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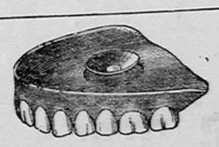

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Poetry.

Nemesis.

When he and she were ten and eight
His little wife was she:
And both were quiet content to wait
Till he a man should be.
They played together as they grew;
A tyrant lord was he—
They'd quarrel when the clock was two,
And make it up at three!

At fifteen he on girlish toys
Looks down with scornful mien;
And she disdains to play with boys
At feminine thirteen.
His matrimonial views are cool,
At love he gayly mocks;
She boasts a dearest friend at school,
And daily lengthening frocks!

When twenty sees him quiet a man,
Its bliss has one alloy;
She laughs at him behind her fan
And calls him such a boy.
For she has lovers now galore,
Who smiles and favours crave.
And he who tyrannized of yore
Is now her humblest slave!
They now are middle-aged; 'tis said
His chin a beard now covers;
And strange to say, she's not let wed,
In spite of all her lovers!
But vain for her to sigh for him,
For so the story tells—
Grown weary of caprice and whim
He's married some one else!

—*Chambers' Journal.*

Literature.

MR. JOHN SMITH.

BY MARY FORMAN.

It was a dreary day in the month of December, 1860, when I left the railway station at L——to start on a walk across a new (to me) road to find the house of my old friend, Dr. Harris. I had never visited him in this, his new residence, before; but his invitation to spend the Christmas holidays was so urgent, that I accepted it, as heartily as it was given—sure of a warm reception from my friend Mrs. Harris, and three of the fair daughters who were still at home. Armed with the most precise directions from a man whom I met at the railway station, and not expecting any conveyance, as I had not written to say by what train I should arrive, I started blithely on my walk, hoping to reach the house before nightfall. I had not gone more than a few rods from the station, when the snow, which had been threatening all day, began to fall in thick flakes, filling the air, and laying in a smooth sheet upon the hard dry ground. Although I am a bachelor of only fifty, I will own that of late years, snow air affects me with curious pains, not rheumatism; I am hardly old enough for *that*, but odd shooting pains, which make me avoid giving any occasion for them, if possible, and which made my present situation decidedly uncomfortable. Whether the snow-filled air blinded me, or the directions were not sufficiently clear, I cannot tell, but certain it is that I lost my way. The little village of L——lay far behind me; night was coming on, and the early twilight of winter had already fallen, yet not a house could I see where I might buy a night's lodging, or even inquire the way to my friends. In this emergency, my delight may be imagined at a brilliant light suddenly appearing at some little distance, evidently from the window of a house near at hand. Another and another gleam followed, till the whole front of a large house was illuminated. By this light I easily found a little gate which opened with some difficulty on account of the snow, but which finally yielded to my efforts, and admitted me into a large inclosure, at the back of which stood the house I have mentioned. Plodding on through the snow, I at length reached the high flight of steps, which led to the door. The wide porch was sheltered by an overhanging roof; and, having shaken off the snow from my coat and hat, I found the bell handle, and gave it a vigorous pull.

The door was thrown open by a tall man in neat livery, and before I had time to make my inquiries, he asked eagerly—

"Are you Mr. John Smith?"

"I am," I replied.

"From New York?"

"Yes,"

"Come in! The young ladies will be so glad! They've been expecting you ever since morning; I'll tell them you are here," and throwing open the parlor door he motioned to me to enter, and then left me.

"Lo," I thought, "I have stumbled upon the right house after all. The young ladies are very kind." And I involuntarily gave my collar a twitch higher, and stole a glance at the long mirror over the mantle-piece. My survey was interrupted by seeing reflected in the glass a female figure, who was just entering the room. Surprise kept me motionless for an instant, for it was the most extraordinary figure for a private parlor in a country house. The lady was very tall, and wore a white garment, which fell in long loose folds from her throat to the ground, unconfined at the waist. Her round, white arms were bare, excepting that upon the left wrist she wore a steel fetter, to which was attached a chain; the companion fetter, evidently intended for the other wrist, she held in her hand. Her face was ghastly pale; indeed it looked as if it had a thick coating of powder over the natural complexion, and her hair, which was long, thick, and black as a raven's wing, hung in long masses far below her waist. I turned to face this damsel, wondering if either of the doctor's daughters could be insane, and expecting a raving speech or at the least a burst of tears. She advanced, however, with a graceful, easy step, and said quietly—

"Mr. Smith, I believe?"

"I am Mr. Smith, Miss. May I inquire—"

"I will tell you all; but as we are rather pressed for time, on account of your late arrival, I must be brief. I presume the storm delayed you. You will find refreshment in the library, and—"

"Ellen!" screamed a voice in the distance.

"Coming!" answered the lady beside me, in a scream that fairly made me jump. "I cannot wait," she added, hurriedly; "I am called; you will find pen, ink, and paper on the table.. Pray lose no time, for it is nearly six now. The third door on the left in this entry."

A man's voice in the entry at this moment exclaimed in thundering tones—

"Here let us, then, divide; each in his round
To search her sorrows out; whose hap it is
First to behold her, this way let him lead
Her fainting steps, and meet me here together.,,

"Ellen!" he added. "Where the mischief is Ellen?"—and, entering, the owner of the voice proved to be a tall, handsome man in a cavalier's dress, who came in hastily, saying, "Have I found you at last?"

"Mr. Smith—Mr. Johnston," said the tall damsel.

"I am glad you've come at last. You will find a table in the library ready for you," said the new-comer.

"It's horrid late. Jane, they wait the Lady Jane."

"She comes," said the lady whom he had just before called Ellen. "You will excuse us, Mr. Smith; we are very busy just now," And before I could put a question they were gone.

Where was the doctor? What was the solution of this odd conduct? Hoping to find an answer to both questions in the library, I went out; found by the bright light in the hall the door to which I had been directed. Upon opening it, I found myself in a room lighted only by the reflection from the hall lamp which I had just admitted through the doorway. A figure in a dark dress stood in one corner, and, as I appeared, cried, in a frantic tone—

"Where is he?
They said he was with you; he—thou knowest
Whom I would say."

"Upon my word, I don't" I said; but she continued—

"I heard ye loud. I thought
I heard ye; but, perchance, the dizzying throb
Of my poor temples. Where is he?"

The question was put in such a yell that I was positively alarmed.

"My dear madam," I said.

"Are you Mr. Smith?" inquired the lady, coming forward, and speaking in a natural tone.

"I am, madam; I came here—"

"Yes, I know; it's all right. I will not interrupt you, of course. I thought when you opened the door that it was—Mercy on me! there's the bell." And this second singular female rushed off like a young whirlwind.

I was beginning to feel rather uncomfortable. I knew that my friend Harris was rather Quixotic in some of his ideas, and I began to fear that he had turned his house into a private lunatic asylum. Perhaps, I argued, some explanation may be found here. I drew from my pocket my little match-box, which I carry to light my cigars, and struck a match. The light flashed for an instant, and then went out; but I reeled back, for that one flash showed me, gaping at my feet, an empty coffin.

A faint scream from the next room came to my ears as I stood panting against the doorway.

"Oh, Lily," said a soft voice, "don't scream *so*!"

Another scream, a little louder, followed.

"Pinch her," said a man's voice.

Apparently the suggestion was acted upon, for a long, loud, piercing shriek followed, and was greeted by a roar of laughter from several voices.

"Bravo, Lily!" said one voice.

"No danger of consumption there; her lungs are good," said another.

"Nell pinched awfully," said a lady's voice, laughingly.

"I shall certainly do it again at the proper time," said the voice of the lady whom I had met in the parlor.

"The brutes are making game of some unfortunate idiot," I thought indignantly.

"Perdition seize my soul, but I do love thee!"

shouted a voice so close to the door that I jumped as if a pistol had been fired there.

"Where is the shroud?" said a new voice.

"In the box with the wineglasses," said another.

The empty coffin flashed on my mind, and I determined to explore the library still further. I had dropped my match-box in my first fright, and I stooped to find it. A round, hard substance was the first object I touched, and I drew it out to the light. Imagine my horror! it was a grinning skull. I dropped it with a cry, which attracted no attention in this queer house; and then summoning up all my resolution, stooped again for my match-box; this time I was more successful, for I found it immediately.

At that instant a scream so long, loud, and piercing that it seemed the concentrated yell of a dozen demons sounded at the head of the stairs. and then a woman in a long black dress and with a veil over her face dashed down the staircase, across the entry, past me, and stood panting under the hall lamp. An instant later, a man in the ordinary dress of a gentleman came from the same landing, and ran lightly down the stairs.

"Back!" cried the lady, in a voice denoting an agony of terror. "One step nearer, and I plunge this dagger into my heart!" And she actually drew a dagger from her belt, and held it up.

"Come in here," said a voice from the mysterious room; "don't go on that way in the entry."

Apparently the voice restored the lady to her senses, for she held out her hand to the gentleman, and they went in together. My position in the doorway had shielded me from the notice of this couple, and also prevented my obtaining a view of the room from which so many strange sounds proceeded.

Half frantic, I struck another match, and this time succeeded in lighting the astral lamp which stood upon a large round table in the centre of the library. By this light, I glanced fearfully round the room, not knowing from what corner some lunatic might pounce upon me. The usual furniture of the room seemed to be piled away in one corner, excepting only the bookcases, whose tall, upright frames stood against the walls. The coffin still gaped near the door, and in it was the skull which I had dropped. Upon a chair near it hung a velvet pall, with a heavy black fringe. On another chair lay a red velvet mantle, and across this lay a naked sword. Turning my head, I saw in another corner a block such as was anciently used for beheading criminals, and across it lay a bloody axe. I felt sick, suffocated with these horrors, when another pile attracted me. Here were pistols, daggers, and swords, in amiable companionship with crowns, masks, purses of money, velvet caps, a violin, and a large pitcher of silver. Upon the centre-table stood the astral lamp, writing materials, and a small tray, upon which were a cold chicken, a plate of biscuit, and a bottle of wine. Despite the singularity of my position, I remembered that I had been invited to partake of refreshment in the library, and I drew up the only vacant chair in the room, and attacked the supper. I was just comfortably seated, and had taken one mouthful, when a man rushed into the room, exclaiming,—

"Here I can be alone for five minutes." Then, seeing me, he said, "Mr. Smith?"

"Yes, sir; will you be kind enough—"

"In a minute; in a minute! don't let me interrupt you. I will be gone in five minutes."

He was as bad as the woman. He wore a long, black cloak, and in his hand he held a naked sword, which he flourished within an inch of my nose.

"But, my dear sir," I began.

"Don't bother me now." And making savage passes with his sword he shouted, "Down, down, dog! dost thou beard me still?" Then striking an attitude, with the point of his sword making a fearful hole in the carpet, he cried, "So perish all who cross me on my path."

A voice from the next room said—

"Burn the witch!"

Apparently the advice was followed, for a scream of pain followed, and the gentleman in the cloak, crying, "It is her voice! On, on!" darted out of the room.

"That's better, Lily," said the unseen burner (I presume); "you don't scream worth a cent. generally."

A loud voice at this moment began to sing, in good time and tune, "Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen." A dozen male voices took up the chorus, and the song was well sung throughout. I had finished my supper, and was meditating and hoping the doctor would soon arrive, when a gentleman, in a powdered wig, breeches, and tights, came to the door and looked in. Seeing that I was alone, he advanced and said, in a low tone—

"Mr. Smith?"

"Yes, sir; will you tell me—"

"By and by; I have not a moment to spare. I only came to say to you that they are determined upon the murder of your—some one comes—be on your guard, and if you cannot prevent them from seeing it, call for me, and I will deliver it in a style befitting—hush!" and the gentleman withdrew with his finger upon his lip.

"If you please, Mr. Smith." I looked up to see a little black-eyed girl, in a picturesque peasant's dress, in the doorway. "You're wanted, now," she said.

"Wanted?"

"Yes, sir, we're ready for you."

"Are you? Where?"

"Come, Susy, hurry!" said an impatient voice in the distance.

"Coming. Come, Mr. Smith."

Determined to see the meaning of all this strange conduct, and emboldened by a glass of wine, I followed my pretty conductress to the next room.

Some twenty or thirty gentlemen and ladies occupied this apartment, which was immensely large, uncarpeted, and unfurnished. Such a strange scene I never beheld. In one corner a sailor was fencing with a Turk, while a little negro girl urged the combat forward. In another place, my white-robed, black-haired damsel was composedly fettering herself with her steel bracelets. The lady in black was pacing up and down in the background, talking to herself in a low tone, and gesticulating violently as she moved backward and forward. One man, in a corsair's dress, was kneeling at the feet of an exceedingly pretty nun, who was toying with the curl's on his forehead and arranging them in picturesque confusion. My arrival was unnoticed for an instant, then a gentleman in a white sheet, apparently, came over to me.

"Mr. Smith?"

"Yes, sir; will you have the goodness—"

"Oh, Mr. Smith," said the lady in black, coming forward, "did Harry remember the owl?"

"And the torches; are the torches coming?" said the pretty brunette.

"Oh, Mr. Smith, who's to speak?"

As they were by this time all speaking at once, I considered *this* question rather superfluous. I was almost deafened.

"Why didn't you come together?" cried one.

"Harry's dreadfully late," screamed another.

"Are they written?" yelled a third.

"We are ruined without the owl," murmured the lady in black.

"Ladies and gentlemen," I began.

"Oh, bother, a speech!" said the corsair, impatiently. 'Give me the papers."

"No," interrupted the powdered-wigged gentleman, "give them to *me*."

"But, really, my friends!" I said, again.

"Come, old fellow, the papers. Hand them over," said the sailor, joining the outcry.

"Here I am at last!" cried a cheerful voice behind me.

We all turned to see the new-comer, who stood in the doorway. He was a tall, rosy-cheeked young man, evidently just in from the storm.

"Nellie," he said, tossing a bundle of papers to the fettered damsel. "Here are the papers. The other things are in the library; Smith couldn't come."

"Couldn't come!" cried a chorus of voices, and all eyes turned upon me.

"Why," said the new-comer, "whom have we here?"

Glad to have an opportunity of speaking, I said,—

"I am Mr. Smith, sir, from New York, who, having lost his way in the storm—"

A roar of laughter interrupted, and then one after another my tormenters spoke.

"The wrong man!" said one.

"What *did* you think?"

"Of all absurd things, this is the funniest," said a third.

"Such a remarkable name," said a fourth.

"We owe you a thousand apologies," said the brigand, raising his voice above the Babel of tongues, and silencing them; "and must trust to your good-nature to grant us a pardon for our error. Allow me, ladies and gentlemen, to explain the facts to this gentleman." Then to me again, he said: "We are a party of amateur actors and actresses, sir, and this evening give our first performance here in about an hour. My brother Harry went to New York yesterday to secure the services of a friend of his, Mr. Smith, who was to come down, write our prologue and epilogue, and act as prompter. We have been expecting him all day, and the similarity of names must be our excuse for our error. If you will accept a place in front here we shall be very happy to have your opinion of our performance."

I need only add that, after seeing several fine tableaux, scenes from different plays, and hearing some good, some bad recitations, I was shown to a comfortable room for the night, and after partaking of a hearty breakfast, at which the white-robed lady presided in a pretty wrapper, with the hair "done up" in approved style, I was driven to my friend's house, where my late adventures made a hearty laugh for the old doctor.

Methods of Country Maids.

It would be impossible to enumerate all the methods of divination still practiced by country maids to learn their fate as regards matrimony. Burns has described many Scotch customs; Herrick and Gay (in "The Shepherd's Week") mentioned others. The marks left by a snail crawling in ashes, the position into which an apple or an onion peeling falls, the swift or slow burning of nuts, the shape assumed by melted wax or lead dropped into water, are all eagerly scrutinized and believed in now as they have been for centuries. The superstitions practiced on All Hallow's eve alone would require a small volume to enumerate. An old and extremely Protestant writer, Barnaby Goadge, describes an ancient custom practiced in Advent by young girls, who, at this season of the year, drew out sticks from a wood pile, and foretold the temper of their future husbands by the straightness or crookedness of the stick.—London Standard.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's Noble Wife.

Good out of evil found a pretty illustration in the case of Hawthorne's removal from office. He was crushed by the blow, and staggered to his humble home full of bitter disappointment. No one knew him then as one of our greatest—yes, the world's greatest—men of genius. His wife quietly left the room, says Conway, then came back with an armful of wood, kindled a cheerful fire, drew his chair up to his desk, brought papers, pens and ink, and then, turning to him with a beaming face, said: "Now you can write your book." The result was "Scarlet Letter," and such fame as no novelist in America before or since has attained. It was all due to his noble wife. Had she repined, and added to this burden, the world would never have known Hawthorne.—Globe-Democrat.

A Look at Japan's Book Stores.

A look at the book stores of Tokio gives some idea of the class of literature that the educated people of the empire read, and there are no subjects too high or abstruse for them. In one of the book stores here there is as good a collection of metaphysical works as you will find in any book store in Washington, and Mill and Spencer are read by the thousands. All classes of scientific works are sold, and there seem to be more solid books than novels. I see second hand books for sale on the street marked here and there with Japanese notes bearing on such subjects as biology, political economy and history, and a number of the more noted works have been translated into the Japanese language.—Frank G. Carpenter in New York World.

A CRIME OR A HOAX?

Chocolates Sprinkled With Yellow Powder Turn Up in a Dead Letter.

OTTAWA, Nov. 27.—What is either another case of attempted poisoning by means of candy or a silly joke of some Toronto crank has just been brought to light by the officials of the Postoffice Department. A few days ago there reached the dead letter office here a small cardboard box addressed to an individual at Galt., Ont. The package had been sent letter postage from Toronto, but only bore a one cent stamp, and consequently, being short of postage, was forwarded to the dead letter office for additional postage. On being opened by the officials to discover, if possible, the name of the sender, the following appeared on a piece of paper about four inches square, evidently written by a female:

"Charles—I send these with my love. Meta murdered. HANNAH.

"I defy you to show these to Mat Howie, I curse the day I ever saw you. Eat of these and die, you cowardly villain."

An examination of the box was made yesterday and it was found to contain three or four chocolate creams, which had evidently been broken before being placed in the box. The white, creamy substance, probably congealed from exposure, had been well sprinkled with a yellowish powder having something of the appearance of insect poison. The precise number of the candies cannot be ascertained, as they were separated in about a dozen or fifteen pieces.

The box is one of ordinary cardboard, 3¼ by 2 inches. The address was evidently in a female hand-writing, as also the word "Hannah" on the bottom of the receptacle. There has been no little discussion among the officials here as to whether the candies were sent in a joke or in earnest. The Postmaster-General has the matter under consideration and will decide in a day or two what to do about it.

Henry George Banqueted in London.

LONDON, Dec. 2.—Henry George spoke at a banquet in London last night. Many notable Radicals were present. The first thing to do, he said, was to secure land values for public use, which would open a whole vista of possible reforms. He opposed a peasant proprietary. His speech was received with great enthusiasm.

President Diaz Enters on His Third Term.

CITY OF MEXICO, Dec. 2.—President Diaz took the oath of office yesterday. This is President Diaz's third term and his second consecutive term. The Government made a great display with firing of cannon, parade of troops, etc. There was no popular demonstration.

A Big Difference.

"Johnnie was playing tag this afternoon and fell down the cellar," said Mrs. Brown. "But, thank goodness, the poor little fellow wasn't hurt."

"That was very fortunate," replied her friend.

"Yes," returned Mrs. Brown. "It was only last week that he fell down there before when I sent him for coal. He said that he felt he was going to die, and he couldn't eat anything but cake for a week afterward."—New York Sun.

The Boulangist committees advise their adherents not to take part in the Baudin demonstrations, as it is a Government trap to provoke a bloody collision.

The legal expenses of Mr. Lepine, M.P., in the late Montreal East election were $420.65, and those of Mr. Porier, the defeated candidate, $1,320.29.

Lieut.-Col. Ouimet has sent in his resignation as commandant of the 65th Battalion. Judge Dugas, who is senior major, will probably succeed to the colonelcy.

Mr. Rufus Stevenson is urging the Minister of Finance to impose an export duty on hemlock logs, which are produced chiefly in Kent, Essex, and Lambton counties.

The Kingston by-laws granting a bonus of $75,000 to the Napanee and Tamworth Railway and $150,000 to the Kingston and Smith's Falls railway have been carried.