

## ONE MONTH.

Miss Dent stood to receive her death sentence. She could not sit still and watch Dr. Mercury rub his glasses and deliberate. His musty books occupied one whole side of his study; the morning sun threw a broadside in at the other. He stood with his back to the north side, she with her back to the south, while he pronounced his opinion. Miss Dent accepted his opinion as the oracle. She knew the flaw that was in her race. He had eased all her family gently out of the world. Her turn must come. Yet, "To man, all men are mortal except himself."

"My dear young lady," droned Dr. Mercury tapping his glasses on his thumb nail, "it would be better for you not to know it; but since you so determinedly insist, I say candidly, I do not think your lease of life extends beyond a month. You may die any moment. According to natural laws, you cannot survive beyond the time I named."

He looked apprehensively at her. His sentence developed no alarming symptom. The doctor followed her to the door, cautioning and soothing; put her into her waiting carriage, bled up into her still smiling face, all solicitude for her; sighed, succeeded, and could not put the matter out of his mind until the next patient appeared.

Christine drove to the Park. She wanted to breathe. Her undulating greenness struck her like a pang. "This is the earth," she said, "and I must leave the earth in a month." Yet Christine Dent had told her soul a great many times that she wished she was dead. She hated life. Her unhappy temperament had beaten against it more than a score of luxurious years. However, we all remember the fable of the old man who fell down and called on death, and rose again "to explain" when death appeared.

People said Christine Dent had everything in the world to make her happy. She was an heiress, cultured, much sought after; had an indulgent maternal aunt for a guardian; a beautiful establishment; she had spent the seasons abroad, and in the capital; she was herself a thing of beauty; how could her existence be anything but a joy forever? For are not those nurses on Fortune's bosom borne tenderly to the door of Heaven, and headed in? Wealth is a beautiful advantage. We don't need dear Charles Lamb's word to convince us that "exhilarating cordials, books, pictures, the opportunities of seeing foreign countries, independence, heart's ease, a man's own time to himself—are much, however we may scandalize by that appellation the faithful metal that provides them for us."

But Christine Dent, with her wealth and beauty, her circle, had not been happy. Some grasps of rapture had been hers, which left her miserable because they didn't last. She had entered the world—not for the pursuit of happiness; the privilege is guaranteed to the meanest of her countrymen (excepting the Chinese)—but for the purpose of retaining happiness. She couldn't do it; consequently her life stood for nothing, it was a failure.

Christine Dent had owned a lover, and now owned him not. (You reach the core of the matter.) She had scores of old notes breathing vows warm enough to scorch the satin paper, signed by her devoted Darty. Couldn't she remember how they used to set her heart a-beating till it nearly burst? Couldn't she remember also how her love waxed while Darty's waned? They met in Washington. He at once seized sway over the unfortunately made girl. They were lovers in a few hours. Darty had that vanity which spoils the fascinating man. Had Christine been a flirt, she might have kept him. But she was a jealous, exacting, worshipping woman. Their engagement ended in a tempest. Christine was just young enough to wish violently for death, until the old fellow came obligingly and stared her in the face that lovely morning.

"I'm not positively glad to see you," she said; "It's a little odd. And I've been in the habit of living. But I'm not sorry. One month. Well, it doesn't matter whether I'm happy this last month or not. But I could do something fit to be done before I go."

She spent the day putting many little things in order. "Aunt Thusa," said Christine at dinner, "what do you want to do this evening?"

"Why, my dear," replied Aunt Thusa in her usual brisk, submissive formula, "anything that you want to do—the opera?"

"Oh, auntie," said Christine, with sudden mournful qualms, "you've always given up to me in this way, haven't you? Oh, I'm so ashamed. Do tell me for once what you would like me to do."

"My darling child," cried Aunt Thusa. She straightened her spectacles and looked fixedly at Christine. The sad, earnest, great eyes were perfectly sane. "Well, my dear, since you are so thoughtful, I will confess I would like to stay at home this evening, so I can spend the time on some finery for your cousin Rhoda. You know she hasn't your means, Christine, and is anxious to make the sum her father gave her to go as far as possible. I promised to help with her little fancy articles."

"I had forgotten Rhoda was to be married so soon," muttered Christine. "Aunt, I ought to go there oftener, oughtn't I?"

"Why, my dear!" cried Aunt Thusa, setting her spectacles for another observation, "you know a young lady in your position has so many engagements."

"But I shall not have so many engagements the rest of the time. I will go there to-morrow. Wait, I'll

ring the for Lisette to bring some of my lace; I shall like to do things for Rhoda."

"Aunt Thusa," said Christine, as they sat under the gas, their laps overflowing with lace and tulle, "is Rhoda's fiancé wealthy?"

"No; he has only his salary, but a very worthy young man."

Christine left the room, and went up to her writing desk. She found a blank check and filled it up.

"When I'm dead," she thought on the staircase, "Aunt Thusa will miss me; she will enlarge the borders of her mourning—dear soul. I hope Rhoda will think of me, too. I shan't hurt her till tears gushed over her cheeks."

Next morning Rhoda ran up that same staircase, palpitating with a feeling which would outlast her own life. She found Christine alone, and reached out her trembling hands.

"Oh, cousin, you've made me the happiest girl in the world. Two thousand dollars—two whole thousand dollars for a wedding gift! We shall owe our home—where we begin our lives together—to you." Christine here crushed the tremulous red lips against her cheek, and carried the happiest girl in the world into her own apartments there to devote three precious hours of her slipping life to plan for another's bliss.

Christine was not a member of any Charitable Board or Society, though she gave liberally to those boards. She nervously abhorred what she called the goody-goody Dorcas type of women. She turned on herself in surprise, when she found that a sudden desire to enter a sisterhood of her acquaintances had told her. It comprised mainly young women of society, with time and money at their disposal. Each in her appointed week laid off the pomp and vanities of this wicked world, robed and veiled in the gray uniform of serge and went among the poorest poor to serve them.

Christine presented herself before the Society, and was gladly received. "You came just in time, Miss Dent, if you wish to commence at once," said the presiding lady. "It will be Miss Train's turn next week, and she is seriously indisposed."

"I will take her place," said Christine. So she slipped into the gray uniform, and went to spend days and nights nursing a German family, who lived in a pestilential part of the city. I dare say, if Dr. Mercury had heard of it, he would have prescribed sudden death for her, unfettered by any day of grace.

"I wish I had three years to live instead of three weeks," she whispered over the feverish German baby. "So many to be taken care of in just the very places where there is no one to pity, and no arm to save."

An artist—unfortunate rat—who burrowed in the same great warehouse with these Germans, went up and down the stairs. Ever as he passed, he turned an appreciative eye on the picture they opened door showed him. One twilight, as Christine soothed the baby on her knee, she saw the evening star between the roofs. While she turned her rapt and resigned face upward, the artist paused on the stairs, caught an inspiration which he called "St. Agnes," carried it up, put it on canvas, and had an opportunity soon afterward of hanging it on exhibition.

Among the visitors who noticed the picture was Darty. He stopped to study it. "St. Agnes." That's Christine Dent's face, yet it isn't her face either. "Where did you find your model?" he asked the painter, who hovered near like a seedy guardian angel.

"I found her in the room of a poor family, nursing a sick child, in one of those charity uniforms which I believe ladies sometimes don during Lent. I studied her face without her knowledge."

"It is Christine Dent!" muttered Darty under his moustache. "Rather a selfish saint. But there's something fascinating about that look. I say, what's your price for this picture?"

Christine did not take off her gray shroud at the end of the week; she would give one more week to the work.

As she went her ways, street beggars began to take great stock in her. She who had loathed the unwashed, would stop to talk with filthy children; to touch with money and her pure pink fingers the repulsive palms of half-alive wretches; to speak compassionately to those desperate because lost. He heart was on a level with them; its currents flowed with them. The repeat of her days was all love. "I wonder if I feel a little as Jesus Christ felt toward people," she meditated.

"Why,"—the thought struck her suddenly one day—"I'm happy! It didn't make any difference whether I was happy or not, yet I never was so happy before! This is a beautiful last month!"

She saw cousin Rhoda married, and took one or two little dips into such festivities as there were. We are social, and part from our kind reluctantly.

Christine found her world had changed with herself. She discerned sterling principle in many whom she used to distrust and despise. The little vanities and jealousies of society broke against her like gossamer. She was a woman who was going to die. She stood in more than one great drawing room, casting her earnest, true eyes about, with a wish that she could reach them with her arms and cry, "Oh, friends, knowing more of our humanity, I love the best of every one of you. I wish I could make you a little happier before I go."

Every one agreed there was a charm about Christine Dent at that time which drew even women to her. The manager of her property called on her one morning directly after

breakfast. He brought bad news. Two business houses had failed, involving whole communities in their ruin. Her fortune was gone.

"Now, don't, my dear Miss Dent," cried the excited banker, seeing her fold her hands and cast down her eyes. "Don't give up! A pittance—a mere pittance may be saved, but it is wise to expect the worst."

Christine thought of her disappointed heirs; yet none of them were in want. Of the beautiful plan she had formed for her poor wretches; yet somebody else would take that up.

"I'm sorrier," she said, "for the families that are ruined. Men ought to be very careful in handling money when the interest of so many are tangled in their transactions."

"First time," meditated the financial gentleman, after concluding the interview, "that I ever saw a woman sacrifice hysteria to moral reflections."

Her month was near its close. Yet how evenly, serenely two hearts throbbed. Was it really the treacherous fountain Dr. Mercury described, liable at any moment to suffocate and strangle her?

She was wont in these last hours to be finding sad inspiring chords on her piano. She was living intensely. Time and eternity melted together. Says Emerson, "It is the quality of the moment, not the number of days, that imports."

Once, as she thus sat in the cathedral of her own emotions, Darty's card was brought in. He knew she had lost her fortune, and he came with a mainly impulse to befriend her. Christine rose to meet him with a singularly beautiful grace. She loved him with self-forgetfulness as if there were no Christine Dent.

Their positions were reversed. Darty forgot he had ever held any power over that face, now so lovely, so intense with universal tenderness. She spoke simply of her reverses. She gave herself up to making this man of her happier for one little hour, since by such beautiful happening, he came to her so near the last.

He rose and stood near her. Saw the St. Agnes face which was coming up through the former unhappy, tigerish beauty of his sweetheart.

"Christine, I know I love you better than I used to do. Forgive and take me back."

She leaned two sudden, entreating hands against him. "Don't, don't love me! I'm only trying to make you happy a moment not to make you love me!"

"You're making me unhappy by repelling me. Christine, you loved me once, didn't you?"

"I loved you after a fashion," she replied, turning up a face white with that electric look which only comes from earnestness, "but I care so much for you now that I would rather do without you than to have you for mine, and give you pain."

"What pain could you give me worse than the torment you're dealing out to me now?"

He crushed her like a barbarian. He was at her feet, pleading, at this moment, when she would turn his thoughts from her, lest her death should be a bitterness to him.

"Sit down," breathed Christine; "don't make life too dear to me; I want to see clearly and coolly for your sake. Do you know I'm going to die? It would be too foolish to accept and bind you to me now. I only want you to be my dear, dear friend for a little while. And, believe me, I will be as close, as helpful a friend to you forever, as my Maker will let me be. Dr. Mercury told me nearly thirty days ago that I should scarcely live a month. It is some trouble in the heart and circulation."

"Zounds, Dr. Mercury! What right had he to set bonds to your life?—And you believe him! I'll prove him a quack! Give your remaining life into my hands."

Now whether this young woman's heart leant to comfort itself peacefully during that month, or whether Dr. Mercury made a slight mistake in time, which even the wisest scientists may do, or whether the liability to sudden death was not as great in her body as it had been in some bodies of her blood—she still lives. And as her heart enlarges, and learns the pulse-beat of humanity better, it may do service to a good old age.

"But," says her friends, "Mrs. Darty has the happiest faculty of getting a lifetime out of a day."

They do not know she learned her happy faculty by having to squeeze a lifetime into a month.

## Ideal Matrimony.

The highest type of matrimony is the ideal. In that state, the husband and wife are not absorbed into each other by any means. They remain totally separate individuals, with their own aims, desires, and loves, but blending as it were into one whenever union is necessary. The wife in this marriage is no slave or toy of her husband, but his equal, companion, friend, and adviser, inspirer, stimulator, and even agitator. Him she meets with open, frank eyes, not in the barbarous fashion of Western Europe, abashed and submissive; and him she leads on to a higher and nobler life, not administering to his base material comforts and ease, but urging him ever onward and upward. The ideal husband, knowing her to be his equal in every respect, mental and moral, naturally regards her with the deeper veneration that she is physically his inferior. This ideal condition, according to the account of many foreign observers, actually exists somewhere in this country—where, we have never seen stated, but probably not in Connecticut, Indiana, or Illinois.

Topping, the West Oxford murderer, is fast recovering from the effects of the self-inflicted wound, and his health is being restored.

## Things Wise and Otherwise.

An impossible request—To ask any one "to stop a minute."

The Siamese twins, Chang and Eng, died on Saturday morning in Greensboro', N. C. Chang was the first to die, and two hours after his death Eng expired.

Sentiment for winter—The old woman about this time may be expected to pick her goose; may the fall of snow be unaccompanied by a rise in coal.

On Monday Mr. Washburne, the United States Minister to France, presented ex-President Thiers with a gold medal on behalf of the French residents of Philadelphia.

Two fires occurred in Chicago on Tuesday morning, by which a railway depot and a fine block of building were destroyed. The loss is calculated at between \$500,000 and \$600,000.

A knitting mill in Bennington, V., was destroyed by fire Tuesday afternoon, and nine women killed by the explosion of the boiler, besides several others severely injured.

The White Star steamer Celtic, which left Liverpool on Thursday, came into contact with some floating wreckage at night and lost all the blades of her propeller, and had to put back into Queenstown for repairs.

That a man who attempts to bring down and deprecate those who are above him, does not thereby elevate himself. He rather sinks himself, whilst those whom he traduces are rather benefitted than injured by the slanders of one so base as he.

Two Irishmen were in prison—one for stealing a cow, the other for stealing a watch.—"Hullo, Mike, and sure what o'clock is it?" said the watch-stealer. "An sure," said the watch-stealer, "I've no timepiece handy, but suppose it's just about milking time."

Extract—"You cannot taste in the dark," said a lecturer. "Nature has intended us to see our food." "Then," inquired a forward pupil, "how about a blind man at dinner?" "Nature, sir," answered the Professor, "has provided him with eye-teeth."

Texas has a colored preacher named Benjamin William, who is said to have all the earnestness and pathos of Robert Collyer, with more natural dramatic talent. He begins his sermon with the exclamation, thrice repeated, "Come to the rock!"

Mr. G. L. Albert has recovered from the Iowa Central Railroad a judgment of \$6,000 for injuries received in a collision in October, 1872, when his collar bone was injured and he was crippled for life. Another man named Haines, who was injured at the same time, obtained a verdict of \$11,000.

A young lady of Lyons, Iowa, recently said: "Some men are always talking of patronizing their own town—always harping on that duty—and yet they go on to get married, while here we wait and wait! I do hope that some of these men who marry Eastern women will get cheated!"

A relief society has been organized in Olneyville R. I., which furnishes a free dinner of hot soup to the hungry. Previous to the banquet, however, each applicant is requested to sign the pledge, state what church he attends, where his children go to Sunday school, &c. After having proved his orthodoxy, the liquid repast is tendered, and he is supposed to eat with the proud satisfaction of knowing that his spiritual welfare is being cared for at the same time his empty stomach is being filled.

The Bay View Street Railroad Co., in San Francisco, is experimenting as to the limit of human endurance. The conductors and drivers are made to work eighteen hours every day, and sometimes nineteen, for \$2.50 each. Besides this they are expected to keep their cars in order, and breakages are generally retained from their wages. Their average amount of sleep does not exceed four hours a day, and their meals are cold lunches eaten at odd moments.

Five negroes were killed in a row near Montrose, Alabama, recently. Two of them got into a dispute, and one shot the other dead. A brother of the slain ran up with an axe and split open the head of the man who had fired the fatal shot. A friend of dead man No. 2 killed murderer No. 2 with an axe, and a fifth negro soon laid the last axe-man low with the same deadly weapon. Before the fourth negro was cold, another axe laid No. 5 dead on the heap. The surviving murderer is abroad.

One of the stations on the Selma and Meriden Railroad is named Cuba. Recently a train with an emigration agent and a party of colored men going West reached that point, and the brakeman put his head inside the car door and shouted "Cuba!" One old colored man rose, and as his hair straightened out with sudden fear, said, "Dar, I know'd it! Heah we is in Cuba, an' dat ar white man's gwine to put us in de war or sell us fore day. I see gwine from heah," and he, followed by about thirty others, bolted off the train and into the woods, leaving the agent alone in his glory.

The bane of the beautiful island of Martinique is a serpent called the "iron lance." This reptile, with venomous taste, chooses the coolest and most delightful places in the garden for its retreat, and it is literally at the risk of one's life to lie down on the grass, or even to take a rest in an arbor. The wounds inflicted by these serpents are very apt to be fatal unless immediately cared for. The island is infested with this dangerous reptile, and it is said that on an average nearly eight hundred persons are bitten every year, of which number from sixty to seventy cases prove fatal, while many others result in nervous diseases which are almost as bad as death.

## A Knowing Dog.

Recently in Detroit a coach dog was quietly wiggling his way under his master's carriage, and a Newfoundland manifested a disposition to chew him up. After a great deal of maneuvering the Newfoundland darted under the buggy at the rear, and coachy darted out in front close to the horse's heels. The other followed, but failed in his mission, and, besides being stepped upon by the horse, was run over by the carriage and badly hurt.

## A Beauty of the Land of Flowers.

"Silver spring," according to a Florida correspondent, is the most unique spot near that most unique of rivers, the Ocalawa. One marvels over the clear transparent water. Your boat seems to float in the air, and objects can be seen eighty feet down at the bottom—fish, too, are plainly seen. The bottom is silver sand, varied with pale emeralds, huge colored rock, strange formations of lime crystals and white coral. The spring throws out thousands of gallons of water a minute, but there is scarcely discernible a ripple on its surface. Drop in a coin and you can follow it with your eyes to the sand at the bottom as it signals downward.

## Bazaine's Fortune.

A correspondent, who writes as one having authority, says that he reports that the personal fortune of Marshal Bazaine will barely suffice for the payment of the costs of the late trial, is quite unfounded. Bazaine being worth many hundreds of thousands more than the costs could possibly amount to. His wife is wealthy, having large estates in Mexico, from which she receives regularly a handsome revenue. It is said that she will sell the fine residence they lately had constructed in the fashionable quarter of the town, the Champs Elysees, and with her children take up her residence near the fortress of St. Marguerite.

## Complicated Suicide.

The San Francisco papers chronicle the taking off of M. Lemaire, a French cook of that city, who left his seventy years too much for him. He repaired to his room, and closing the doors and windows tightly, lighted a charcoal fire in a furnace; then drew a pen-knife and cut his throat, inflicting a wound about two inches long not at all serious in its nature, but which he probably thought in his inexperience would finish his career, for he lay down to die without any further attempt at blood-letting. The fumes of the deadly charcoal, however, did the work effectually, and in due course of time the room contained a corpse only.

## Furrin' Aid.

Luther S. Butler, a prominent farmer, had a narrow escape from drowning in one of the Lenox lakes, which he attempted to cross recently on his way to attend the dedication at the centre of the town. He came upon a thin place on the ice where the water is thirty feet deep, and fell in. His struggles to clamber up on the ice were ineffectual for a long time, and he was growing numb, when a happy thought struck him. He had on his hands gloves with fur on the outside. Changing them from one hand to the other, so as to bring the fur on the palms, he slapped his hands down on the ice, the wet fur froze down, and with the help of that slight adhesion he was enabled to pull himself up on the ice and save his life.

A NEW EPOCH IN MEDICAL HISTORY.—"Reason and chance," says Pliny, "led to the discovery of the virtues of medicinal herbs." In these modern days, research and experiment have perfected the work that reason and accident began. DR. WALKER'S VINEGAR BITTERS are the latest result of botanical investigation and pharmaceutical science. This extraordinary medicine, composed entirely of vegetable ingredients culled from the soil of our Pacific Territory, is pronounced a remedy for every disease—not organic—of the stomach, the liver, the bowels, the respiratory system, the kidneys, the muscles, and the other organs which make up the machinery of life. All who have witnessed its effects are in favor of its universal adoption as the safest and most reliable tonic known. Free from the taint of alcohol, it is nevertheless a stimulant, though not a dangerous excitant. One thing is certain—no curative heretofore introduced to the public through the press, has ever obtained, in so short a time, the celebrity of Dr. WALKER'S CALIFORNIA VINEGAR BITTERS, or been supported by such unimpeachable testimony. From that testimony it is evident that this preparation is a specific for Dyspepsia, Nervous Debility, Intermittent and Bilious Remittent Fevers, Diarrhea, Dysentery, Rheumatism, Gout, and all disturbances of the secretory and excretive functions.

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