

The Chatham Record.

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My Lesson.

'You have only two' the lady said. As she glanced at my table at play, And I answered her, 'Only two on earth.'

A dear little girl with bright, black eyes, Unlike the other two.

The one with eyes of hazel brown, The other with heaven's blue.

A dear little girl with a laughing face, And sunshine in her hair.

Whose lips were smiling and pattering feet Made music everywhere.

And I grieve when I miss a single note From the music of baby feet.

And I weep for the tangle of sunny hair That is lost from my cluster sweet.

For the prattling lips, the clinging touch, The bound upon my knee.

When the chord was full, and the group complete, And my children numbered three.

And then I noticed the room was still, That the children stopped their play.

Then the oldest one, with the hazel eyes, Came to my side in tears.

She was only five, with a tender heart, And thought that beyond her years.

'What is the matter with mama's child?' This was the answer given.

'You said that a year ago a little child, I thought she was gone to heaven.'

And why don't you look for her every day, Until you find her again?

And not sleep a wink till you bring her home, Out of the cold and rain?

Then I brushed my grief for the little child, Lying under the bed.

I had learned a lesson from baby lips, 'Not out, but gone to God.'

—Mrs. J. H. H. in Atlantic Constitution.

The Mother of Marius

'And there's an end of it!' said Marius Gray, letting his hand fall despairingly on the table.

He had just returned from his weary day's work, which had stretched itself far into the night—he was engaged on a newspaper, and was beginning to earn good wages as assistant foreman in one of the departments—and had perused a letter which had lain on the table at his lodgings.

To Marius Gray's credit

be it spoken that he never for an instant hesitated as to what decision to make. He wrote an affectionate letter to his mother, telling her of the little home which was now at her disposal, and offering to come to Montreal and bring her thither at any time which she should fix.

And this letter safely dropped into the nearest mail box, he next began to consider the forthcoming explanation with Alice Ardley.

He went to see her that very evening. She was a music teacher, and lived in one of those genteel, comfortable boarding-houses which afford so poor a substitute for real homes, and she came down into the parlor, where the gas was economically lowered, and the scent of the vegetable soup that had been served for dinner still lingered.

'Oh, Marius!' she said, with a little gurgle in her voice, 'I've been wanting to see you so much.'

'Have you, Alice?'

He stood holding both her hands in his own.

'I've got such a favor to ask of you, Marius—and oh, I don't know how to do it, after all the hatful things I've said about mother-in-laws, and that sort of thing!' faltered she.

He stood still listening, and after a short pause, Alice went hurriedly on: 'It's my Aunt Aethia. I've got to take her home and take care of her, for the cousin who has supported her all these years can't do it any more; and oh, Marius, we can't be married unless—unless you will be very good and kind and let old Aunt Aethia come and live with us. I'm sure she can't be a great deal of trouble and I'll keep on with my music lessons to furnish her with clothes. She's a very nice, quiet old lady, and—but if you'll rather not, Marius, say so at once, and of course the engagement will be at an end.'

Marius Gray's face lighted up. 'Alice, forgive me!' he said. 'You have shown greater confidence in me than I have done in you. As far as I am concerned your aunt will be most welcome in any home that you and I are to share together. But, Alice, I had come here to ask you to release me from our engagement.'

Alice gave a little start. 'Marius!' she cried. 'Oh, Marius, you don't mean it?'

'For the reason,' he went on, 'that it is now incumbent on me to support my mother, who has hitherto lived with her father. I didn't like to ask you, dear, knowing your opinion on the subject of—well, of mother-in-law, to share your home kingdom with any one else; and there was no other home to bring my mother to. But now—'

'Marius,' cried Alice, 'it's quite true what you say. You have put no confidence in me. If I could trust you to be good to my poor old aunt, could you not have been sure that I would love my mother?'

'I am sure of it now, Alice,' said the young man, still holding her hand tenderly in his.

'And I won't release you from your engagement,' declared Alice, disguising her emotion under a very effective pretence of gay indifference. 'I've been taking lessons at a cooking school and I'm making up household linen, and I mean to show you in the end and my Aunt Aethia what a capital housekeeper I can be. And oh, how proud I shall be when they eat the first dinner I cook in my own home!'

'Alice, you are an angel!' asserted Gray.

'No, I am not,' said Alice. 'I'm only a silly, chattering girl, who says lots of things that she is sorry for afterwards. But I know how good and forgiving you are, and you shall see how dearly I will love you mother for your sake until I have learned to appreciate her for her own.'

So Alice Ardley and Marius Gray were quietly married, and on their wedding trip they went to Montreal to bring the old mother home.

Mrs. Gray, Senior, was a trim, erect little woman, dressed in black serge, with her rosy old face surrounded by the neatest of caps.

She came back to the cottage with them. 'I shall be glad to see how my children live,' said she.

And she took a great fancy to Aunt Aethia, who was waiting on the doorstep to receive them—a meek, soft-voiced old Quakeress, who moved noiselessly a foot and looked like a human dove in gray plumage.

'I wonder,' she said, 'how Friend Aethia—for she won't let one call her Mrs. Ardley—would like a situation as companion and reader! She reads aloud charmingly. That bit of the daily paper she read us yesterday, I declare I thought I could see with my own eyes everything that happened!'

'I think she would be delighted,

mother,' said Alice.

'It's a dreadful trial for her to be dependent on any one for a living; but there are no such nice places to be found.'

'I know of one,' said Mrs. Ardley. 'Where?' asked Alice. 'In Montreal.'

'But I couldn't trust Aunt Aethia with any one but a very kind lady.'

'Well, this lady is kind. At least she'll try to be. For she is myself, daughter Alice.'

'You, mother? But I thought you were going to live with us!' exclaimed Alice.

'My son Marius and you seem to have that for granted,' said the old lady, with a twinkle of her bright, black eyes. 'But you are wrong, nevertheless. No, I am not going to live with you. I'm very glad to have caught a glimpse of you in your happy little home, my dear; but I've an idea that young married people are better by themselves—for a year or two at least. And my father left me some real estate in Montreal which has increased very much in value, and I can live as I please now. Some-day it will all be yours; but in the meantime I shall take Friend Aethia back with me, and we'll be company for each other. Once in awhile we'll come and visit you, and mind you both take excellent care of each other.'

So vanished Mrs. Gray and quiet little Aunt Aethia from the scene.

'And here we are, just where we originally planned to be,' said Marius, as he and Alice stood at the door, where the mosses were in bloom, watching the wheels of the hack that bore the two old ladies away.

'Yes!' faltered Alice with a tear in her eye; but I never thought I should be so sorry to see a mother-in-law go out of the house.'

Superstitions of the Chinese.

It has often been a matter of conjecture why a Chinaman should be so particular in sleeping with his head toward the east. When at home, or traveling, or visiting, the Celestial, if among strangers, expresses no little care to avoid sleeping in any other position than the one which he has been brought up to look upon as the most correct and beautiful to his mind.

According to the Chinese superstition it is exceedingly dangerous to sleep with the head toward the setting sun. The sleeper might justly fear darkness, unhappiness and death; that is, of course, if he is a believer. From the north comes coldness, loneliness and barrenness, and to sleep with his head in that direction would be to bring down upon himself and family these products of the pole.

The south signifies passing glory, a limitation of wealth, health and happiness. Therefore, that is extremely undesirable. But to the east—the source of the rising sun—in all its splendor—in which the Celestial looks for all his good gifts. From it he expects (so he believes) light, life, wealth and happiness. No misery, or wretchedness, or want can come from the glorious east; so he must sleep with his head in that direction, in order to get the full benefit of the good gifts which will come to him.

Often, in traveling, Chinamen carry a mariner's pocket compass, in order that, when the time comes to return, they may discover which way to point their heads. If they make a mistake and sleep the wrong way, they are likely to lose just so much health and happiness. With a dead Chinaman this is reversed; for we believe that after death the body has nothing to lose, and the head, therefore, is placed before the west.

It is a fact worthy of notice and mention that those Chinamen who have become Christianized follow the old superstition about sleeping just as much as the heathen who steps his foot on American soil for the first time. They look upon it as truth, and not superstition, from childhood up, and it is hard to break down the teachings of a mother and father, especially in China.—Littell's Home Journal.

California's Remarkable Soil.

'The soil of California is so fruitful,' said a native of the Golden State, 'that a man who accidentally dropped a box of matches in his field discovered the next year a fine forest of telegraph poles.'

'That's nothing to my state,' said a native of Illinois. 'A cousin of mine who lives there lost a button off his jacket, and in less than a month he found a brand-new suit of clothes hanging on a fence near the spot.'—Texas Squire.

His Progress.

Dadaway—'You say you are going to call on Mrs. Palmsdale. What! in that shabby outfit?'

Clevert—'My dear boy, I've got 'way beyond the point where she notices what I wear.'

One Thing Puzzled Him.

He—'The fools are not all dead yet. She—'That's as true as you live. And he couldn't understand why she emphasized the "you."

CHILDREN'S COLUMN.

A MESSAGE. The wasn't on the play around, she wasn't on the lawn. The little one was missing and lost time coming on.

We hunted in the garden, we searched about to see if sleeping under rose tree or blue she might be.

But nothing came in answer to all our anxious call. Until at length we hastened within the darkening hall.

And then upon the staircase there broke a silver tone— The darling one was waiting before the telephone.

And softly, as we listened, came stealing down the stairs. 'Hello, Central! Give me Heaven I want to say my prayers.'

—Nights Days, in Independent.

BANG THE DOOR BELL.

I once had a cat whose intelligence was remarkable. We lived in an old-fashioned house; the kitchen was separated from the cellar by a partition with a glass window in it, and there was also a small window in the cellar that looked into the street. It was broken and this cat could pass out of it.

She was never allowed to go upstairs, but sometimes we would take her up on the sly. The servant was much annoyed by the doorbell's ringing, and on going to answer, find no one there, thinking it was the boys in the street.

The cat had a family and all were disposed of but one.

She seemed very much grieved at the loss. One day I happened into the kitchen and saw the cat on the top of the coat with her paw up in the air, playing with something. The bell rang and the servant went as usual, and I noticed the cat take her only kitten and jump through the broken window.

The servant came back. No one, as usual, but the cat came in with her kitten and the girl. I noticed when I went to the door that the cat always came in. The mystery was solved. The paw I saw in the air was pulling the bell-wire, and the cat had noticed when the bell rang the servant always opened the door, and when locked out from the house went to the cellar and rang the bell, and then to the front door to be let in.—N. Y. Journal.

THE SERIOUS MIND.

Two birds were building a nest under a study window. A gentleman sat in that study every day. He watched the birds. They were building the nest of clay. They brought bits of wet mud in their bills. They stuck these bits upon the wall.

After they had worked busily for awhile they would perch on a tree near by. They they would sit and look at the nest. Sometimes they would fly away and tear down all that they had built. Sometimes a part of the nest would fall down. Then the birds would sit and think how to build it better.

Right in the middle of their work an accident happened. One of the birds stepped on a piece of glass. It cut her feet very badly. But Mrs. Bird was a brave little body. She wished to keep on with her work. She did keep on until she was faint and sick, and could not fly up from the ground. Then she lay down. She closed her eyes. She looked very sick.

The other bird looked at her anxiously. Then he turned around and gave three loud strange cries. Soon, several birds came flying about to see what was the matter. A little surgeon bird came with them. He looked like the others, but he seen showed that he was a surgeon. He brought a bit of wet clay in his bill. He ground it fine with his own little beak. Then he spread it on the bird's sore, stiff foot, just as a surgeon spreads a plaster.

Next, he took in his bill a long green cornstalk which lay near. He flew up on a tin water-pipe under the window. One end of the cornstalk was near the lame bird. She understood what to do. She took hold of it with her bill, and helped herself up on the water-pipe top. Then the surgeon bird helped her into the half built nest.

Poor Mrs. Bird! It was very hard to be sick and to move into the half built home.

What do you suppose the little surgeon bird did next? He went to work and helped Mr. Bird finish the nest, then he flew off home.

Could the gentleman in the study have been kinder or wiser than that little bird?—Littell's Primary Reader.

Making Him Understand.

She—'Will you please close the door, Mr. Stayer!'

He—'Yes, it is closed. She—'Why, but I meant from the other side.'—Source in Journal.

POLITE SWEDES.

A Nation of Gentlemen from King to Coal-Heaver.

The Universal Truthfulness and Honesty of Norsemen.

The beautiful politeness and courtesy of the Swedes is a thing that is very striking to visitors. They have a large assortment of bows, bows, courtesies and hat liftings, according to age and sex, but the lifting of the hat to meet acquaintances reaches, I fancy, much lower down in the social scale than elsewhere in Europe; it looks odd to see the butler boy in a livery elaborately taking off his hat to the baker's assistant. I suspect, on examination, Swedish hats would be found to contain a little extra stiffening, in order to enable them to stand the wear and tear of these greetings in the market places.

On one occasion, when going by steamboat to Upsala, I noticed a very quaint example of this national trait. The steamboat, as it nears Upsala, passes through many shallow reaches of the Malar Lake, where the depth of water is insufficient to allow of the passengers being landed in the ordinary manner directly on the landing stages, and so have to be taken on shore in small boats. The forty man on shipping his complement of passengers would first take a dozen strokes or so in order to clear the crew of the steamer, and then would carefully lay aside his oars, rise from his seat, and take off his hat with a solemn bow to the people sitting in the stern whom he had just taken off the deck of the steamer. He would then row on again and put them ashore. This did not occur as an isolated instance, but regularly every time the passengers had to be landed by shore-boats.

The women of the middle and lower classes are little if at all behind their husbands and brothers in this matter. Their good temper and pretty behavior are worthy of all praise. The servant girls in Diocletian peasant dress, the cafe maids, and the young persons employed in shops all make the prettiest of all possible little hat courtesies, and so, oddly enough, do the young ladies of good family up to the day of their confirmation, which ceremony takes place rather later than with us, generally about the age of sixteen. From that day forth they put their hair up and take to bowing.

The Upsala students among one a good deal by the elaboration and conscientiousness of their manners. Any day during the vacation a few of them may be seen gathered around a table in the garden cafe of Hasselbacken or Tivoli, drinking their punch. They are mostly lads under twenty, but they bow to each other, and make little civil speeches, and pledge each other with solemn salutation, all according to the strictest Swedish etiquette, as if they were middle-aged gentlemen of high dignity and position, but slightly acquainted with one another. They certainly take themselves very seriously.

The custom of pledging or health-drinking is a survival from very ancient times. The glass is raised a slight bow made, the word said (initially hoarsely pronounced, followed by another slight bow, when the glass is replaced on the table, generally empty; it is not de rigueur, however, that it should be so, but in Denmark, where a similar custom obtains, the glass must always be drained to the last drop. To English eyes it appears quaint to see this complicated ceremonial observed towards each other by college companions not yet out of their teens.

That this universal courtesy and politeness is not merely on the surface is proved by the trouble to which Swedes will invariably put themselves in order to be of use to a stranger in need of help or information. So much is this the case that I at last tried to avoid making my way in the country round about Stockholm, because it so often happened that the countryman whom I interrogated would lay aside his occupation and accompany me some little distance in order to make sure of setting me on the right path. For this service he would seldom accept any recompense.

Another point which soon attracts the attention of visitors is the punctilious honesty and truthfulness of the Swedes; this is best seen in the many little incidents of daily life. When asking for places at a theatre, for instance, the ticket clerk never fails to inform you of, owing to the crowded state of the house, a better position would be secured with a cheaper ticket than the one asked for. Again, when parcels are taken out by steamers from Stockholm to country places in the neighborhood they are just thrown out on to the quay, where they frequently remain half the day without being

claimed. It never seems to occur to any one that they could possibly be taken by any one but their rightful owners. On a trip of any length, as for instance to Gothenburg by canal, a little book lies in the saloon of the steamer in which each passenger keeps his own record of the number of meals, cafes, cognies, etc. he may take during the journey. But, indeed, it is impossible to talk to a Swede for any length of time and not see how incapable of any meanness or dishonesty he must be. There is nearly always a simplicity and straightforwardness of manner the very antipodes of affectation, which is certainly a very pleasing attribute, and which can scarcely fail to convince the least observant person that he has before him a man who thoroughly respects himself, and who walks very straightly on the straight line. The Swedes, you feel, are a nation of gentlemen down to the coal-heaver and the wharf-men.—Temple Bar.

A Duffer Meets a Consumptive.

You have seen the duffer—a lunking big fellow, with a bullet head and lots of wind and fat, but without an ounce of—

—and in his crew. He always picks his man, and he always means to be certain that he has got hold of somebody who can be bluff and bulldozed.

There was a chap of just this sort—a duffer from Dufferin—in the crowd of passengers obliged to wait at the depot in Detroit, Alabama, for several hours on account of a railroad accident. After half an hour everybody sized him up for what he was, but he was permitted to go blowing about because no one wanted the excitement of a row. He boasted of his fights and his victories, and he tried hard to pick a foe with two or three farmers, and finally got his eye on something good. It was a tall, slim, hollow-eyed man from Ohio, who was evidently on his way to Florida to die of consumption. He had a deathly look to his face, and as he wandered up and down the platform he coughed in a hollow and dismal way. Duffer arranged to meet him in his walk, and at once loudly demanded:

'Did you move my valise off the seat?'

'No, sir,' was the reply.

'Well, I want to find the man who did; I can mop the earth with him in two minutes.'

'Well, I don't care who it was.'

'Oh! You don't! Mighty independent, you?'

'Go away from me, sir! I don't know you and don't want to.'

'Don't you? If you were only a well man I'd make you eat mud. As it is, don't give me too much sass, or I'll teach you manners.'

'You are a loafer, sir—a first-class loafer!' said the Buckeye, as he continued to walk.

'Never strike a sick man,' replied the other, 'but I will teach your nose once it relieves your temperature. Now come—'

He reached out with thumb and finger, but he didn't get the nose. He stepped it he got it! Bang! bang! in the face with the right and left, and as he went down the consumptive kicked him to his feet and knocked him over a baggage trunk. He didn't get up again until two men assisted him. He had two bunged eyes, a bloody nose and a bleeding mouth, and he looked about in a helpless way and stammered:

'Gentlemen, lead me some where where I can be alone.'

When he had gone some one asked the consumptive if he wasn't afraid the exertion would give him a hemorrhage, and he replied:

'What do you take me for?'

'Aren't you a Northern consumptive on your way South?'

'Not for Joseph! I'm a professional contrabandist on my way to fill an engagement in Cincinnati. I saw that duffer sizing me up, and so I played to catch him. If he should want anything more send him around.'—N. Y. Sun.

A Cunning Portuguese Custom.

A curious survival of custom was illustrated in Lisbon some days after the funeral of the late King Luis of Portugal. A funeral procession, composed of officers, military, and citizens, marched through the streets to places where platforms covered with black cloth had been erected. Four shields, on which were painted the royal arms, were borne aloft on long staves. On arriving at the platforms, the principal persons took their places upon them; one of the shield-bearers, advancing to the front and chanting 'Weep O Portuguese, for your King, Dom Luis I, is dead,' dashed his shield to the ground with such violence that it was shattered. This was repeated at each platform, while the bells were tolled during the whole ceremony. The proceedings were closed with a requiem service.

At Milking Time.

At milking time, when shadows climb The pasture bars, and sheep bells chime High up along the sunset hill 'Tis sweet to wander where he will And take no thought of care or toil.

The heart of boyhood in its prime Lights up with joy the cheek of grim, When karyds come out and trill, At milking time.

There's not in any land or clime An hour so sweet as milking time. As that when patient knee and hand The knots of life in many a rill Of rhyling and redoubt thyme. At milking time.

—James N. Matthews.

HUMOROUS.

Caught on the fly—The spider's web. A business done on tick—Telegraphing.

Where everything is a mis—in a girl's boarding school. Sword-swallowers ought to try saws for a while. They would be more profitable.

'How long was Emerson's speech?'

'I don't know. I didn't have my gnomes with me.'

Emerson—A term applied by man to those animals that object to serving him in the capacity of fool.

Lady (calling on friend)—Oh, isn't it splendid! I have made six calls, and you are the only one I've found at home.

'Do you think I look pretty in this hat?'

'No, it's pretty. You're as pretty as a picture—and I'd like to take the picture.'

'That cigar you smoke has its advantages.' 'Like it?'

'No; just a friend doesn't feel hurt if you don't order him one.'

A farmer was holding a plough. He had up to a remarkable horse. The load got over easiest. And so on.

And the farmer's an invalid tonight.

Cross-Examining Counsel—Isn't your husband a burglar? Witness—Yes.

Cross-Examining Counsel. And didn't you know he was a burglar when you married him? Witness—Yes; but I was getting a little old and I had to choose between a burglar and a lawyer, so what else could I do?

In the European standard war, I'm never out of sight. I don't know what they keep me for—They never have a fight. But I'm forever on the list. At every peace treaty they tell me I'd be early missed if I were not on it.

Facts About Watermelons.

The watermelon appears to be divided into two distinct classes—one adapted to very hot localities and the other not able to bear well more than a limited degree of heat. As a rule, large melons bear large seeds and vice versa, but there are exceptions. The most delicious melons, generally speaking, are those with thin rinds and punk or deep red flesh. Such melons, however, do not bear transportation very well. Large, tough-rinded melons of good quality, which have the additional merit of carrying well and being good keepers, are now produced in large quantities in the southern states. We now produce a greater variety of large watermelons than ever before, some attaining to 100 pounds and over in favorable seasons and localities.

Formerly our melons were mostly long and oval in form and dark green or striped, and bore large black or brown seeds. Seeds from Spanish melons produced our first thin-rinded melons. The French gardeners, when they want to keep melons a long time, cut them with long stems. These stems are coated up and covered with brown sugar to prevent them from drying up by exposure to the air. Melons from Spain and Italy thrive here, but there are not many varieties worthy of cultivation.—N. Y. World.

Wedding Rings.

The latest thing in wedding rings comes from England, and is a narrow but thick circle of 22-carat fine gold. This has come in fashion in America in the course of the last year, replacing the old style ring, which is both heavy and wide, being sometimes half an inch broad. These latter have been in use as far back as I can remember. The Germans always buy two plain gold rings, the lady giving one to her betrothed and he one to her. The 'alliance' ring is sometime called for, and often manufactured to order. It is made of two circles fitting into each other and coming apart something like a puzzle, and is a revival of a very old style. The ordinary wedding ring costs from \$7.50 to \$15, although the English ring is somewhat more expensive. In engagement rings individual taste is the only law, but set stones are great favorites. A novelty is a ring of three circles, almost as narrow as wire, each set with a band of different stones, such as pearls, turquoises and coach-shells.—St. Louis Globe Democrat.