

TO THE "BOUQUET CLUB."

O Rosbud garden of girls! Who ask for a song from me, To what sweet air shall I set my lay?

A Ruse of War.

"You'd better make up your mind to do it, Frank. I give you my word for it, you'll find 'Laurelton' not a bad place, and the girls are well, there are no finer girls than my granddaughters."

"You certainly are very good, Judge, to press upon me such a friendly invitation to visit 'Laurelton,' and under any other circumstances than those we have discussed, I would be delighted to accept. As it is—I confess I haven't the cheek to go down to your place, see my pretty cousins, be entertained by aunt Sarah, and all the while feel that my object, and your object, is to select me a wife from among the young ladies."

"I guess we'll manage it between us, Sara, Frank's agreed to come, and what's more, has half-promised to fall in love with one of the girls."

"Well, Henry Ransom, I never would have believed you were such a fool! Don't you know you've ruined our little arrangement by going and telling him? Why there's not a man living who'll take a fancy to a girl that is recommended to him! Well, if you aren't a nimble!"

"I can't see what I've done so dreadful. I'm sure you are as anxious to have him in the family as I am."

A magnificent December night, with myriads of frosty-twinkling stars above, and a snow-bound landscape below them; and Frank Hazelton, wrapped in his Astrachan overcoat, and his seal-skin cap cozily jammed over his forehead, thought as he was driven from the depot to "Laurelton" behind the judge's fast trotters, and in the "Laurelton's" big double-seated, warmly-cushioned sleigh, that the lines might fall to a fellow in a far less pleasant place than that to which he was going; where the judge met him at the door, in the broad banner of warm yellow light streaming from within.

young girls were sitting in apparent ready welcome. "What! have I four cousins? Judge, you've got the best of me. I had no idea my courage was to be put to such a test."

"Indeed, you needn't think you are so blessed as to possess four pretty cousins. These are all you need lay claim to—Maud and Ida, my two dear granddaughters. These other two young ladies are Miss Florence and Irma Cloudeley—visiting 'Laurelton,' to assist in entertaining you."

"There's Maud, with her matchless grace and her stately dignified manner. She should wear a coronet and never feel but what the strawberry leaves were honored by her acceptance. But not for a thousand 'Laureltons' would I spend a lifetime with her; when an hour excites all her entertaining and instructive ability."

"I wonder what aunt Sara and the Judge would think if they knew of my private opinion of Maud and Ida? To be sure, Ida is a nice, ladylike little thing, and has about as much mind of her own as a butterfly. I doubt if she ever really does think beyond the arrangement of her pretty yellow hair, and the fit of those marvelously tiny slippers of hers."

"I'll go, in a moment, Irma. Tell me first if you are angry with me that you seem so eager to get rid of me? Not only now, Irma, but always. You avoid me continually."

"No, Irma! you must answer me. Have I offended you?" "No, Mr. Hazelton, you have not. Please go to dinner. They won't like it, and Maud will think—"

"I consider myself the best judge of that, Miss Cloudeley! Perhaps you think, in your humility, that you are not more to me than ten thousand 'Laureltons'."

That of course settled it, since Frank was so anxious to have Irma. And so, after all, Aunt Sara's ruse of war accomplished the desired end, on the unalterable principle that she and the rest of us women understand, that men are stubborn creatures, who are sure to do just exactly contrary to the way you want them to do.

The Fourth Courtship.

Women often wait for a husband that is pretty until they wait too long. It also happens to men sometimes. So it was with Mr. Griffith. When he was young he was in love with a beautiful girl, but when he became a man he thought he could get some one richer and prettier also and while he was thus thinking the opportunity was lost—she had married another.

"Ah, you've never heard of my three courtships! I thought everybody knew all about them."

"Well, upon my word, I don't know anything about them; but I should, indeed, like to know. Ah ha, so you've been in love, too, have you?"

"Yes, Louisa, indeed I have, twice, even three times. The first is not worth mentioning, but the second is. Well, I clerked in a large grocery store; the owner's daughter was the one I set my cap for. She was very pretty and also very rich. Well, to be short I loved her dearly. I visited her several times, but every time she was visited by another young man, whose name was Fritz. I don't know which one of us she liked best. You know how very slow and safe I am about everything, and so I am in love matters. This will not do in love matters in this country, and so let me tell you what happened. One morning I thought I'd make a sure thing of it; so I dressed up in my very best clothes, put my stove-pipe hat on one-sided, and off I went. No sooner had I opened the hall door than there came Fritz running down stairs, half losing his breath. He ran against me at the same time knocking my flue hat off, which he accidentally stepped upon, and exclaimed, 'you'll please excuse me, but I'm so glad, that I can't help my foolishness. Say, what do you think? I've won her! How do you like that, sir?' I didn't say anything, but went home, and never mentioned the hat."

"That was the second; tell me now about the third!" said Louisa. "Well, I was then forty years old. I had been out traveling, and was just stopping at a small town in France, when I noticed the smallest feet I ever saw on a woman; they were not hidden by a long dress, but neatly covered with snow-white stockings and slippers. In fact, she was a perfect beauty. She had a basket on her arm which contained flowers. I stepped up to her and asked her how she sold them. She told me, and I bought all she had. I continued buying from her for three weeks, when one day I bought all she had to sell. I took my flowers and left, when suddenly she came running to me saying: 'Thank you sir, I am very much obliged to you! For what?' said I, 'Oh, sir, I can't thank you enough, you have done me such a favor.' 'How?' said I, 'Oh, sir, by buying my flowers; you see, sir, I had a sweet-heart, and his mother wouldn't let me marry him until I had one hundred dollars cash, and now, thank goodness, I have it. So to-morrow I mean to get—' 'Hush!' I exclaimed at the top of my voice. But she wouldn't hush until she had finished telling me how the wedding was to come off. At last she lushed her talking. I went home, and afterwards left the town."

"But Mr. Griffith, do tell me about the first courtship."

"My first sweetheart loved another also. I could have wedded her if I had not been too slow and bashful, but she was engaged to this other man, and so she married him. I have had awful bad luck with women, and never will have anything more to do with them any more."

"But she was engaged, wasn't she?" "Engaged! pooh! I believe they are all engaged! Anyhow, she was the daughter of a large plantation owner. Her name was Lilly Fones, and I tell you she was a perfect little beauty."

"Fones! Lilly Fones! Oh, my God! I am she. I was once the happy Lilly Fones, but now—(she burst into tears)—I am only Mrs. Rummel."

Since he who mistook patriotism for plety might mistake self-interest for patriotism; and third, that the suspicion expressed by the flag was a stain on Christian character, tested for years, which must be removed before they could be recognized by a minister of another denomination. With his characteristic vehemence the Secretary exclaimed, as the note was read to him: "It is in the right." The flag was flown before 3 o'clock, and no flag from that day was allowed to be put over a church.—Watchman and Reflector.

Men of science speak of epidemic waves, and of scarlet fever being communicated by the few drops of milk which you pour into your tea, or cream diffused in a dish of strawberries. On a late occasion, at a fashionable dinner-party in London, as many as eight or ten guests, and seven members of the household, took scarlet fever. Obviously, the infection must have been caught at the dinner-party; but how was the puzzling matter of inquiry, for no one in the family of the host was known to have been affected with the disorder. Was the disease brought to the house by a waiter? Was it conveyed in the table-linen from the washwoman? Was it somehow incorporated in the cream that had been used in the dessert? An investigation on these and other points, as we understand, was made, but no with any satisfactory result. The cream was thought to be most likely the vehicle of infection; but how could any one be certain on the point? The cream employed in fashionable dessert in London is possibly made up of half a dozen creams from as many dairies and inquiry ends only in vague conjecture. Rather a hazardous thing, one would say, going out to dinner where you may run the chance of being killed in a manner so very mysterious. People, in their innocence, are not aware of the manner in which contagious diseases may be communicated by public conveyances, by articles of dress, by dwellings, by the very atmosphere. We have just heard an instance of the communication of scarlet fever by means of a "kist," the name usually given in Scotland to a servant's trunk. A servant girl in Morayshire fell all with scarlet fever, and died. Her kist, a painted wooden box, containing all her worldly goods, her later clothing included, was sent home to her relations, and lay for some weeks at a station on the Speyside Railway before an opportunity occurred for removing it by a cart to her mother's cottage among the hills. During this interval the station-master's children, in romping about, conducted their gambols on the kist, which was a repository of contagion, and in due course were struck down with scarlet fever. At length, the fatal kist was conveyed to its destination, and the contents were dispersed among friends and neighbors. The donations were kindly meant, but they proved fatal. No precautions had been taken to disinfect the articles, the result being that wherever the clothes of the deceased girl were taken in, scarlet fever found its victims. For several months the fever raged, until the wave of its infection was expended. Now ensued a remarkable event. The outbreak proved to be an opposing barrier to the spread of a more virulent type of scarlatina advancing from another quarter at a later period of the year. On reaching the former scene of the disease, it was arrested for want of material to feed upon; a second attack being very unusual.—Chamber's Journal.

Moral Courage. Sidney Smith, in his work on moral philosophy, speaks in this wise, of what men lose for want of a little courage, or independence of mind.—"A great deal of talent is lost in the world for the want of a little courage. Every day sends to the grave a number of obscure men, who have only remained in obscurity because their timidity has prevented them from making the first effort; and who if they could be induced to begin, would in all probability, have gone great lengths in the career of fame. The fact is, that to do anything in this world worth doing, we must not stand shivering, and thinking of the cold and the danger, but jump in and scramble through as well as we can. It will not do to be perpetually calculating tasks, and adjusting nice chances; it did very well before the flood, where a man could consult his friends upon an intended publication for a hundred and fifty years, and then live to see its success afterwards; but at present, a man waits and doubts and hesitates and consults his brother, and his uncle, and his particular friends, till one fine day he finds that he is sixty years of age; that he has lost so much time in consulting his first cousin and particular friends, that he has no more time to follow their advice."

A Popular Fallacy Concerning Overwork. The subject of overwork, then, is one of the greatest importance to study, and has to be discussed daily by all of us. My own opinion has already been expressed, that the evils attending it on the community at large are vastly overestimated; and, judging from my own experience, the persons with unstrung nerves who apply to the doctor are, not the prime minister, the bishops, judges, and hard-working professional men, but merchants and stockbrokers retired from business, government clerks who work from ten to four, women whose domestic duties and bad servants are driving them to the grave, young ladies whose visits to the village school or Sunday performance on the organ are undermining their health, and so on. In short, in my experience I see more ailments arise from want of occupation than from overwork, and taking the various kinds of nervous and dyspeptic ailments which we are constantly treating, I find at least six due to idleness or one from overwork.

Instinct of Whales on the Approach of Danger.

Sperm whales have a means of communicating with each other at long distances—how long has never been determined; but certainly at distances as great as are commanded by the eye from the mast-head of a ship, or in a fall of six or seven miles. The means are a mystery, but every whaler has observed the fact, and has based his operations in the chase upon it. It has been suggested that, as water is so good a conductor of sound, it may be by sound; but the distances are too great for any sound which the whale is capable of making to penetrate, and it is observed that the telegraph is as perfect as ever in high winds when a thousand waves are breaking. Dart an iron into a whale or gaffe him by going on his eye, and almost simultaneously with his cutting flukes in the air the whole school will show alarm by running and cutting their flukes, or by disappearing from the surface, and coming up miles to windward and running head out. If it be a female that is struck, the males are arrested in flight, and are apt to gather about her, and offer chances for more than a single whale. Again when a school of cows and calves are frightened to windward and a calf is struck, the whole school will "bring to," and gather closely around the wounded young, sometimes so closely packed that the enclosed boat will not dare to use the lance; and they will thus remain as long as the calf is alive or the iron holds. But should the iron draw or the calf die, the whole school will instantly scatter. Whaling captains have taken pains to observe from the masthead, when a boat was going on to a whale to leeward, the effect on the school miles to windward; and soon as the eye could turn from one spot to the other, the alarm of the struck whale to leeward would be communicated to those to windward.

Let a man fail in business, what an effect it has on his former creditors! Men who have taken him by the arm, laughed and chatted with him by the hour, shrug their shoulders and pass on with a cold "How do you do?" Every trifle of a bill is hunted up and presented that would not have been for the misfortunes of the debtor. If it is paid, well and good; if not the scowl of the sheriff, perhaps, meets him at the corner. A man that has never failed knows but little of human nature. In prosperity he sails along gently, wafted by favorite smiles and kind words from everybody. He prides himself upon his name and spotless character, and makes his boast that he has not an enemy in the world. Alas! the change. He looks at the world in a different light when reverses come upon him. He reads suspicion on every brow. He hardly knows how to move or to do, this thing or the other; there are spies about him, a writ is ready for his back. To know what kind of stuff the world is made of, a person must be unfortunate, and, stop paying once in a life time. If he has kind friends then they are made manifest. A failure is a moral sieve, it brings out the wheat and shows the chaff. A man thus learns that words and pretended good will are not and do not constitute real friendship.

Making Christmas Presents. A very old practice and one still respected is that of giving presents. The practice is as old as the visit of the three kings, Melchior, Jasper, and Balthazar, to the manger. How pleasant this custom is can be attested any day. Stop at any street corner during Christmas week and watch the crowds that hurry past. They are hastening to spend money, not to make it, and their countenances plainly indicate how much pleasure there is in planning the innocent deceits and gay surprises which add so much to every Christmas gift. And the joy with which, on Christmas eve, the mothers steal at midnight to fill their darling's stockings as they dangle from the mantelpiece is only equalled by the breathless delight with which in the early morning their children patter barefooted over the floor, and feel, for they cannot yet see, to the uttermost stocking toe to discover what Santa Claus has brought them. Fortunately as much Christmas happiness can be bought with a little money or with a great deal. The child is not particular about the costliness of its playthings, and with his elders it is the act of giving as a proof of remembrance and affection which is or ought to be, more valued than the gift itself.

Nothing is more trying to the mistress of a house in any grade of life than to be compelled to "wait dinner" for the convenience of tardy guests, to say nothing of the discomfort inflicted on other visitors. The busy people of the world are punctual people; the man whose every moment is worth money to himself and the others always manages to be in time. It is hard that such persons as these should be compelled to waste a long time in waiting dinner for the arrival of some man or woman whose unpunctuality is merely the result of an impertinent want of forethought. The proper mode of treating such persons would be to ignore them altogether. If, when the dinner hour arrived, dinner were served, and the drawers were compelled by their late arrival either to go without dinner or to sit down in the middle of the feast—no bringing back of earlier dishes allowed—this evil of careless lateness would soon be remedied. "So sorry to be late," ought to be met by "So sorry we couldn't wait, but glad to have you join us at this stage." If ladies would take this matter in their own hands, the habit of late arrival, which is a positive social nuisance, would soon be cured.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

When flatterers meet the devil goes to dine. Your sayer of smart things has a bad heart.—Pascal. Women always give more than they promise—men less. We cannot escape to-morrow by sleep nor eternity by death. Indecision keeps the door ajar; but decision shuts and bolts it. The greatest misfortune of all is not to be able to bear misfortune. We are liable to be corrected by books as by companions.—Fielding. The fellow who recovered his appetite says he is now in a gnaw-mal condition. An English company is engaged to the manufacture of bricks from slag. Characters never change. Opinions alter; characters are only developed.—Dissraeli. There is no such thing as liberty—for no man is free if he is the slave of his conscience. The human heart is made for love, as the household hearth for fire; and for truth, as the household lamp for light. The superfluous blossoms on a fruit tree are meant to symbolize the large way in which God loves to do pleasant things. For six months matrimonial happiness depends upon the state of a man's heart; forever after upon the condition of his stomach. Slag is a chemical compound, the combination of an acid with various bases and as much salt as the sulphate of alumina or potassa. The silica is the acid, and the lime, alumina, magnesia and the alkalies are the basis. It appears that a Valenciennes lace-maker, working twelve hours a day, can produce only one-third of an inch of Valenciennes lace in a week. Every piece of Alencon point passes through the hands of twelve workwomen. She was tripping up Washington street with a lady companion, and both were painfully pinned back. In stepping up to surmount the curbstone, she stuck her tiny foot right through her "front breadth." Only her companion's support saved her from falling—fainting perhaps. Gone to meet her dressmaker. The French connoisseurs maintain that an English dinner is positively indecent and immoral. A huge chunk of bloody roast beef, carved by a lank, lynch-eyed Englishman, a mass of plumb pudding, solid enough to mow down a regiment, form a spectacle they say, to frighten the gods, and one which suggests the shambles. Statuettes and other artistic forms in plaster are made very closely to resemble silver in appearance by being covered with a thin coat of powdered mica. This powder is mixed with collodion, and then applied to the objects in plaster with a brush, after the manner of paint. The mica can be easily tinted in various colors. It can be washed in water, and unlike silver, is not liable to become tarnished by sulphurated gases. Addison says: "I have always preferred cheerfulness to mirth. The latter I consider as an act, the former as a habit of the mind. Mirth is short and transient, cheerfulness fixed and permanent. Those are often raised into the greatest transports of mirth who are subject to the greatest depression of melancholy; on the contrary, cheerfulness, though it does not give the mind such an exquisite gladness, prevents us from falling into any depths of sorrow. Mirth is like a flash of lightning which breaks through a gloom of clouds and glitters for a moment; cheerfulness keeps up a kind of daylight in the mind, and fills it with a steady and perpetual serenity."

One of the greatest curiosities in Japan to the stranger is the wonderful variety of coins that are used daily. In some instances it takes one thousand pieces to make a dollar. They are called "cash," and are seldom received by foreigners, who, as a general rule, refuse to take them in change. Imagine making a trade of five cents, and giving a man a fifty-cent piece, and receiving four hundred and fifty of these coppers. This coin is peculiarly made, having a square hole in the center. They are about the size of our dime piece, and nearly two thirds of the thickness. Next to this comes the quarter of a cent then the half cent, eight-tenths of a cent, and the one and two-cent pieces. In silver coins they have five, ten, twenty, fifty-cent and one dollar pieces. In gold, the one, two, five ten and twenty dollars, which are very pretty coins indeed. Next to this comes the Government series of paper money, in various denominations, ranging from 5 cts to one hundred dollars. This money is made on quite inferior paper to ours, and from general appearance will not last like the American money.