Wanted—A Little Girl.

Where have they gone to—the little girls,
With natural manners and natural curls?
Who love their dollies and like their toys,
And talk of something besides the boys?

Little old women in plenty I find,
Mature in manners and old in mind;
Little old flirts who talk of their "beaux"
And vie with each other in stylish clothes.

Little old belles, who, at nine and ten
Are sick of pleasure and tired of men,
Weary of travel, of balls, of fun—
And find no new thing under the sun.

Once in the beautiful long ago,
Some dear little children I used to know;
Girls who were merry as lambs at play,
And laughed and rollicked the livelong day.

They thought not at all of the "style" of their clothes,
They never imagined the boys were "beaux"—
"Other girls' brothers" and "mates" were they;
Splendid fellows to help them play,

Where have they gone to? If you see
One of them, anywhere, send her to me.
I would give a medal of purest gold
To one of those dear little girls of old,
With an innocent heart and an open smile,
Who knows not the meaning of "flirt" or "style."

PHYLLIS.

BY THE DUCHESS.

Author of "Molly Bawn," "The Baby," "Airy Fairy Lilian," etc., etc.

There is a low apologetic knock at the door. Instantly I seat myself on the sofa in as dignified an attitude as I can assume, considering my hair is all awry and my eyelids crimson. 'Duke lowers the lamp prudently, and falls back to the hearthrug, standing with his hands clasped carelessly behind him, before he says, in a clear, distinct tone:

"Come in."

"Dinner is served," announces Tynon, softly, with the vaguest, discreetest of coughs. How is it that servants always know everything?

"Very good," returns Marmaduke, in his ordinary voice. "Let Mrs. Vernon know." Then, as though acting on a second thought—

"Tynon."

"Yes, sir."

"It may be as well to let you know that Mrs. Carrington and I are leaving home next week for some time."

"Indeed, sir? yes, sir." Tynon's face is perfectly impassive, except at the extreme corners of the mouth; these being slightly down-drawn indicate regret and some distress.

"We both feel much disappointed at being obliged to leave home at this particular time, the Christmas season being so close at hand; but the business that takes us is important, and will admit of no delay. I shall leave behind me the usual sum of money for the poor, with an additional gift from Mrs. Carrington, which I will trust you and Mrs. Benson" (the housekeeper) "to see properly distributed."

"Thank you, sir; it shall be carefully attended to."

"I am quite sure of that," kindly. Then, with a return to the rather forced and stilted manner that has distinguished his foregoing speech, he goes on: "It is altogether uncertain when we shall be able to come back to Strangemore, as the business of which I speak will necessitate my going abroad; and as Mrs. Carrington's health will not allow her to accompany me, and as she has been ordered change of air, she will go to Hazelton, which she has not seen, and await my return there. You quite understand, Tynon?"

"Perfectly, sir," replies the old butler, with his eyes on the ground. And as I watch him, I know how perfectly indeed he understands, not only what is being said, but also what is not being said.

'Duke, weary of lying, draws his hand across his forehead. "You will please let the other servants know of our movements. Although my absence may be more prolonged than I think, I shall wish them all to remain as they now are so that the house may be in readiness to receive us at any moment. But," turning his gaze for the first time fully upon Tynon and speaking very sternly, "I will have no whispering or gossiping about things that don't concern them; mind that. I leave you in charge, Tynon, and I desire that all such conduct be punished with instant dismissal. You hear?"

"Yes sir; you may be sure there shall be no gossiping or whispering going on in this house."

"I hope not." Then, having noticed the quavering voice and depressed air of this old servitor, who has known him from his youth up, he adds more gently, "You may go now. I know I can trust you. I do not think I have any more directions to give you at present."

Tynon bows in a shaky, dispirited way, and leaves the room. Outside in the dusk of the corridor, I can see him put his hand to his eyes. But he is staunch, and even now compels himself to turn and say, with deference and with a praiseworthy show of ignorance of what the preceding conversation may mean:

"I hope you will excuse my mentioning it, sir, but if there is one thing beyond another that raises Mrs. Cook's irritableness, and make her perverse towards the rest of the household, it is to hear the soup was allowed to grow cold."

"All right, Tynon; Mrs. Harrison's nerves shall not be upset this evening. We will go down now," says 'Duke, with a smile—a very impoverished specimen of its kind, I must own, but still a smile.

I rush into the next room—my dressing-room is off my boudoir—and having bathed my poor eyes and hastily brushed my hair and given myself a general air of prosperity make for the dining-room. On the stairs we encounter mother, looking so pale and wan, and almost terrified, that I take my hand off Marmaduke's arm and slip it round her waist. It will never do for her to present such a woful countenance to the criticism of servants.

"Try to look a little more cheerful, darling," I whisper, eagerly; "it will not be for long; as it has to be gone through, let us be brave in the doing it."

She looks at me with a relieved astonishment; and truly the strength of will that bears me through this interminable evening amazes no one so much as myself.

Hazelton down by the sea, I have gained your shelter at last. Only yesterday, Marmaduke and I finished our miserable journey here, and took a long, a last farewell of each other.

How can I write of it, how describe the anguish of those few minutes, in which a whole year's keenest torture was compressed? How paint word by word the mad but hopeless clinging, the lingering touch of hands that never more should join, the despair, the passion, of the final embrace?

It is over, and he is gone, and I have fallen into a settled state of apathy and indifference to what is going on around me, that surely bears some resemblance to a melancholy madness.

Hazelton is a very pretty, old-fashioned house, about half the size of Strangemore—with many straggling rooms well wainscoted almost three parts up each wall. Some of the floors are of gleaming polished oak, some richly, heavily carpeted; it is a picturesque old place, that at any other time, and under any other circumstances, would have filled me with admiration.

Afar off one can catch a glimpse of the sea. From the parlor windows it is plainly visible; in the other rooms a rising hill, and in summer the foliage, intercept the view. In reality it is only a mile and a half distant from the house, so that at night when the wind is high, the sullen roar of it comes to the listening ear.

The few servants who have had the house in charge have been retained, and three more have been added. These have evidently made up their minds to receive me with open arms; but as a week passes, and I show no signs of interest in them, or their work, or the gardens, or anything connected with my life, they are clearly puzzled and disappointed. This I notice in a dull, wondering fashion. Why can they not be as indifferent to me as I am to them?

All the visitors that should call do call; it is not a populous neighborhood, but as I decline seeing them, and do not return their visits, the would-be acquaintance drops. On Monday the vicar, a slight, intellectual-looking man, rides up to the door, and, being refused admittance, leaves his card, and expresses his intention of coming again some day soon. Which message, being conveyed to me by the respectable person who reigns here as butler, raises my ire, and induces me to give an order on the spot that never, on any pretence whatever, is any one—vicar or no vicar—to be admitted to my presence.

Sunday comes, but I feel no inclination to clothe myself and go forth to confess my sins and pour out my griefs in the house of prayer. All days are alike to me, and I shrink with a morbid horror from presenting myself to the eyes of my fellows. In this quiet retreat I can bury myself, and nurse my wrongs, and brood over my troubles without interference from a cruel world.

I find some half-finished work among my things, and taking it to my favorite room, bend over it hour by hour; more often it falls unheeded on my lap, while I let memory wander backward, and ask myself, sadly, if such a being ever really lived as wild, merry, careless Phyllis Vernon.

The days go by, and I feel no wish for outdoor exercise. My color slowly fades.

One morning, the woman who has taken Martha's place, and who finds much apparent delight in the binding and twisting of my hair into impossible fashions, takes occasion to address me.

"The gardens here, ma'am, are so pretty, the prettiest for miles round."

"Are they? I must go and see them."

"'Deed, m'm, and it would do you good. A smart walk now once in a way is better'n medicine, so I'm told. And the grounds round here is rare and pretty to look at, though to be sure winter has a dispiritin' effect on everything."

"It is cold," I say, with a shiver.

"It is, m'm, surely"—leaving the mighty edifice she is erecting on the top of my head to give the fire a vigorous poke—"but with your fur cloak and hat you won't feel it. Shall I bring them to you after breakfast, ma'am?"

"Very well; do," reply I with a sigh of resignation.

Much pleased with her success, the damsel retreats, and punctually to the moment, as I rise from my breakfast table, appears again, armed with cloak and gloves and hat. Thus constrained, I sally forth, and make a tour round the gardens that surround what must be for evermore my home.

And very delicious old gardens they are, as old-fashioned as the house, and quite as picturesque. There is a total want of method, of precision, in the arrangement of them, that instinctively charms the eyes. I wander from orchard into flower-garden and from flower-garden on again to orchard, without a break of any sort; no gates divide them; it is all one pretty, happy medley.

The walks, though scrupulously neat, are ungravelled, and here and there a dead leaf, crisp and dry, displays itself. The very trees, though bereft of leaves, do not appear so foolish, so melancholy, in this free land of theirs, as they always look elsewhere.

I feel some animation creeping in my blood; my step is more springy. At the garden gate the father of all this sweetness steps up to me. He is a rosy-cheeked, good-humored-looking man, a brilliant contrast to the unapproachable Cummins; he presents me with a small bouquet of winter flowers.

"I am proud to see you ma'am," he says, with a touch of interest in his tone. "I am sorry I have nothing better worth offering you than these 'ere." He tenders me the bouquet as he speaks—a very marvel of a bouquet, considering the time of year.

"Thank you," I say, with a gracious smile, born of my brisk and pleasant promenade; "it is lovely. It is far prettier in my eyes than the summer one, because so unexpected."

I pass on, leaving him, bowing and scraping and much gratified, in the middle of the path, with the unwonted smile still upon my lips.

But, as the evening draws on, this faintest glimmer of renewed hope dies, and I sink back once more into my accustomed gloom.

"What will you please to order for dinner to-day, mum?" asks cook from the doorway. I have never yet given directions for that meal, much to that worthy creature's despair, whose heart and thoughts are in her stew-pans.

I glance up with languid surprise.

"Anything you please," I say; "you are always very satisfactory. I told you I would leave everything to you. Why do you ask me to-day in particular?"

"Law, mum, sure it's Christmas day, and I thought maybe as 'ow——"

"Christmas day, is it!" I exclaim, curiously. "Then I have been a whole fortnight in this place."

"Yes, mum. A whole fortnight and one day, by five o'clock this heavening, precisely. I took the liberty of asking you to order dinner for this one night, thinking as you might put a name to something or other dainty that you fancies."

"Indeed I have no choice, cook, and I am not at all hungry."

"Likely enough, mum, considering it is now only twelve o'clock; but for a lady like yourself, as eats no luncheon to speak of, you will for certain be starved by seven."

"I thought a Christmas dinner never varied, cook. You can have the usual thing, I suppose."

"In course, mum," says cook, undaunted. She is a fine, fat, healthy-looking woman, with large eyes, and slightly wheezy intonation, as though she were constantly trying to swallow some of her own good things that had inadvertently stuck in her throat. It seems to me that I ought to love this comfortable creature, who is so obstinately bent on flattering me against my will. "But whatever folks may say, a plum pudding for a delicate lady like you is uncommon 'eavy on the 'art and mind when bed-hour comes. If you would just say anything that would please you—something light that I might try my hand on—an ice-pudding, now?"—this with as near an attempt at coaxing as respect will permit.

But the word "ice-pudding" calls up old memories; I remember my ancient weakness for that particular confection. My brows contract; a sharp pain fills my breast.

"No, no! anything but ice-pudding," I say, hastily; "I—hate it."

"Dear me, mum! now do you? Most of the quality loves it. Then what would you say? I'm a first-class hand in the pastry line——"

"Make me—a meringue," I murmur, in despair, seeing I shall have to give in, or else go through a list from the cookery book, and fortunately remembering how I once heard a clever housekeeper say there were few sweets so difficult to bring to perfection. But the difficulty, if there is any, only enchants my goddess of the range.

"Very good, mum; you shall 'ave it," she says, rapturously; and retires with flying colors, having beaten me ignominiously.

A month—two months—go by, and still my self-imposed seclusion is unbroken.

Now and again I receive a letter from former friends, but these I discourage. From mother I hear regularly once a week, whether I answer her or not. Poor mother! She has begged and prayed for permission to visit me, to see how time is using me, whether I am well or ill; but all to no avail. I will not be dragged out of the gloomy solitude in which I have chosen to bury myself.

From Dora, on her return from Rome, comes such a kindly, tender letter as I had not believed it possible the chilly Dora could pen. It is wound up by a postscript from Sir George, as warm-hearted in tone as he is himself. It touches me, in a far-off, curious manner; but I shrink from the invitation to join them that it contains, and refuse it in such a way as must prevent a repetition of it.

Monotonous as is my existence, I hardly know how time flies. March winds rush by me, and I scarcely heed them. But for the hurtful racking cough they leave me as a legacy, ere taking their final departure, I would not have known they had been among us. This cough grows and increases steadily, rendering more palid my already colorless cheeks, while the little flesh that still cleaves to my bones becomes less and less as the hours go on. It tears my slight frame with a cruel force, and leaves me sleepless when all the rest of the world is wrapped in slumber.

Oh, the weary days; the more than weary nights, when oblivion never comes to drown my thoughts, or, coming, only wraps me in dreams from which I wake, damply cold, or sobbing with a horror too deep for words!

There are times when I fight with Fate, with all that has brought me to this pass; when I cry aloud and wring my hands and call on death to rescue me, in the privacy of my own room, from the misery that weighs me down and keeps me languishing in the dust. But these times are rare, and come to me but seldom—at such weak moments as when a feeling of deadly sickness or overpowering regret gains mastery over me.

In very truth, my life is a sad one—a mistake—a blot; there is no proper place for me in the universe that seems so great. There is no happiness within me, no spring of hope. I appear to myself a thing apart—innocent, yet marked with a disgraceful brand. With an old writer—whom I now forget—I can truly say:

"For the world, I count it not an inn, but an hospital; and a place not to live, but to die in."

At last I awake to the fact that I am ill—dreadfully ill. There can be no doubt of it; and yet my malady has no name. I have lost all appetite; my strength has deserted me; great hollows have grown in my cheeks, above which my eyes gleam large and feverish. When I sit down I feel no desire to rise again.

Towards the middle of April I rally a little, and an intense craving for air is ever on me. Down by the sea I wander daily, getting as close to it as my strength will allow, the mile that separates me from it being now looked upon as a journey by my impoverished strength. Somewhat nearer to me than the shore is a high, level plain of sand and earth and grass, that runs back inland from a precipice that overlooks the ocean. On this I sit, and drawing sometimes up to the edge, peer over, and amuse myself counting the waves as they dash on the beach far, far below.

That plain forming part of the grounds belonging to Hazelton possesses the double charm of being easier of access than the strand, and of being strictly private.

It is the 17th of April—a cold day, but fresh, with little sunshine anywhere. I am sauntering along my usual path to my sandy plain, though less of anything in the present, innocent of presentiments, when suddenly before me, as though arisen out of the earth, stands Sir Mark Gore.

How long is it since last I saw him?—not months surely?—it seems more like yesterday. Why do I feel no surprise, no emotion? Is the mind indeed within me dead? I am more puzzled by my own calmness at this moment than even by an event so unexpected as his presence here.

We both stand still and gaze at each other. As far as I am concerned, time dies; I forget these weary months at Hazelton. I think of our parting at Strangemore. His eyes are reading, examining with undisguised pain, the changes in my face and form. At length he speaks.

"I hardly thought to meet you here, Mrs. Carrington," he says, advancing slowly, and addressing me in the low, hushed tone one adopts towards the sick or dying. He appears agitated.

I regard him with fixed coldness.

"You, who know all," I say, with quiet emphasis, "why do you call me by that name? Call me Phyllis; that, at least, still remains to me."

He flushes crimson, and a pained look comes into his eyes.

"I suppose," I go on, curiously, "that last warning you gave Marmaduke at the library door at home—at Strangemore," correcting myself without haste, "had reference to—that woman? Am I right?"

"Yes; I regret now having ever uttered it."

"Regrets are useless, and your words did no harm. Thinking of things since, I knew they must have meant an allusion to her."

"How calmly you speak of it!" he says, amazed.

"I speak as I feel," I reply.

There is rather an awkward pause. Now that he is here, the question naturally presents itself—for what reason has he come? At length——

"Will you not say you are glad to see me?" ventures Sir Mark, uneasily.

"I am neither glad nor sorry," is my unmoved return; "I have forgotten to be emotional. I believe my real feeling just now is indifference. Considering how unlooked-for is your presence here, it astonishes even myself that I can call up so little surprise. Curious, is it not? You look thin, I think, and older—not so well as when last we met."

He grows a shade paler.

"Do I?" Then, drawing a hard, quick breath—"And you, child, what have you been doing with yourself? Except for your eyes, it is hardly you I see. So white, so worn, so changed; this place is killing you."

"It is a very quiet place. It suits me better than any other could."

"I tell you it is killing you," he repeats, angrily. "Better to face and endure the world's talk at once, than linger here until body and soul part."

"I shall never face the world," return I, quietly. "Here is my convent; at least within its walls I find peace. I see no one, therefore hear no evil talk. I have no wish to be disturbed."

"So you think now; but as time goes on you must—you cannot fail to tire of it. Is it natural to one so young to lock herself voluntarily away from people of her own age? Why, how old are you, child?"

"Almost nineteen."

"Almost nineteen!" cries he, with an unmirthful laugh, "and you may live for fifty years! Are you going to immure yourself within these same four walls for fifty years."

"I shall not live for fifty years."

"But you may; without excitement of any description, I see no reason why you should not live for a century."

"I shall not live for two years," returned I, impressively.

"Phyllis, what are you saying?" cries he, with a shudder.

"The truth. I am dying slowly, and I know it. I am glad of it. I have no energy, no hope, no wish for life. Do you wonder much? At times I have a strange fancy that I am already dead; and then——" I break off dreamily.

"What abominable morbid fancy! It is horrible! exclaims Sir Mark, excitedly. "You must see a doctor without delay; if you were well no such mournful ideas would occur to you."

"Mournful!" I smile a little. "Yes, perhaps so—when I wake again to find I am alive."

"Nonsense," impatiently. "Why have your people left you so much alone? It is shameful, unheard of! Phyllis, promise me you will see a doctor if I send one."

"Who shall minister to a mind diseased?" says I, still smiling. "No, I will not see your doctor. My ailment has no name; I do not suffer; quiet is my best medicine."

We walk on a little way in silence.

"You do not ask after your friends," says he, abruptly.

"Have I still any left? Well, tell me. I should like to know—how is Marmaduke? and where?"

"Do you not hear from him, then?" turning to gaze suspiciously in my face.

"No; why should I? We parted forever when he brought me here. Oh," with a sudden, sharp uplifting of my voice—"how long ago it seems! what years, and years, and years! Tell me you—where is he?"

"Abroad somewhere; we none of us know where. You think of him incessantly?" still with his eyes searching and reading my face; "it is for him the color has left your cheeks, the light has died from your eyes? Is it the old life, or is it merely him you regret?"

"I think I regret nothing but my youth," return I, wearily.

"Had you never at any time, any idea of the truth?" asks he, in a low tone, presently.

"Never. How should I? He kept it from me, fearing it would cause me pain."

"He deceived you grossly."

"Yes but, as he thought, for my good. Where was the use of enlightening me? The story was told; the woman was dead—or so he believed. He chose to hide it from me."

"Yes, he hid it from you."

"Well, what of that?" I cry impatiently; "it was a mistake, I think, but a kindly one. He was always thinking of my happiness. It was perhaps a worse shock to him than it was to me. He had no faintest thought of her being alive until she stood before him."

He is silent. Something in his manner, in the very way he keeps his eyes bent resolutely upon the ground, chills me. Upon his face a curiously determined expression has gathered and grown.

"No faintest thought," I repeat, sharply, watching him now as keenly as he watched me before; "of course he had not. He had heard of her death years before he had ever met me. Had he even doubted on the subject his treachery would have been unequalled. But you cannot think that; it is impossible you can think it; therefore say so!"

Still he is silent—ominously so, as it seems to me. His eyes are still downcast; the evil determination in his face is stronger; his cane is digging deep furrows in the sandy loam.

"Why don't you speak," cried I, fiercely; "what do you mean by standing there silent, with that hateful expression upon your face? Do you mean to insinuate that there was a doubt in his mind? Look at me, and answer truly. Do you believe Marmaduke knew that woman to be living when he married me?"

I am half mad with suspense and fear. Placing both my hands upon his arm, I put forth all my puny strength, and actually compel him, strong man as he is, to meet my gaze.

For a moment he hesitates—a long moment—and then the right triumphs. Though in his own mind he is firmly convinced that can he but endue my mind with this doubt of Marmaduke's integrity, it will substantially aid his own cause, still, being a gentleman born and bred, he finds a difficulty in bringing his lips to utter the miserable falsehood.

"No; I don't believe he did know," he answers, doggedly.

"You are sure of this?" I ask, feverishly.

"I would give my oath of it," he replies, with increased sullenness.

"Coward!" murmur I bitterly, taking my hands from his arm, and turning away.

The excitement of the past few minutes has been terrible to my weakened frame; I feel a vague dizziness, a coldness creeping over me. I am a good half-mile from home; should I faint, there will be nothing for it but for Sir Mark to carry me there, and to have that man's arms round me for so long a time is more than I could endure. The bare thought of it nerves me to action.

Hurriedly drawing a pin from some secret fold of my dress, I press it deep into my arm, so deep that presently I feel a warm slug—bitterly. "Have you come all the way down here to tell me what I know so well already?"

"Yes, and for something more; to ask you to be my wife. Hush! let me speak. I know the answer you would make me, but I do not think you have fully weighed everything. Were you to endure this life you are now leading but for a season, for a year, even for several years, I would say nothing; but until this woman, this Carlotta, dies, you can never be his wife. Remember that. And who ever knew any one to die quickly whose death was longed for? Look at annuitants, for instance; they live for ever; therefore this isolation of yours will know no end."

I am motionless, speechless, from rage and amazement.

(To be continued.)

Bill Arp on Life Partners.

I sat in my piazza ruminating over the scene and I wondered that there were as many happy matings as there seem to be. Partners for life ought to be congenial and harmonious in so many things. When men make a partnership in business they can't get along well if they are unlike in disposition or in moral principle or in business habits. They can dissolve and separate at pleasure and try another man. A man and his wife ought to be alike in most everything. It is said that folks like their opposite, their counterparts, and so they do, in some respects. A man with blue eyes goes mighty nigh distracted over a woman with hazel eyes. I did, and I'm distracted yet whenever I look into them. But in Mental qualities and emotional qualities, and tastes and habits and principles and the like they ought to class together. Indeed, it is better for them to have the same politics and the same religion. And so I have observed that the happiest unions, as a general thing, are those where the high contracting parties have known each other for a long time, and have assimilated from their youth in thought and feeling.—*Atlantic Constitution.*

Conseling the 'Squire..

'Squire Patterson, wearing an air of deep concern, approached his friend, Farmer Glover, and, without speaking, leaned on the fence and sighed.

"What's the matter, 'squire?"

"I don't know what this country's comin' to. What would you think if your daughter should run away and marry an ignorant hired man?"

"Oh, I don't know, squire, but I would not take it to heart, if I were you. I would try to think that it happened for the best."

"Would you forgive the girl?" asked the 'squire.

"Yes, I believe I would. There's no use in holding out, you know. When did it happen?"

"Just a while ago."

"Who performed the ceremony?"

"I did."

"What! Then you could not have been opposed to the marriage."

"Oh, it makes no difference to me," replied the 'squire, "for, you see, its your daughter, instead of mine."—*Arkansas Traveller.*

Sure to Be a Politician.

Arkansas Traveller: A little boy and girl playing in the yard. The girl finds an apple under a tree, and with an exclamation of delight, begins to bite it.

"Hold on!" said the boy. "Throw it away. The colwy is comin', an' if you eat that apple you will be too sick an' you can't talk, an' the doctor will come an' give you some bad med'cine an' then you will die."

The girl throws the apple down, and the boy, snatching it up, begins to eat it.

"Don't!" the girl cries. "Won't it kill you, too?"

"No," says the boy, munching the fruit. "It won't kill boys. It's only after little girls. Boys don't have colwy."

That youngster will be a great politician.

The valuable stallion, "Glorio," the property of Mr. McManus, Berlin, died recently of inflammation of the bowels. The animal was valued at about $2,800. There was no insurance on the horse, and the loss will be a serious one to the owner.

The German physicians have to study in an ordinary college for five years, then attend a medical school six years, and end up with two years in the hospital—thirteen years in all.