

RARE ENGAGEMENTS TESTS OF LOVE?

The engagement period is the most important chapter in the history of a girl's life. It is even of greater importance than the married state itself, for while the one stamps the twain with the seal of a hidden futurity which may be happy or otherwise, the other positively ties them down to a lot which is already known, and inevitable.

The engagement time is the open preface to the uncut leaves of the book of matrimony, and it very often happens that the preface is much more interesting than the book itself.

Girls look with brightness and cheerfulness to the day when they will become engaged. It is the one event of their lives. They are enraptured when in the due course of time their wish is fulfilled, and they see sparkling on their finger the much-coveted engagement ring.

But how do most girls regard their engagement? As the season of serious thought, or merely as a right to plunge headlong into what we may call a round of giddy frivolities?

There are girls who go through their engagement time with hardly a breath of serious thought to cool down that enthusiasm which commands their every thought, word, and deed. No right-minded person, of course, would deny the newly-engaged girl all the joy and enthusiasm possible, but her delights should be tempered with judiciousness. There is something else to be thought of besides what their friends will think of their affianced husbands, what particular style of finery they will indulge in on their wedding-day, or of what their trousseau will consist.

All these are fine things in their way, but they do not form the backbone of the engagement time. They are flimsical compared with the seriousness of the future which is dawning before them. Are they fully prepared to enter the lists of matrimony sure of that success which is a sine qua non of a happy marriage? Is their education in the stern reality of marriage as perfect as their idyllic dreams of wedlock? Does the modern engaged girl fully realize that she is about to become the wife of a man of whom she knows in reality—except in rare cases—but very little?

The engagement period is the time for consideration, and not a favorable opportunity for boasting. It is not to be inferred that we would prefer to see an engaged girl assume a melancholy countenance because she is engaged, but what we regret to see in the modern engaged girl is the cultivation of a tendency toward an erroneous interpretation of the real meaning of her newly-acquired state.

Outside shows seem to be the main attraction. She seldom tries to peer into that life which lies beyond the altar rail.

It is here where the crucial question comes in: Are modern engagements tests of love? Modern engagements are modern social puzzles. It is not always love that induces Hymen to tie the nuptial knot. There are other considerations. "What is he?" concernedly asks the world of the bride-elect. If she can satisfy Mammon that her future husband is a follower of Croesus, all is well; the world will ask no more questions.

This may be a corruption of the morals of society, but it is patent to every Christian on earth that when a maiden or a man becomes engaged the principal thought that strikes the average mind of the average friend is: "How much is he or she marrying?"

The engagement time, therefore, is, basing our logic on this rule, seldom a test of love, but we grant that it is not impossible for a couple who marry for position, wealth, or other social reasons, to let love in, as it were, at the door of marriage.

These are the conclusions of an observer who has had under his eye the problems that affect the middle classes mostly, and believes that the aim of the modern middle-class girl is to secure the best match possible among her friends.

She practically lets her heart be bartered for among her male friends, and it goes to the highest bidder. Her parents and friends look upon her with the expectation of making a good match; but if she have regard for pure love, and marry contrary to the wishes of her friends, she may look in vain for any great amount of sympathy from them. The greater the match the greater is the opportunity given the modern engaged girl and her friends for the boasting of its superior qualities.

A man regards his engagement differently. He doesn't telegraph it to the world. He doesn't gossip about it with the man in the street, nor stop outsiders on the pavement to tell them about it. It is a very serious matter with him; indeed, so very nervous is he sometimes over the business that he has been known to lose courage and run away from it on the very morning of the "settlement."

This resume of the engagement time is not written in any vindictive spirit. The desire is to promote in the breast of the newly-engaged girl a sense of true propriety in relation to her enviable position. She ought not to make it too cheap, but rather look upon it as a very distinguished honor and dignify it with proper considerations, thus reflecting credit not only upon herself, but also her affianced husband.

WITH THE LIGHTS TURNED DOWN.

Do you notice any increase in your gas bills since your daughters are old enough to receive company, professor? You have recalled something, sir, that is inexplicable to me. We regard mathematics as a fixed science, and yet it is a fact that I pay less for gas than when the entire household used to retire together. It's astounding.



HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN; 78 YEARS OLD MAY 24, 1897.
(Engraved from a late photograph.)

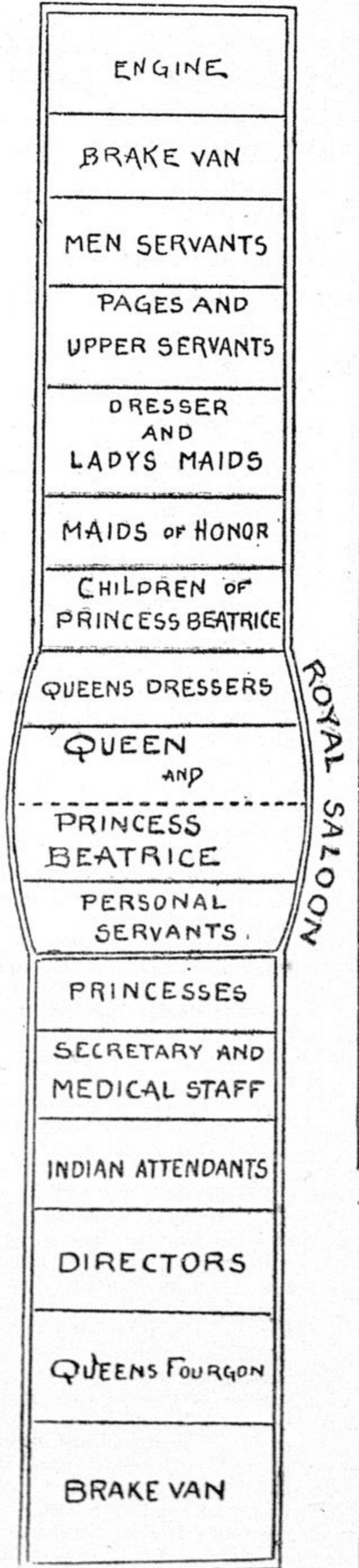
ONE DOLLAR, OR PNEUMONIA.
Railroad President—Hum! Seems to me the receipts from our chair-cars are not as large as they might be.
Superintendent—No. The people object to paying the dollar extra for such a short distance.
President—Hem! While this damp, chilly, windy weather continues, see that the brakemen on the ordinary cars politely open all the doors for passengers to get in and out at every station, and—and politely leave them open until the train gets under full headway again. Politeness pays, you know.

STILL VALUABLE.
Eastern Youth, out West—I have called to get you to help me locate lot 902 in this village—I mean city. My late uncle left it to me and I have come West to see about it. Pretty valuable by this time, I suppose?
Real Estate Agent, looking over map.—Hum! It was valuable when your uncle bought it, but the grade of the streets has been changed and it is now 500 feet below the curb and full of water.
Eh? Water? Good gracious! It can't be of any use at all.
Well, I dunno. If you like frogs' legs, you might get a meal off it once in a while.

AN ORIGINAL METHOD.
Delia is so queer.
In what way?
When we go to get ice-cream soda she stands out on the pavement before the drug store fully half an hour; she won't go in until she has made up her mind what flavor to take.

A RARE CHANCE.
Waiter—Very sorry, sah, but we haven't any veal. Veal is mighty scarce dis time of year, an' we haven't had no veal for a week. Can I bring you anything else, sah?
Guest, hastily—Yes; double order of chicken salad.

IT MADE NO DIFFERENCE.
There had been a little family jar and she was sulking.
You have no right to refuse me, she said. When I promised to marry you I told you that I always wanted my own way, and you said that made no difference.
Well, it doesn't does it? he retorted. You don't get it, do you?
Thus it happened that she called him a mean thing.



OFFICIAL DIAGRAM OF THE TRAIN.

QUEEN'S RAILWAY TRAIN.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRAIN IN WHICH SHE TRAVELS.

Her Majesty's Car is a Palace on Wheels—Adjustment of the Spring Prevents Jolt or Jar—The Queen's Luxurious Compartments—What the Engineer Says About Precaution to Prevent Accident.

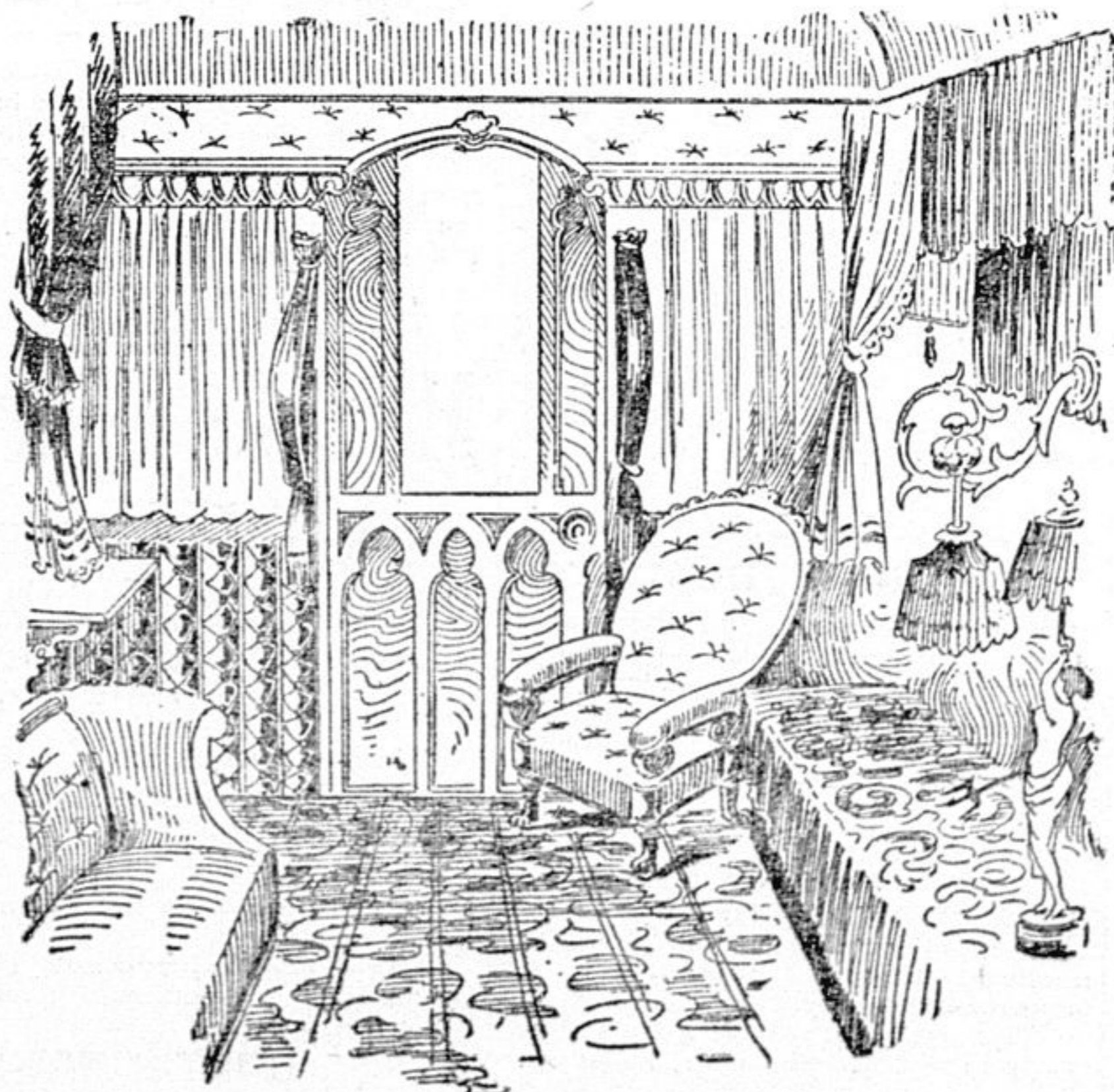
The Sheffield Independent, giving a description of the railway train in which the Queen recently travelled when starting for the Continent, says:—"Its length is exactly sixty feet, and it is carried on two six-wheel bogies. The vibration from the springs bearing the wheels is practically nil, and a double precaution is taken by fastening thick strips of rubber where the springs and the frame join. Thus the sensation of travelling is rendered extremely enjoyable, for it is impossible to have the slightest jolt or jar anywhere. The body of the carriage is painted a rich lake color, and highly varnished; but in place of the familiar 'L.N.W.R.' and the accompanying 'Britannia' emblem on the panels there are skillfully painted replicas—in gold—of the Order of the Garter, the Thistle, St. Patrick, and the Order of the Bath, headed, of course, by the Royal Arms. The upper part of the carriage is painted in flake white, and at each cornice is a carved and gilded lion's head, while the springs are picked out in

CREAM AND GOLD.

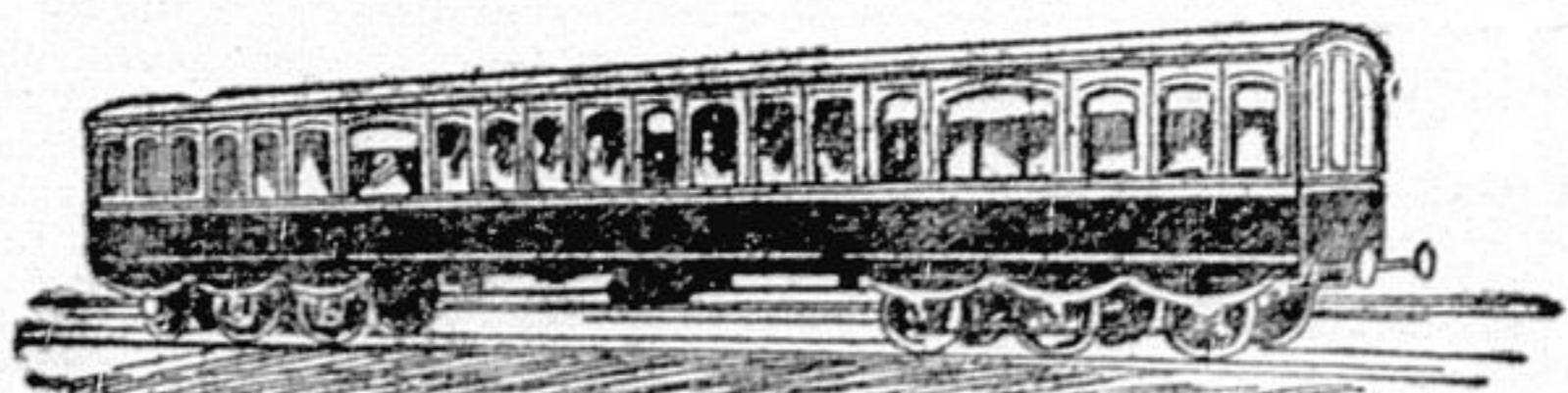
The windows on both sides are broad and high, some of them—at the side—being embossed with small orders. The entrance to Her Majesty's day compartment is effected by means of collapsible steps. The floor is carpeted with a rich Axminster, the prevailing tints of which are blue—to harmonise with the general 'tone' of the rest of the compartment; and the ceiling is upholstered with white silk. Running one length of the side is a delightfully comfortable lounge, upholstered with blue water-face silk, and the four chairs, made of satin wood, inlaid with tulip wood, are similarly covered. At the cornices the Royal Arms figure prominently, and the prevailing blue tint is further emphasised in the blinds and the curtains—the former being composed of blue silk, and the latter of similar material, lined with cloth. Light is supplied by two large electric lamps depending from the roof, and two smaller ones at each end of the room, the shades to these being composed of fine yellow silk. Leading directly from this handsome room, is the Queen's sleeping compartment. It affords a striking contrast with its neighbor from the fact that the hangings and upholstery are of a much more subdued nature, the prevailing color being a dark green. To the left of the carriage, facing the engine, is Her Majesty's bed, at the foot of which is the coach set apart for Princess Henry of Battenberg. The two beds are

UPHOLSTERED IN GREEN.

the bedsteads themselves being heavily gilded; while depending from brass rods fixed to the cornice are heavy curtains which can be drawn totally round both beds. Fixed in the centre of the roof is a large electric globe light, and in different parts of the compartment are four smaller ones, each delicately shaded with silk texture; while in both rooms are electric bells communicating with the attendants, and with the guard at the rear of the train. The door of the sleeping compartment leads direct to the lavatory which is most elaborately fitted up; and a further door brings one into the compartment constructed for the use of the Queen's



INTERIOR OF THE QUEEN'S SALOON.



THE QUEEN'S RAILWAY TRAIN.

dressers. It is comfortably fitted with Pullman lounges, upholstered in brown silk taborette, and the favorite blue is once more in evidence in one corner, calls the dressers into Her Majesty's bed-chamber. This compartment is the last in the saloon, and the final one that remains to be described is that at the other end of the carriage. It is a small square room communicating with the rear door of the Queen's day compartment, with a lounge seat for the four personal servants of Her Majesty.

ENGINEER OF THE QUEEN'S TRAIN.

"Everybody knows that extra care is exercised whenever Her Majesty travels by rail," remarked George Lasham, familiarly known among railway men as the "Queen's driver," to the writer one day recently, "but few people realize how thorough and complete are the precautions taken to guard against any and every possible danger."

Mr. Lasham, it may be explained, has driven the "royal special" over the London and Southwestern system for nearly forty years, and is therefore an authority on the subject. Quite recently, on his retirement from active service, he was presented by Her Majesty, with a beautiful silver salver, elaborately chased, and engraved with the royal arms.

"Before every journey," he explained, "no matter how short the distance may be, the engine and tender attached to the special are carefully examined by the chief locomotive superintendent. A pilot engine precedes the train, all ordinary traffic is suspended, and the line for the whole distance is watched by relays of platelayers. To the driver are given the most explicit instructions as to speed, stoppages, etc., to disregard any one of which would be to court instant dismissal.

PRINTED INSTRUCTIONS

are given to every official accompanying the train, who is strictly forbidden to give any information respecting the arrangements.

"It is wrong to suppose, as many do, that the Queen's special slips along faster than any other train. As a matter of fact, it is a standing order that the speed of the Queen's train is never to exceed forty miles an hour, and it is generally kept well within even that moderate limit. This latter regulation, however, applies only to Her Majesty's special. The Prince of Wales likes to travel as rapidly as possible, and he generally has his desire gratified, if not, he invariably wants to know the reason why."

"When any special danger is apprehended the ordinary precautions are redoubled. For instance, during the dynamite scare in the jubilee year every piece of coal used in the furnace was broken into little bits in the presence of an official before being loaded on the tender, and the interior of the boiler was carefully examined and scraped. The object was, of course, the same in both instances—to guard against the introduction of explosives."

It is not usual, it appears, for members of the royal family to bestow extra remuneration upon the drivers of their trains. Foreign potentates, however, are more free-handed. Thus, Mr. Lasham recounts, with a good deal of satisfaction, that he invariably received from the Shah twenty pounds a trip. Next to that much bejewelled autocrat in generosity was the late Emperor Napoleon, whom the 'Queen's driver' often took from Chislehurst to Windsor, and who was invariably "good" for a five-pound note. It was always delivered, inclosed in a sealed envelope, by His Majesty's private secretary. This custom his widow, the Empress Eugenie, kept up until the death of the Prince Imperial, when she ceased to charter "specials."

LOVE AND LACEWORK.

Marion there by the window is sitting, Some dainty lacework is Marion knitting, Swift in and out the bright needles are fitting, As I sit here by her side, Marion's brows are ensunnen in gold tresses, Marion's sweet lips were formed for caresses, One daring wish now my fond heart confesses, But to win her as my bride, Over her hair drift the shadows a-quiver, Softly the poplar trees rustle and shiver, Down far below gleams the blue of the river, Never was fairer June day.

"Marion, sweetest, you know I adore you."
"Wait but a moment, kind sir, I implore you. This pattern is new, I must knit one row more, you are sitting too much in my way."
"Marion, listen! I've loved since I met you; Never, while life lingers can I forget you."
"You'd put your eyes out I'm sure, if I'd let you! Of my needles beware if you please."
"Never, sweetheart, will you find truer lover, If you care for me I fain would discover."
"Purl three and knit seven, slip one and thread over— Was ever so charming a tease!"
"May, you shall hear me, you slyest of witches! Here at your feet lay I all my love's riches."
"See, now, you've made me drop one of my stitches! You're very provoking to-day."
"Was ever maiden so wilful before her? Yet the more wilful the more I adore her, Since 'tis in vain I'll no longer implore her, Coldly my farewell I say, Marion looks up with pretty beguiling All my feigned anger away from me wiling."
"Nay, sir, what hurry?" she asks, slyly smiling, "See, now, the pattern is done."
Rarest of blushes are o'er her cheek flitting, Lace work forgotten, no longer she's knitting, Close, side by side, at the window we're sitting, Marion's sweet heart is won.

L. M. Montgomery.