in the true sense of the word, partaking as it does more of the nature and characteristics of a gigantic species of asparagus. It has large, thick, fleshy leaves, such as would remind one of the cactus, especially of the one popularly known as the "prickly pear."

The "needles" of the needle-and-thread tree are set along the edges of these thick, fleshy leaves. In order to obtain one fully equipped for sewing it is only necessary to push the needle gently backward into the fleshy sheath (this to loosen it from the tough outside covering of the leaf), and then pull it gently from the socket. If this operation is properly carried out one hundred or more fine fibres adhere to the thorn like so many spider webs.

By twisting the "needle" during the drawing operation the thread can be made of any length desired. The action of the air on the fibres toughens them amazingly, a thread from it not larger than common No. 40 being capable of sustaining a weight of five pounds, about three times the tensile strength of common "six-cord" spool cotton.

The American Sunday-school Union since its organization has established 26,000 Sunday-schools.

### CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

**A HINT.**  
Our Daisy lay down  
In her white nightgown,  
And kissed her again and again  
On forehead and cheek,  
On lips that would speak,  
But found themselves shut to their gulf.  
Then foolishly, absurd,  
To utter a word,  
I asked her the question so odd  
That wife and that lover  
Asked over and over:  
As if they were surer when told:  
There, close at her side,  
"Do you love me?" I cried;  
She lifted her golden-rod head,  
A puzzled surprise  
Shone in her gray eyes—  
"Why, that's why I kiss you," she said.  
—New York Mail and Express.

**DAFOUR WAS A BRIGHT REEL.**  
Dafour belonged to a lady in Boston, and perhaps was one of the most remarkable parrots on record. She lived to be twenty-three years old, and her long life had made her very knowing.

She joined every Sunday morning in family prayers, always occupying the same place, and when the bell rang for church she would cry out to her mistress: "Got any money to put in the box?"

The servant in cleaning the room one morning in a spirit of curiosity, lifted the foot of a visitor from the floor, for examination, when Dafour cried out: "Drop that!" The maid believing the parrot to be some mysterious spirit, ran out of the room, and was always afraid to enter it after that.

This same parrot would order the fire to be made, tell how to proceed with paper and wood, and like an overseer, watch the performance until it was satisfactory.

You will not be surprised that she was the wonder of the neighborhood, in fact, people came from far and near to see her, and particularly to hear her sing. She was greatly missed when she died, six years ago.

### TWO QUEER TREES.

The tallow-tree is a native of China. Some species are also found in the East Indies. It is of about the height and appearance of the pear tree, the leaves resembling those of the poplar. The blossom is yellow, but the singularity of the tree is the fruit, which is enclosed in a husk, like that of the chestnut. When the tree is ripe the husk opens of itself, showing three white grains, the size of a filbert. These grains contain the vegetable tallow so useful to the Chinese.

The grains are crushed, boiled and afterwards mixed with vegetable oil and wax. So prepared they make the best candles, burning a most without smoke and quite free from smell. In China these trees are cultivated in extensive plains, planted in regular order. The leaves incline to red, and the blossoms being yellow the trees are beautiful objects in a Chinese landscape, a grove of them having the appearance of a flower garden.

The tree has of late years been introduced into North America, and is cultivated about Charleston and Savannah. It is also admitted in this region for its remarkable appearance at the approach of winter. The leaves become a brilliant red, and the fruit husks falling off the white seeds remain suspended to their stem by slender threads.

Another curious tree which grows wild in China, as well as Japan, produces the beautiful black Japan varnish so much admired in Japanese productions of art.

The varnish is made from the green of the tree, which is gathered much in the same way maple-sap is got from the maple tree. About the middle of the summer a number of laborers proceed to the plantations of these trees, each man furnished with a knife and a great number of hollow shells, larger than oyster shells. In the bark of each tree they make many incisions, about two inches in length, and under each incision they force in the edge of the shell, which easily penetrates the soft bark.

### RUSSIAN WEDDINGS.

**Curious Customs That Date From a Remote Antiquity.**

**A Woman Mediator Brings About Marriages.**

The choice of a bride in some parts of Russia is still accompanied with many difficulties. The customs which are observed rigorously by the families of the lower classes would certainly embarrass an American suitor, or indirectly create a large number of young "Loachinvars of the West."

"In almost all Russia," says a recent issue of "L'Italie," "marriages are brought about by means of a woman mediator, known as the 'svaknia.' As soon as the choice is made the svaknia puts on her best 'shib and necker' and proceeds to the home of the future bride. She makes her entrance in as dignified a fashion as possible, salutes the hosts and begins to speak of various things which seemingly have little relation to marriage. She says, for instance: 'Where there is no snow, it is difficult to follow tracks; but today snow has fallen and it is easy to find the way to a marriageable maiden.' Or, she may say: 'A white swan has escaped from the house; is it possible that it fled to you?' It depends upon the answers of the parents of the young girl whether the mediator becomes more specific and speaks to the point, or withdraws from the place. If the negotiations end desirably, the suitor takes courage to visit the young girl, to become better acquainted with her and her surroundings.

In some provinces, for instance, in the Government of Volodga, this visit of examination on the part of the suitor becomes an elaborate ceremony. The family of the bridegroom, under the leadership of the mediator, proceed to the house of the bride. The mediator, without much ado, commands the bride to spin. If the visitors are satisfied with the talent of the girl for weaving, they ask her to walk about the room to see whether she limps. The prospective, or rather possible, bride and groom, are then placed side by side to see whether they are mated as to height. If one of the young persons happens to fall short of the proper length of body there is always great liberty among the members of the two families.

"In almost all the so-called Great Russia," the surrender of the bride assumes, in a way, the character of a sale. The money and objects of various kinds which the groom intends to present to the parents of the girl are the subject of long discussion.

"We can consider the affair closed," asks, for instance, the father of the suitor.  
"I am agreed," comes the answer.  
"How much will you give me in cash?"  
"Fifteen roubles."  
"That is no money at all. I received twenty roubles when my oldest daughter was married, and then times were hard."  
"I shall add a fur mantle," comes the reply.

"Keep your mantle. My daughter has one."  
"Thus the conversation proceeds until the marriage terms are settled. But the customs at the marriage are equally queer. A few days before the wedding the bride is taken to bathe by her friends and companions. The soap used at the time is a present from the bridegroom. The bathing sponge, through which ribbons are passed, is carried on a long pole in front of the bride. The young woman sings as the procession advances. The platform of the bathing house is sprinkled with beer. It depends upon the odor from the beer whether the groom is to be a shagpeaked husband or not. As soon as the bridal procession enters the church on the day of the wedding, the bride and bridegroom start down the aisle in a mad race. There is a tradition that whichever one places the foot first on the cloth in front of the altar is to be master in the house.

"Among other things, there are queer customs at the wedding dinner. When the wine is passed around, each guest tastes the beverage and cries out that it is bitter. That is the signal for the newly married couple to embrace one another. In some governments, the young wife is obliged to pull off her husband's boots in the presence of the guests as proof that he is master. A whip—placed there purposely—falls from the boot and the husband strikes the wife with it three times. After this greeting he kisses her. The Russian peasant values his wife for her economical properties."

### Mercury Mining.

The mercury mines of Almaden, in Spain, are at a short distance from the town of that name, following the valley in a northerly direction. The veins of the precious metal are disseminated a little haphazard, but those at present in working form altogether a zone stretching for a length of from 100 to 170 metres, and which is only from 10 to 12 metres wide. The depth of the bed is still unknown, for the reason that when a vein is exhausted the depth of the well is increased in order to reach a new vein. Between the different workable veins there are beds of ores and rocks of different kinds; the average thickness of the unworkable beds varies between 10 and 37 metres.

A curious feature is that the further the distance gone, the quality of mercury improves and the quantity increases. In the tenth and eleventh gallery (the deepest) the mercury runs, so to speak, from the rock as resin exudes from the trees; it can be gathered in small skin receptacles.

The rock varies in color, and passes from black to brilliant red; the more the color approaches red, the more the quantity of mercury increases. Very often mercury is present under the form of cinnabar or sulphur. The pits at present in working number three. The other old wells have been abandoned, and only serve in exceptional cases. On delivery from the pits the ore is melted in vast furnaces, with enormous cupolas, beneath which a fierce fire is constantly kept burning.

Distillation is effected through a long and complete series of tubes, formed of thick jars, with a long, narrow neck, fitting into each other. In the lower portion of these jars there exists a kind of small reservoir, where the drops of mercury produced by the evaporation of the metal in a state of fusion are condensed. These drops are then collected, and with the aid of small pipes, stored in large iron barrels. A strong and penetrating odor, which irritates the eyes and nostrils, escapes from the jars and barrels.

The production of mercury reaches about 55,000 to 60,000 francs per annum, the francs being enormous bottles of cast iron, which contain four arrobes of about 25 pounds each. Each bottle, which measures twenty-two centimetres in height by six in width, weighs, when filled, about 100 pounds. The workmen at present employed number about 2,000. There are also a thousand workmen who are employed out of the mines with machinery, furnaces, transports and other works.—[Chamber of Commerce Journal.]

### Finest of Persian Carpets.

There is now to be seen in London what is declared to be the finest Persian carpet in the world. This is the Holy Carpet of the Mosque of Anlebi in Persia—a carpet which for size, beauty, condition and antiquity is said to be unrivalled by any known example. Its dimensions are 34 feet 6 inches by 17 feet 6 inches. The ground of the body of the fabric is of a rich blue, covered with a floral tracery of exquisite delicacy. A central medallion of pale yellow terminates on its outer edge in sixteen miniature-shaped points, from which spring sixteen cartouches, four green, four red and eight cream, and from two of these are suspended, in the direction of the respective ends of the carpet, two of the sacred lamps of the mosque. But the most interesting detail is the pale cream cartouche placed within the border at the upper end of the carpet, bearing an interwoven inscription, which is thus translated: "I have no refuge in the world other than thy threshold. My head has no protection other than thy mercy." The work of the slave of the Holy Face, Mubson of Karhan, in the year 917. Now, 917 of the Hijra is 1505 of our era; so that the carpet was actually in existence, in the Mosque of the sacred city of the Saffavian Dynasty, when Queen Elizabeth sent Anthony Jenkinson an embassy to Shah Tamasp. Carpets thus signed and dated are extremely rare and are historically important, but a carpet not only dated and signed, but of such size and beauty as this, is said to be something unheard of before.—[New York Post.]

### Cheap Lodgings.

**Old Gentleman—**Where do you lodge?  
**Tramp—**I lodge where I get board.  
**Old Gentleman—**And where do you get board?  
**Tramp—**In a lumber yard.—[New York Weekly.]

### Ten per cent. of the population of

Judia are widows.

### Humming-bird Song.

Humming-bird,  
Not a word  
Do you say;  
Has your throat  
No sweet note  
To repay  
Honey debts  
It begs  
When you go  
On the wing  
Puffing  
To and fro?  
May be you  
Whisper to  
Blossom and leaf  
On the vine  
Secrets fine  
In your brief  
Call-on them,  
Winged gem,  
Not a word  
Do you say,  
Humming-bird?  
—[Frank D. Sherman, in Independent.]

### HUMOROUS.

There are two places where it requires an effort to keep one's balance—on the ice and at the bank.  
Maamma—And now, Eddie, can you tell me what velocity is? Eddie—Yes. That's what papa let go of the hot plate with today.  
Ho—Are you happy now that you are married? She—Comparatively. Ho—Compared with whom? She—Compared with my husband.

Miss Gooding—I wouldn't marry you, sir, if you were as rich as Croesus. Mr. Hardrow—Well, that's just the difference; I wouldn't marry you if you weren't.  
Attorney—Sneaky sort of man? What do you mean, sir? Witness—Well, sorr, he's the sort of man that'll never look ye straight in the face until your back's turned.

Wynch—So poor Stagger has shuddered off the moral coil. Lynch—No. As I understand it he tried to, but the boys had the rope too firmly secured around his neck.  
Mary had a little pig,  
But not as you suppose—  
Because it's not of course breed;  
The pig is in her nose.

Young Smith (telling the news to his grandmother)—Wrinkle, the greaser, has busted. Grandma—La me! who'd a thought it? He was one of the skinniest, boniest men I ever laid eyes on.  
She (in a fright)—Oh, Tom, why do you make such awful faces at me? He (contritely)—I can't help it, dear. My eye-glasses are falling off and I don't want to let go of your hands.

"Browning, dear," said Mrs. Emerson of Boston to her husband, "what is a catenaceous pastime?" "A catenaceous pastime, love, I never heard of such a thing." "Well, I heard two men on the street car talking and one of them spoke of a skin game."  
"Literature certainly runs in the Greensmith family. The two daughters write poetry that nobody will print, the son writes plays that nobody will act, and the mother writes novels that nobody will read." "And what does the father write?" "Oh, he writes checks that nobody will cash."

### Marriage in Japan.

A Japanese wedding in high life is a pretty ceremony. Though no vows are spoken, nor has the church nor religion any part in it, the rite is, nevertheless, solemn and impressive.

There are ten bridesmaids grayly attired in costumes of the "daps." Two at a time enter from opposite directions, and salam each to the other, until the entire party has passed in, each kneeling opposite her companion. The parents of the bride and groom now enter, those of the groom at the left, and those of the bride at the right, and are seated near the bridesmaids on either side.

The bride, attired in a snowy, filmy dress and closely veiled, now appears leaning on the arm of her affianced, while the bridesmaids salam. The go-between assists the bride to a seat by her parents, and the groom to one near his. Tea is then served by the go-between, three cups being given the parents of the bride and groom and to the happy couple. Each of the bridesmaids receives one cup.

The go-between joins the hands of the bride and groom, and the latter leads his bride to the front and whispers in her ear a promise of faithfulness. The bride whispers in return, and they exchange seats to show the union of the two families. A simple repast is now served, and the bridal party disperses; the bride and groom leaving first, then their parents, and lastly the bridesmaids, salamming as they go.

The go-between is generally a friend of the groom. In courtship she settles the question and arranges and assists in the marriage ceremony.—[New York Recorder.]