

**VIVIAN MEREDITH.**

At 20 we know much less than we think we know, though we would make it very warm for any one who informed us of the fact. The world then is a great, beautiful kingdom where Love is monarch and we his ministers. We think better of ourselves in these days than we ever thought before or ever will think again. We strut about a little space puffed with the idea of our importance, or stagger about drunk with our ambitious dreams. And then some bright morning we wake up to find that we were all wrong—that the universe wasn't made just for us, and that love after all is not—but this is not telling my story.

I was just 20 when I met Vivian Meredith, and as full of all the foolish and romantic notions that are common to that adolescent period as I could be. She was indeed a lovely girl. I met her first at a party given by my dear friend, Mrs. Horace Haberton, and on inquiring who she was was told by my hostess that she was a "poor young woman of good family, who wrote for the papers."

I was not poor and I didn't write things for the papers, but I liked people of that description, especially when they looked like Miss Meredith, so I sought and secured an early introduction to her. She was as charming as she looked. Everything she did was well done. She dressed well, she talked well and she danced well.

I have before intimated to you that

al. He laughed at my apprehensions and said: "You are rich are you not? Halliday is poor. Everything is in your favor, for money will buy anything from a man's honor to a woman's love." And—well, on the whole, I believed him and thought he was very clever, and, in fact, felt rather sorry that I myself had not made the remark—it bordered so nearly on the epigrammatic. The spirit of it permeated the subsequent course which I pursued with the occupants of the house on Tenth street. Without being vulgar or ostentatious, I took every occasion to let them know that I was a man of wealth. Somehow at the time I felt shame-faced about it and wondered whether my method of pursuit were worthy the object, but I did not change.

I brought my trap around to her door, drawn by a spanking team of grays, and took Vivian driving. I put at the disposal of her and her mother my box at the theater. I sent her, out of season, flowers that in their season were enormously costly. Sometimes she protested; at other times she received my attentions with a quiet grace that made my heart bound and then fall back twice the distance it had leaped.

Meanwhile the strong-faced and earnest Mr. Halliday was still in positive evidence. One couldn't help liking the fellow. He was such a man. He looked like one who might break steel bars with his hands if he only wanted to do so, and, what was more, he looked as if his life were clean, and I liked him in spite of myself.

But because he was decent and noble and likable I couldn't consent to let him carry off Vivian, so I consulted Alsbury again, but he told me to keep up heart; that I was getting on swimmingly, and that my course was the talk of our whole set.

condole with me. He merely said: "Well, these things often happen in life. You'll get used to them by and by. You are young now, but after awhile you will be cynical."

I very much suspect that he had had a disappointment in his own life.

Well, "I am not dead and I am not wed." I am 40 now and well fixed. But I sometimes wonder what the outcome would have been, what new ambitions for achievement I might have developed, had God given it to me to realize the dreams I had at 20.



THE DREAMS AT TWENTY.

I was not literary. But I was fairly well off in this world's goods, and amply able to support some one who was literary. Then, besides I was 20. So the idea took sudden and violent possession of me to have for a wife a woman who wrote things for the papers, and who, placed beyond the necessity of scribbling for her daily bread, might yet follow her bent and make the name of "Jones" famous. And to my mind Vivian Meredith seemed just the person to do this. I thought of her name—it was a pretty one, and I thought it would look well, with my surname suffixed, signed to a story or magazine article. Vivian Meredith-Jones! Pray think of it! With the hyphen between the Meredith and the Jones—I insisted on the hyphen—wouldn't it be the very perfection of literary cognomens?

The upshot of it all was that I fell in love—or thought I had—with the little blue-stocking. She was very gracious to me and so I began to hope. I thought that from feminine graciousness to love was not a far cry, and so I had not only hoped, but was elated. Such a thing may happen at 20, you know.

She had a quaint little house down on Tenth street, where she lived with her mother and one servant and where after a while I began to be a frequent visitor. I found in the Widow Meredith a high-bred, delightful old lady, who talked with familiar ease of the most prominent of our old families, and musing over my cigarette, I concluded that I might do much worse in the way of family.

Meanwhile the discovery began to dawn upon me that I was not the only one who was seeking Vivian Meredith with intentions. On several occasions at the house on Tenth street I had met another caller, a strong-faced, earnest-looking young fellow, Halliday by name. I found upon inquiry that he also was poor and "wrote things for the papers." Vivian was very gracious to him also and her mother treated him as quite a favorite. I liked Halliday, but I did not like his attitude toward him, so I told Alsbury about it. He was sort of a friend and mentor of mine. He was a worldly bachelor, 40 and withal cynic-

Was I elated? Well, I was 20. Just then occurred the great Thornton reception, which we had all been looking forward to for a long time. I had hoped very much that Vivian would accompany me there. I had even presumed on her doing so, and my heart sunk when she regretted that she had made other arrangements.

She came with Halliday in a miserable hired coupe, and she wore only a few inexpensive flowers. But I could not help remarking, as did every one else, how well Vivian and Halliday looked together.

Well, I suppose I was looking very dejected when Alsbury found me, but I had reason. He laughed at me and told me that I must expect some reverses, that I could not hope to carry off such a prize by one triumphant sweep; why, it was worth some few defeats to win such a girl as Vivian, and he prophesied that all would come right.

I had great faith in Alsbury's good judgment. He knew the world better than I, and I could depend upon his observations. But to me there was a look of most discouraging content upon Vivian's face when she danced and chatted with Halliday, and the total absorption in him which she displayed did not seem to indicate that any thought of me had any place in her life. So I grew desperate. What man of 20 would not, under such circumstances? I determined to settle it all for good, and with this end in view drove my span of grays around to her door next day and took her out for an airing.

Why should I revive pain in even an old wound by telling how I proposed to her and how she was surprised and sorry that I should have loved her, but she could never marry me? What's the use of giving her words? You no doubt heard the same or something very like when you were 20.

Of course, Halliday was the hindering cause, though she did not say so in so many words. I took a run over to London for a little while, and when I came back she was married to the poor young man who also "wrote things for the papers."

Alsbury was sensible enough not to

Nothing is more common than for persons to imagine that they have heart disease, and they often make themselves dreadfully uncomfortable in consequence. In the overwhelming majority of cases, more particularly in young, nervous, fanciful people, the heart is as sound as a bell, but the stomach is out of order.

**MUCH IN LITTLE.**

Mme. Jeanne Hugo, the granddaughter of Victor Hugo, who was recently divorced from her husband, Alphonso Daudet's son, is about to marry a young doctor of Paris.

When Mile. Christine, the two-headed colored woman, rides on the European railroads she has "heaps of trouble" with conductors who try to levy two fares from the freak.

Among Dr. Donaldson Smith's discoveries in the region of Lake Rudolph is that of the existence of fifteen new tribes of Africans—one of them dwarfs, none over five feet in height.

Mrs. Mercy Thornhike of Rockland, Me., has been a pilgrim here below for ninety-two years. She has moved her place of residence fifty-seven times, and isn't permanently settled even now.

A good deal of interest is manifested just now in an old document on exhibition in Bucksport, Me. It is a commission, signed by Thomas Pownall, governor of Massachusetts, appointing Jonathan Buck first Lieutenant of a company to invade Canada, and bears the date of March 13, 1758.

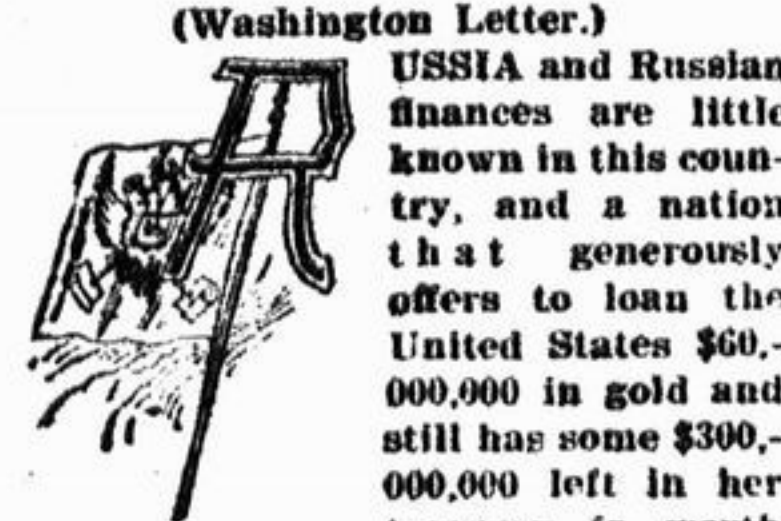
Emperor William, of Germany, received from the empress several Christmas presents of great appropriateness. She gave him a set of porcelain plate with paintings on them of naval scenes, six drinking cups, each holding a golden spoon, and two large landscapes painted by a German artist.

Miss Hesba Stretton, the English authoress, spent some years on the borders of Epping Forest. Her house there was given up because the "nightingales warbled so vociferously as to spoil her night's rest." There is a story about the late Mr. Robins, a famous English auctioneer, who, in offering an estate for sale, said the only drawbacks to the desirability of the property were "the litter of the roseleaves and the noise of the nightingales."

**WEALTH OF RUSSIA.**

**FINANCIAL SYSTEM OF OUR GREAT EUROPEAN FRIEND.**

The Money in Circulation is Almost Exclusively of Paper—The Imperial Bank Ruling with Gold and Silver—Stimulates Industry.



(Washington Letter.)

RUSSIA and Russian finances are little known in this country, and a nation that generously offers to loan the United States \$60,000,000 in gold and still has some \$300,000,000 left in her treasury is worth becoming better acquainted with. The government institution from which this gold would have been drawn, supposing the United States had accepted the loan, would have been the Imperial Bank of Russia.

In 1844 the Russian government commenced the accumulation of metal, when 70,000,000 rubles were deposited in the St. Petersburg citadel and 12,000,000 more were added in less than a year. This forming a reserve fund nearly half as large as the amount in circulation raised the value of the currency, and when, a little later, Emperor Nicholas ordered 100,000,000 rubles government money to be invested in foreign stock financiers thought themselves justified in considering the printed currency of Russia tantamount to coin. In 1860 the government established the present imperial bank and conferred upon it ex-

Beside the state bank, Russia has several hundred commercial banks which somewhat resemble our state banks, and St. Petersburg, Moscow, Khar'kov, Kiev, Riga, Volga-Kama, Warsaw and Odessa have several joint stock banks each. The bank law of Russia is said to be very stringent in its limitations in the amount of advances. The nature of the securities to be taken, the publication of accounts and the like, and the failure of a banking institution is the cause of a most stringent inquiry by the government and severe punishment is meted out to all defaulters, as in the case of Dr. Strausberg, who, as one of the depositors in the Moscow Commerce and Loan Bank, was convicted of wrecking this institution in 1875 and was banished for life from Russia.

The financial system of Russia offers not a few points of similarity to our own. It is more than a century since the issue of the Russian paper money was begun. Previously the trade of the country was in a very undeveloped condition, and the exchanges were carried on by means of a copper circulation. The heavy copper copecks previously in use were so inconvenient that the paper currency soon became quite popular.

The system of popular banks in Russia is comparatively a recent introduction. The first was established in 1868 in the department of Kasroma by a great landed proprietor, M. Zouguin, who supplied it with money to begin business with. Many of the other banks that were founded received aid from the elective municipalities, which have the legal right to borrow and lend money. The progress of the new banks was at first slow. The ignorant peasants had but just been emancipated, and, being well-to-do and jealous of their new freedom, they mistrusted



IMPERIAL STATE BANK OF RUSSIA TO THE LEFT.

tive powers with a view to a reform of the monetary issues and a revival of commerce and productive growth. Two years later, in 1882, M. Eugene Lamanski, the director, an able economist and an accomplished banker, published a report on the causes of the disorganization of the machinery of credit in Russia and on the best means of financial reform. He showed that one principal cause of mischief was the instability of the monetary circulation, and declared that so long as the state maintains a forced currency the paper money can have but little stability of value, but that if Russia would renounce forever the policy of using the issue of paper money as a financial reserve all might be remedied. This suggestion was approved by the emperor, and his successor on the throne continued the policy.

To the presentable minister of finance M. De Witte, and the governor of the Imperial Bank, M. Plekha, the improved condition of Russian finances is to a great extent due. The Journal De St. Petersburg, one of the official newspapers of Russia, and printed in the French language, recently published a report of the Imperial Bank and its nine general offices throughout the empire, which shows the enormous amount of business passing through the state bank.

This bank is a powerful instrument of administrative finance. Like the old banks of Venice and Genoa, this bank

that the new banks were a contrivance invented by the nobles to re-establish slavery. An association was organized by the efforts of Prince Vassilitchoff to combat this prejudice by means of public meetings. This expedition was successful, and during the last thirty years banking institutions have become popular with the Russian people, but of course not on a scale compared with the number of banks in the United States, when it is considered that Russia has a population of over 100,000,000. The rate of interest at which these popular banks lend money is, on the average, 12 per cent, and to an American must seem high, but it is not so in Russia, where the interest charged on loans to the peasantry is often as much as 100 per cent.

In a review of the popular banking institutions of Russia a writer in the American Bankers' Magazine says: "In these views there is considerable plausibility. It appears to us to argue as if the popular banking system was incapable of modification, and could not be liberated from the mechanism of the unlimited liability, which unites it for large communities where people do not know each other. But this is an error. The Italian banks have already cut loose from this obstructive mechanism, and their success is manifestly the result of the reform. If a like improvement could be adopted in Germany a new impulse would no doubt be given to the popular banking system, which would thus be raised to the level of the new imperial institutions with their spirit of enterprise, progress and industrial organization. There is another aspect in which the popular banks may be regarded. They put capital within the reach of skillful, steady and frugal mechanics. They thus facilitate the rise of these men from the ranks of journeymen and their promotion to the ranks of masters and employers of labor. The tendency of modern credit organizations has been to check this promotion, by facilitating the concentration of capital in large masses. Under proper conditions the popular banks are capable of supplying an antidote to this industrial evil. If the workingmen's unions had devoted part of their large funds during the last half century to the establishment in Europe of popular banks on an enlightened system adapted to the spirit of the age and to the wants of each country some of the difficulties which surround the question at issue between mechanics and their employers would long ago have disappeared."

The popular banks of Russia present a trait of the Russian character—conservatism and economy—by their large deposits, remarkable for the contrast it shows with the state of banking in most if not all of the continental states of Europe. Thus in the Bank of France the deposits (including those of the government) are but little more than two-thirds the discounts and one-fifth of the circulation. The leading banks of the other continental capitals have even a smaller amount of deposits in proportion to their discounts and circulation.



M. DE WITTE, (Russia's Minister of Finance.)

**A SUMMER CUTTING.**

The Finances and Wealth of the State are in the Mountains of Colorado.

The days are here, when one begins to make plans for his summer outing, and studies railway maps and questions friends to learn of the best spots, and where the most varied amusements may be had for the least outlay. To Kansas people the Rocky mountains are the most convenient and afford opportunity for the enjoyment of tastes of all shades. Twenty-four hours places the most eastern dweller of the state right in the heart of the great divide, and he has enjoyed such scenic circuit, as wealthy tourists go across the ocean to find. The Denver & Rio Grande road, the Great Scenic Route of the world, takes you at Pueblo or Denver, and whisks you through canons where there must have been an enchantment and where giant arms have dashed the boulders into their present resting places. The ride through the Royal Gorge displays the great ingenuity of its engineers, and the obstinate determination of its builders. The rails are placed in almost inaccessible places, along the edge of the stream or torrent, which with wonderful skill has been forced out of the way to make room for the rock road bed and the iron rails. At certain points the torrent maintains its supremacy, but the difficulty is met and surmounted, a set of hangers being made into the cliffs overhead, to support the bridge work and track. The stream is still jubilant of its power over man, and laughs, booms and dashes by as the train passes, not caring for the queer shadows that fall into it, if it can only be supreme at this critical point. The world, barely wide enough, in certain parts, to admit of the stream and the tracks, the granite walls of giant mountains towering above and over all, and giving a still more impressive object lesson of the great force of Nature which has caused it all. The climb is a long one, and after leaving Salida you think it is over and that as you enter upon a slight down grade, or a smiling valley, that you are now going to slide down into the great San Luis Valley. Never were you more mistaken; and if you look you will see two puffing little giants pulling the train for several hours yet. At length, however, when you have begun to wish for breakfast, the summit is reached, and there is a rapid stride down the western slope, and into the beautiful valley. For more than fifty miles the track is as straight as an arrow, and the train speeds along bringing you into Alamosa for breakfast, right under the shadow of Blanco, the highest mountain in this country. All around are smiling fields as far as the eye can reach, until vision is interrupted by the mountains which encircle the valley. Some one has said the West Mountain and the Sangre de Cristo range on the east are a ring and that Blanco is the setting. These mountains afford every variety of amusement and entertainment. There is fine trout fishing; in season there are plenty of ducks and Sand Hill Cranes, Brants' Geese and Curlew. These are in the valley. If big game is desired you must go back into the mountains, where Elk, Bear, Mountain Sheep and Lions, Grouse, etc., are still to be found. Outfit at one of the pleasant little hamlets and spend a month in these mountains and in this valley, if you want an outing. If you wish to meet the gay social parties, that make the mountains their home in summer, go to Colorado Springs, Manitou, or some other of the delightful resorts on the line of the Denver & Rio Grande road.

We know of no greater advantage to health, than may be gained by a sojourn away from the cares of business and daily duties of the routine of living. Here there is no routine but a continued change, of pleasure resulting more profitable to a tired body or overtaxed mind than any other opportunity within reach. The Denver & Rio Grande Company looks after the comfort of its patrons with scrupulous care, and provides the best facilities for observation and enjoyment of the ride. If you have never yet visited these precincts, decide now to do so this year, and get the rest and health you have been looking for.

F. P. BAKER.

Found the Yarn Factory.

In the town of B. Connecticut, there is a factory where yarn is made. A stranger approaching the town one day in a buggy, pulled up his horse and so costed a farmer who was digging potatoes on the other side of the fence. "Can you tell me where the yarn mill is?" inquired the stranger. "Certainly," was the reply. "Keep straight on until you come to the drinking fountain. Right opposite is wooden block with three doors. The middle door is the one you want." "Thank you," said the stranger, and drove on. In due time he came to the fountain and sought the middle door of the wooden block, and it led him upstairs to the office of the local newspaper. The other yarn factory, the one which he was looking for, lay half a mile beyond.

Florida Facts.

February and March are two of the best months of the year to visit Florida. The climate is fine and the social features at its height of interest. When you have made up your mind to go, you naturally want to go there as soon as possible and in the most comfortable manner. No matter whether you live in St. Louis, Chicago, Peoria, Indianapolis, Columbus, Cleveland, Buffalo, New York or Boston, you can take one of the magnificent trains of the "Big Four Route" from any one of these cities to Cincinnati, and with only one change of cars continue your journey made in Central Union station, Cincinnati, with through trains of all lines in Florida. Call on or address any agent of the "Big Four Route," or address E. O. McCormick, Passenger Traffic Manager, or D. B. Martin, General Passenger and Ticket Agent, Cincinnati, Ohio.

As to Apples.

This year's commercial crop of apples in the United States is estimated at 68,000,000 barrels, an increase of 18 per cent over last year's crop. The yield in England, Michigan and Canada is below that of 1904, but in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Missouri it is nearly three times as large as last year's crop.

Six will banish men from God's presence, but it cannot separate them from His love.

The Tiber is only 230 miles long.