

A GREAT SECRET, OR, SHALL IT BE DONE.

CHAPTER V.—CONTINUED.

But they failed to draw anything but inarticulate murmurings from the old peasant until a little black figure glided past the muscular young servant, and kneeling down, slipped her arms around the mere Benoit's neck, and said in French, with a strong foreign accent:

"Tell me what thy grandson has done."
"He is lost; the wolf devil has got him," sobbed the old woman, after staring dully at her interrogator until the sympathy in the big brown eyes moved her to speech.

"That is what she says, monsieur, mademoiselle; little Jules saw the wolf devil a week ago, and you know that always brings misfortune; and now to-day he went across the dunes to Moreau's farm with a load of wood on his shoulders, and he has never come back. And *la mere* thinks he may have been robbed by the wolf devil of the few sous he got for the wood, which we tell her is impossible, since it is only those who have something worth taking who get robbed. It is more possible that he may have lost the money and have returned to hunt for it; or perhaps he may have had his foot caught in a rabbit-hole and hurt himself. But anyway, as I tell her, it is useless to trouble monsieur."

"No, it isn't," said Gerald promptly. "I will go at once to the dunes and look for Jules. Henri shall take *la mere* home to her cottage; and you Delphine, must go too, for Henri would never dare to come back alone while this stupid wolf story is about. Miss Beresford, you won't be frightened, will you? Marie the cook will be left in the house, and she has plenty of courage."

And without waiting for an answer, he dashed out of the room, and they heard him mounting the staircase. When he returned to the *salon*, Miss Beresford had her hat on and Delphine was fastening the buttons of her ulster.

"I am going with you, Mr. Staunton," said she quietly. "Delphine has just told me the story, and it seems this wolf-creature never attacks anybody who is not alone. No, I'm not tired; I can walk fast, and I shall not be in your way; but you shan't go alone."

He made a few objections; but as she scarcely paid civil attention to them, he contented himself with ascertaining that she was warmly wrapped up, and they left the house together. It was nearly eight o'clock and quite dark. As they passed Henri standing by the gig, Gerald told him to take it back into the stable until his return, and saying simply "Come along" to his companion, he and she walked the whole length of the long white house, over the square-paved courtyard; and then, passing a little pond on the left (which looked, with its background of trees, like a yawning black pit in the darkness), they walked on together along a rough grass-grown path between an ill-kept hedge on the one side and a tangled plantation on the other, followed by a potato-field, and then by more plantation.

"It's very dark; if I were alone I should be frightened," said Miss Beresford at last. In spite of the excitement of the strange place and the novel circumstances of the walk, she had become sleepy and tired again; and though she could walk on steadily at a good pace, her brain was in a sort of excited confusion, which made her glad that her companion did not seem to want entertainment from her.

"Hush!" said he softly. "Look there!"

She tried to follow his glance into the tangle of the still almost leafless plantation; but she could see nothing.

"Are you afraid to stand here one moment alone?"

"No-o," doubtfully.

She had scarcely uttered the word when Gerald sprang away from her, and as he did so she heard the crackling of dry branches and the rustle of last summer's long dead straws, and she knew that he was in pursuit of some one or something. The chase did not last long. In a few moments she heard a sort of squeaking cry and a whining boy's voice.

"O Monsieur Monnier, let me go—let me go! Indeed, I saw nothing—I saw nothing; and I swear I will never tell any one: I swear it, I swear it! Oh, my poor grandmother! Oh, don't kill me please!"

"Get up, Jules; what are you talking about? I don't want to kill you. Come here."

And Gerald dragged out on to the rough path where Miss Beresford was standing a dishevelled, ill-fed-looking boy of twelve, who had turned suddenly taciturn, and who refused to answer any questions as he stood trembling with cold and fright in the grasp of his captor, who led him back to "Les Bouleaux," restored him to his grandmother, who had not yet left the house, and gave orders that both should have supper in the kitchen before they returned home. Then Gerald went into the *salon*, to say good-bye to Miss Beresford, who had accompanied him and his prize home very quietly.

"Good-night, Miss Beresford; the gig is waiting to take me to Calais. Delphine and Marie will do all they can to make you comfortable. I shall see you to-morrow; don't be dull. Good-night."

"Good-night," said she, giving him her hand and smiling. "Be sure you come early to-morrow—as early as ever you can; and don't forget to bring me some more chocolates."

So he left her and got into the gig. On the way to Calais he had plenty to think about; for besides that most interesting discovery of a sweet little sister in the once dreaded Miss Beresford, the words that Jules had uttered in the belief that he was addressing Monnier the gamekeeper had roused some strange suspicions in his mind.

"I wish Mr. Beresford were here," thought he. "I think I shall write and tell him about this business; he will make Jules speak, if anybody can."

He went straight to the house of the Fournier's and announced Miss Beresford's arrival. Madame Fournier asked him to spend the night there; but he did not see Victor, who returned home long after the rest of the family were asleep. Next morning he was at the factory before Victor was up, but he found there a telegram which for several reasons gave him great relief.

"From M. Beresford, Normandy Hotel, Paris."

"To M. Staunton, Fabrique Fournier, Saint Pierre-les-Calais."

"Arrived here from Nice last night. Shall be at Calais at 12.53 to-night."
"Now everything will be all right again!" said Gerald to himself joyfully.

CHAPTER VI.

It was a quarter to six o'clock on the evening of Thursday, March 29th, that Mr. Beresford, of the firm of Fournier & Beresford, lace manufacturers, arrived in Paris on his way from Nice, and drove straight to the Hotel de Normandie, where rooms on the third floor had been engaged for him by telegraph some days before. He grumbled exceedingly on the way thither at the terrible inconvenience either alternative of staircase or lift would cause him, on account of the partial paralysis of his left side, which had for nearly five years made locomotion difficult for him. The little prim English lady, Miss M'Leod, who was his devoted nurse, secretary, companion, but, and scapegoat, condescended with him on this misfortune with perfect sincerity, although she knew that it was parsimony and not poverty prevented him from installing himself in comfort and luxury on the first floor. She was a curious study, this small, spare, haughty, high dried lady, by herself so insignificant that the handsome dresses in which she delighted to array her tiny person were quite without effect, and the height at which she carried her little pinched nose and shrivelled chin gave her, not the dignity she craved, but the stiff air of a doll of our grandmothers' time, which, after having been carefully packed away for half a century, has been discovered and repaired and decked out in clothes of modern fashion at a great sacrifice of congruity. But having had the luck to see, four years and a half ago, Mr. Beresford's advertisement for "an English lady of tact and refinement as companion housekeeper to a middle-aged invalid," Miss M'Leod, after quieting those maidenly scruples which are never so strong as at forty, had been interviewed, approved of, and installed in a position for which, by every little crook in her narrow mind, every little whim of her kind heart, she seemed peculiarly fitted. Away from Mr. Beresford she was nothing; as the right hand of the invalid oracle of "Les Bouleaux" she was quite a great lady. So in return for a courteous deference, in which she was not clever enough to discern "chaff," she yielded him a devotion more complete and absorbing than worshipper at altar ever paid, and was gradually becoming as necessary to him as he was to her.

As they were driving from the station to the hotel Mr. Beresford slowly drew his head far enough out of the multitude of wraps in which his neck was swathed to speak with sufficient clearness to be understood. The paralytic stroke which had deprived him of the free use of his right arm and leg had affected his speech in a curious manner producing the effect of histone being intractable, and apt to get in the way. Miss M'Leod, however, seldom failed to gather his meaning, and she now understood him to grumble at the amazing remissness of Mr. Smith in not turning up at the station to meet him. Miss M'Leod drew up her little person with an electric shock of dignified disgust, and Mr. Beresford gave a dry chuckle on noticing it.

"What has poor Smith done to offend you, that the very mention of his name is always enough to turn your smiles into frowns?" asked he.

But he knew; for the housekeeper was as jealous of her influence with her employer as ever fair lady was of her power over her lover, and "that Mr. Smith" ran her very close in Mr. Beresford's confidence, and was the thorn in the little lady's side. He was the cleverest of the travellers for the firm, and it was well understood that in that matter of predicting the coming fashions in lace, which had done so much for the firm's fortunes, Mr. Beresford never prophesied unless Mr. Smith knew. During the three months she had just spent at Nice, Miss M'Leod had been spared the sight of the hated one, though she had had to read aloud his business letters, and to affect admiration of their sagacity; but to hear his absence regretted in the very first minutes of their arrival in Paris was too much for her patience.

"Nothing, monsieur," said she in French, the language Mr. Beresford now habitually used; "but I think it would have been more courteous of him to meet you, since he knew at what time you would arrive."

"Well, well, it is the first time he has failed to do so, and some accident must have prevented his coming. Or perhaps he was at the station and we missed him."

"In that case he will certainly be at the hotel within a few minutes of your arrival there," said Miss M'Leod, sincerely hoping that the obnoxious clerk would fail to put in an appearance that evening, and thus give her a legitimate ground of complaint against him.

"Come, tell me the reason of your dislike to poor Smith; you are a lady of far too much sense to take an unreasonable prejudice, especially against a man who admires you so much as he does."

But the implied compliment left her frigid. She cast about for a reason, and found one that would serve.

"Mr. Smith takes too much credit to himself for the work he does for you, which is, after all, of quite a subordinate kind, and consists merely in following out your suggestions. He absolutely boasts of his authority with you; and I am sure I would not wish to say anything against a man behind his back, but I certainly do believe that, while working for you, he is working for himself too."

"Naturally. That is the secret of getting well served, to make your own interest that of your servants."

"But if those interests should happen to run different ways, the servant will follow his own," said Miss M'Leod, whose Christianity was apt to grow weak as she grew warm.

"How do you mean?" asked Mr. Beresford, indulgent and amused.

"Why, that I believe—not that I would for the world say anything against a person without proof—that Mr. Smith is more bent on making his own fortune than on making yours."

"I daresay he is human enough for that."

"And I have seen him, out of a packet of letters which he has taken from his pocket to read to you, slip back one or two, with a quick glance at you, as if afraid that you would see them. I believe he has secret

communications with some one," she finished, with a romance-inspired air of mystery.

"Well, he may have communications from the Prince of Darkness himself, as long as the intelligence he obtains from him is accurate and useful."

And Miss M'Leod, to whom even profanity lost its wickedness coming from the lips of her employer, s.t. up her lips tightly, as if to force back any more disregarded revelations; and they reached the Hotel de Normandie in silence.

Mr. Smith was not there, had not even called there, did not arrive during dinner, at the end of which meal Miss M'Leod was secretly triumphant, Mr. Beresford evidently uneasy. He refused to go to bed, and insisted on sitting up, on the chance of his trusted clerk's arrival. At last she suggested that, if Mr. Beresford knew his address, he should be sent for at once. Pierre now, in a *fiacre* with the message. Now, Pierre was Mr. Beresford's valet, a faithful but incompetent old servant, who had been engaged out of charity, or to illustrate Mr. Beresford's theory that fidelity and intelligence in any being except a dog are always found in inverse proportion. The journey from Nice having confused the old man's faculties more than ever, his master hesitated at Miss M'Leod's suggestion.

"I suppose it would be too much to ask you to be kind enough to drive as far as the Rue de la Bienfaisance to the Hotel Alexandra, where Smith is staying?" said he, with courtesy which did not hide the fact that the suggestion was a command. "If you would not mind seeing Smith if he is in, or waiting for him if he is out, I should be exceedingly indebted to you."

"Mr. Beresford was sitting by the low square fireplace, where a wood fire was glowing. At the opposite side of the room, which was large and served as bed-and-sitting room, the old valet, who was scarcely less infirm than his master, was pottering about with an incapable air of being busy with his master's portmanteau. The white cloth and the dessert had been removed from the table, which was now covered by a mossy-looking, heavily fringed, velvet cloth, to which a couple of wax tandles, in tall plated candlesticks that stood upon it a yard apart, gave a lugubrious suggestion of a pall-covered coffin.

"Tell him, if you like to be severe," continued Mr. Beresford, "that it does not look well for an old cripple of fifty-two to be ready for business discussion after a tiring journey, while he, a mere lad of five-and-thirty, is sitting at ease over his claret and thinks that business will do in the morning. I shall expect him up to ten o'clock, and I hope to be in possession of all the intelligence he has to give me before midnight; and ask him to bring with him the letters from Madame Argentan, M. Bontaud, and M. de Breteuil on the subject of the orders we have had from them."

"What are the three names? I will write them down."

"No, no, it is not necessary. Say the three last orders we have just received. I am really much obliged to you for going, especially when you are so tired."

"Oh monsieur, if you can sit up to talk business, surely I—"

"The greed of gain would keep a dormouse awake. You need not come to me again to-night; you can go straight to your room and rest. Good-night."

He rose slowly and raised her small gloved hand to his lips; difficult as movement was to him, he never omitted this nightly ceremony, which was indeed but a small price to pay for the slavish devotion it did much toward purchasing. It was the signal for Pierre to take his stand behind his master's chair, ready to afford his pompous but hindering services in getting him to bed. Miss M'Leod, as usual, received this salute with downcast eyes, looked up with a gracious smile and a curtsy, and retired with a pleasant feeling of satisfaction from her employer's presence. Mr. Beresford, though he was only of the middle height, with a round back and the awkward stoop of the short-sighted, had a dignity about his massive gray-haired, silver streaked beard, and dark eyes shining from under thick eyebrows that were almost white, which made it easy to do homage to him.

Almost reconciled to her disagreeable task, Miss M'Leod went down the wide shallow-stepped staircase, which she preferred to the lift, as she thought the sweep of her silk train behind her made her more impressive than the mere package one became when pulled up and down in that little square box. Then she sent for a *fiacre*, and gave the address of the Hotel Alexandra as she stepped in with a stately air. She was half-way there, when a voice shouting to the driver made her lower the window to see what was the matter. A commissionaire sitting beside the driver of another *fiacre*, which had apparently followed hers at full speed, was telling her own driver to stop, as he jumped down and came to the window.

"The gentleman of whom madame is in search has just arrived at the Hotel de Normandie," said the commissionaire, raising his cap politely.

She recognised the man as the one who had called her *fiacre*, and ordered the driver to return. She was congratulating herself that she should not have to see Mr. Smith at all, as she passed Mr. Beresford's door and heard the clerk's full, clear, rich voice on the other side, when the handle was turned, and a little fat man, with a black bullet head and twinkling clever black eyes—just such a man as the voice foretold—came out, and seizing her frigid reluctant hand, took it in both of his and shook it warmly.

"My dear, dear Miss M'Leod," as if bursting to express the enthusiasm he felt about her, "I am so sorry, so inexpressibly sorry that you should have had to turn out in the damp and the cold on my account. I've had to blow up dear old B. about it, I have really. He might have trusted me not to neglect my business," he went on, ignoring her evident disgust at his disrespectful mention of his employer. "When we poor working creatures get an order from a swell, you know, we must cool our heels in his anteroom at his own time; and M. de Breteuil—I daresay you've heard of him, he's one of the tip top nobles here—Miss M'Leod shuddered—"having done us the favor to order a lot of lace for which he wants special designs, sent for me just as I was starting to meet you and dear B. at the station. Then, after keeping me for two whole hours looking at two cursed bad pictures of dumpy Frenchwomen we wouldn't have for barmaids in London—no, don't go," said he, detaining her by the jetted sleeve of her mantle, absently falling or pretending to fall to understand her sudden turning away—"well, he had me in, looked down at me some miles,

and told me to send one of the principals of the firm to him. I've just told old B. and he's nearly of his head about it," added he, jerking his round black head back in the direction of Mr. Beresford's room. "That just touches his dignity you know. So he's writing to my lord himself, and he vows he'll have the gentleman here himself to-morrow morning. Shouldn't wonder if he did, Old B. can do wonders when his back's up."

"Writing himself! He can't; you should have let him dictate the letter to you. I must go and do it myself." Her hand was already on the door.

Mr. Smith did not attempt to stop her except by a shrug of the shoulders and a significant twitch of his eyebrows.

"Go in if you like, my dear lady, but he won't let you write that letter. He's in one of his black humors, and whatever sort of scrawl he manages to produce will be much to the point, I fancy."

Miss M'Leod's hand dropped. Mr. Beresford could make himself very unpleasant indeed when he was annoyed, and even devotion grew cooler at the thought of the look with which he would receive an unbidden intruder.

"If you do go in," continued Mr. Smith magnanimously, "say I sent you. My shoulders are broad enough to bear the blame, and my credit with him is good enough for him to forgive you if you use my authority."

Whether or not there was a touch of malice in this speech, it fired the lady at once. "I use no authority but that of Mr. Beresford himself, sir; and if it came to a question of your credit against mine, the balance would perhaps not be so much in your favor as you imagine."

She was turning away most haughtily to go to her room, when her enemy, with a chuckling good-humored laugh which exasperated her more than a chorus of blasphemies, seized her right hand, and insisted upon shaking it warmly, while he said in a tone in which even she could detect sly mockery: "Well, well, don't let such a trifle disturb the friendship of old pals like you and me. I'm afraid I shan't be able to go down to 'Les Bouleaux' with you to-morrow evening, but I promise you I'll come down on the following day without fail—and the hours between now and then will seem very long."

Sour-faced, indignant, she suffered the hand-pressure she could not escape, but made no attempt to echo his affectionate sentiments: the moment he let her hand fall she forgot her dignity, and scurried off to her own room like a mouse dropped from the jaws of a cat.

But the poor lady had not seen or heard the last of her tormentor. On the following morning, when, as usual at eleven o'clock, she went toward Mr. Beresford's room to offer her services to read or write for him, she caught the sound of the clerk's hated voice, and retreating hastily to her room, she put on her bonnet, determined to take the opportunity of a little shopping in Paris and to avoid her enemy at the same time. As she reached the entrance of the hotel on her way out, she noticed a little group of waiters watching an arrival with unusual interest.

"C'est M. de Breteuil, le millionnaire galant," said one of the group to another who had just joined them.

Miss M'Leod was not very well versed in the scandals of Paris, less perhaps from lack of interest than of opportunity; but she had heard of this man and of the marvellous vitality of his notoriety, and she stood aside with some curiosity, on pretence of gathering up the train which no change of fashion could induce her to discard, to see the bold bad man pass. She saw him step out of his dainty little dark-colored coupe, which, with its pair of small, long-tailed, black horses and its pair of dark-liveried fur caped servants, looked like the sombre freak of a blonde *demi-mondaine*. An Englishman would have looked upon the turn-out—from the showy high stepping horses, with their foam-covered bits and heads held tightly in with the bearing-rein, to the little black toy behind them with the coroneted gilt monogram L. B. on the panels—as he would have looked at the advertisement car of a circus; but in Paris it was the envy and admiration of men as well as women. The owner of the carriage bore the stamp of his reputation with gratifying clearness. Miss M'Leod felt her curiosity stimulated instead of lessened as she took a keen and comprehensive survey of the tall, slight, erect gentleman, better dressed than most fashionable Frenchmen, whose dark clear-cut face and easy bearing impressed her so much that she passed upon him the mental comment of the imaginative milliner: "He might be a prince!"

"Did you see him?" said in her ear the voice sheathed, as soon as M. de Breteuil had passed. "He wouldn't take any notice of me, though I came down on purpose to receive him. However, I'm going up again and he'll have to be civil to me in the governor's presence. I'm too useful to old B. for him to stand by and see me insulted by any popinjay foreigner."

"M. de Breteuil is every inch a gentleman; any one with any knowledge of good society can see that," said Miss M'Leod superciliously.

"O yes, he's as fine a gentleman as hair-dye and a good tailor can make him. You're mashed, I see. Well, well, I should be content to look as well at his age."

"His age!" echoed Miss M'Leod involuntarily. "Why, he can't be more than thirty!"

"He can, though; he can be more by a good ten years. Well, I must follow my lord up-stairs, I suppose. *Au revoir*, Miss M'Leod; if I don't see you again before you start I wish you a pleasant journey; you won't be so dull at 'Les Bouleaux' when young Miss Beresford arrives to keep you company." And with this artfully barbed speech, for the housekeeper was already madly jealous of her employer's daughter, the little man turned and trotted up-stairs.

When Miss M'Leod returned from her walk, she saw the little black coupe driving away; meeting Pierre outside his master's door, she learnt that both Mr. Smith and M. de Breteuil had gone, and she therefore hastened to present herself to Mr. Beresford. He was in one of his moods of almost absolute silence, as usual after a business talk with Mr. Smith. It was something to believe, however, that for the present her enemy was removed; and it was with no welcome in her eyes that she saw the clerk's fat, happy, good-humored face at the Gare du Nord that evening, when she and Mr. Beresford drove up on the way to continue their journey to "Les Bouleaux."

He raised his round hat to her, and gave a too familiar nod to his employer. "I couldn't get you a carriage

to yourselves, in spite of the Baron's pass," said he, looking in cheerfully at the window of the *fiacre*. "The train is going to be very full, and these d—d Frenchmen just take your tips and then put you in like sardines all the same. I could only get you one to yourselves by paying double fare for each unoccupied seat."

"No, no, you don't men to say you've done that!" stammered Mr. Beresford.

"No, it's all right," laughed Smith, in mischievous delight at the fright he had given to his employer's parsimony. "I've arranged that you are not to have more than two other people with you, so you can both put your feet up and be comfortable. One must consider the lady, you know," he added politely.

"It was evident that the lady would rather have travelled in the luggage-van than be considered by him; but Mr. Smith was unctuously impervious to snubs. He led them, armed with the pass he had obtained from one of the directors who knew Mr. Beresford, to a compartment the further corners of which were already occupied by two gentlemen. The guard unlocked the door for them; Mr. Beresford was carefully helped in and seated in one corner, while Miss M'Leod took the fourth, which was opposite to him. Mr. Smith gave her a cheering assurance at parting, as he stood on the platform, beaming up at her with his twinkling black eyes through the spectacles he sometimes wore.

"It won't be long before I see you again, my dear lady. I have one more call to make on our estimable friend, the king of snobs, M. Louis de Breteuil, who has condescended to give me an audience at half-past eleven to-morrow morning; that done, the claims of duty will be satisfied, and I shall fly to your feet."

At the mention of M. de Breteuil's name both the strangers in the carriage turned their heads quickly toward the speaker. Mr. Beresford, who noticed everything, saw this, and frowned slightly at his clerk's indiscreet mention of such an important client. Mr. Smith, seeing nothing of all this, continued to babble happily on.

"You will have a little pleasant excitement at 'Les Bouleaux' now. Have you seen the account of old Dupont's being robbed the other day? It appears they've been having quite a gay old time about there with a mysterious robber, who is said to be a *loup-garou*, and to take a lot of killing. So you had better not go about after dark until I come down to take care of you, Miss M'Leod. Ah! you're off; good-bye, and a safe journey to you. The train gets in at Calais at 12.53; and I've telegraphed to Staunton this morning, and he'll be sure to meet you. Good-bye!"

Again, at the mention of the name Staunton, the two strangers looked round. Both men were past middle age; the elder, a short red-faced man with snow-white hair and moustache, wore a carefully brushed coat and hat of the fashion of some years ago, and bore himself with an old-fashioned affectation of military swagger which would have been altogether offensive had it not suggested to the shrewd, a spirited struggle against adverse fortune. The younger of the two by a few years was evidently a map of more assured position. He was tall and broad, with keen candid eyes and features still handsome, though his hair, moustache, and close-cut beard were iron-gray. Both men were evidently English.

"Curious coincidence the mention of both those names," suggested the former, in a voice meant only for his friend.

"Coincidence! Something more than that, perhaps," said the other thoughtfully; and he looked with much attention from the invalid gentleman to the little faded lady as the train steamed out of the station.

Mr. Beresford had already closed his eyes, not for sleep, but as an intimation that he did not wish to be disturbed. In a few minutes, however, he felt a touch upon his arm, and found that the housekeeper was sitting by his side.

"Mr. Beresford," she whispered very low in his ear, "please forgive me for disturbing you, but I must warn you against those two men. They keep watching us with their eyes half-closed in a way that makes me nervous. I believe they are"—she formed the last word with her mouth only—"thieves."

Mr. Beresford did not answer, but he glanced at the seat she had left as an intimation for her to return to it. She did so at once, snubbed, as she had expected to be. But her words, also as she had expected, had had their effect, and from under his travelling cap the invalid took a very careful survey of the travellers.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

An Important Correction.

The story circulated around town this week by persons who ought to be in better business, that while we were attending the reception to Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland at Kansas City we got drunk and stood on the street corner roaring like a colicky elephant and making the assertion that we were from Bitter Creek and could lick any President that ever looked through a collar, is absolutely false. What we did do, and all we did, was to get drunk, try to pound a policeman who is really much larger than he appeared, and pay our fine next morning. People who persist in circulating so many stories with no foundation about us will run up against something which will hurt some day.—*Missouri River Democrat*.

Why Editor Grady Blushed.

Editor Grady blushed at the Atlanta festival. Here is the story of this extraordinary phenomenon:—"I was sitting with my family watching the display of fireworks, and to my astonishment the flames threw out pictures of Governor Gordon and myself. The compliment was appreciated by my friends, and even after Governor Gordon's picture burned mine remained. Finally my left eye dropped out, my nose flamed away and my chin melted. I watched my own dissolution with curious feelings, and mortifying to relate, when the whole face and head had been extinguished my mouth remained a flaming band of fire. The crowd cheered, and for once in my life I was silent."—*Athens Banner*.

Stoves Not Needed.

Philadelphia man—Do you mean to say your street cars are not heated in winter? Omaha man—Not at all.
"What in creation do you do to keep warm?"
"Talk politics."—*Omaha World*.