Wait a Bit.

(The Century.)

When Johnny came a-courting
I thought him overbold,
For I was but a young thing
And he not very old,
And though I liked him well enough
I sent him on his way,
With "Wait a bit, bide a bit,
Wait a week and a day!"

When Johnny passed me in the lane,
And pleaded for a kiss,
And vowed he'd love me evermore
For granting of the bliss,
Although I'd liked it overwell,
I ran from him away,
With "Wait a bit, bide a bit,
Wait a week and a day!"

When Johnny fell a-ranting,
With "Jenny, be my wife?"
And vowed I never should regret,
However long my life;
Although I liked it best o' all,
I turned from him away,
With "Wait a bit, bide a bit,
Wait a week and a day!"

Oh, Johnny was a ninny;
He took me at my word!
And he was courting another
The next thing that I heard.
Oh, what a ninny was Johnny,
To mind me when I'd say:
"Wait a bit, bide a bit,
Wait a week and a day!"

Heigh-ho, I've met my Johnny,
I gin him a blink o' my eye,
And then he fell a-raving,
For want o' my love he'd die!
I ne'er could be so cruel,
So I set the wedding day,
With "Haste a bit, nor waste a bit,
There's danger in delay."

SIR HUGH'S LOVES.

For when November came with its short days, its yellow fogs, its heavy damp atmosphere, a terrible thing happened in Mr. Huntingdon's office.

A young clerk, the one above Maurice—a weak, dissipated fellow, who had lately given great dissatisfaction by his unpunctuality and carelessness—absconded one day with five thousand pounds belonging to his employer. Mr. Huntingdon had just given authority to the manager to dismiss him when the facts of his disappearance and the missing sum were brought to their ears. The deed was a cool one, and so cleverly executed that more than one believed that an older hand was concerned in it; but in the midst of the consternation and confusion, while the manager stood rubbing his hands nervously together, and Mr. Huntingdon, in his cold, hard voice, was giving instructions to the detective, Maurice Trafford quietly asked to speak to him a moment, and offered to accompany the detective officer.

He knew George Anderson's haunts, he said, and from a chance word accidentally overheard, he thought he had a clue, and might succeed in finding him.

There was something so modest and self-reliant in the young man's manner as he spoke, that, after a searching glance at him, Mr Huntingdon agreed to leave the matter in his hands, only bidding him not to let the young villain escape, as he certainly meant to punish him.

Many were the incidents that befell Maurice and his companion in this his first and last detective case; but at last, thanks to his sagacity and the unerring instinct of the officer, they were soon on the right track, and before night had very far advanced were hanging about a low public house in Liverpool, lurking round corners and talking to stray sailors.

And the next morning they boarded the Washington, bound for New York, that was to loose anchor at the turn of the tide; and while Staunton, the detective, was making inquiries of the captain about the steerage passengers, Maurice's sharp eyes had caught sight of a young sailor with a patch over his eye, apparently busy with a coil of ropes, and he walked up to him carelessly; but as he loitered at his side a moment his manner changed.

"Don't look round, George," he whispered; "for heaven's sake keep to the ropes or you are lost. Slip the pocket-book in my hand, and I will try and get the detective out of the boat."

"Would it be penal servitude, Maurice?" muttered the lad, and his face turned a ghastly hue at the thought of the human bloodhound behind him.

"Five or ten years at least," returned Maurice. "Were you mad, George? Give t to me—quick—quick! and I will put him on the wrong scent. That's right," as the shaking hand pushed a heavy brown pocket-book towards him. "Good-by, George; say your prayers to-night, and thank God that you are saved."

"Staunton," he said aloud, as the detective approached him, "we are wrong; he is in the bow of the Brown Bess, and he sails in the Prairie Flower;" and as he uttered the first lie that he had ever told in his guileless young life, Maurice looked full in the detective's face and led him quietly away.

But a couple of hours later—when Staunton was loosing his temper over their want of success, and the Washington was steaming out of the dock—Maurice suddenly produced the pocket-book, and proposed that they should take the next train back for London. "For I am very tired," finished Maurice, with provoking good-humor; "and Mr. Huntingdon will sleep better to-night if we give him back his five thousand pounds."

"You'll let the rogue go!" exclaimed Staunton, and he swore savagely. "You have cheated justice, and connived at his escape."

"Yes," answered Maurice calmly. "Don't put yourself out, my good fellow. I will take all the blame. He sailed in the Washington, and there she goes like a bird. You are out of temper because I was too sharp for you. Evil communications corrupt good manners, Staunton. I have taken a leaf out of your book—don't you think I should make a splendid detective?" continued Maurice, rattling on in pure boyish fun. "I got up the little fiction about the Brown Bess and the Prairie Flower when I saw him dressed like a sailor, with a patch over his eye, hauling in the ropes."

Then, as Staunton uttered another oath:

"Why, did you expect me to bring back my old chum, when I knew they would give him five or ten years of penal servitude? Do you think I am flesh and blood and could do it? No! I have kept my promise, and brought back the five thousand pounds, and not a farthing of it would he or you have seen but for me."

Perhaps Staunton was not as hard-hearted as he seemed, for he ceased bluster'ng and shook Maurice's hand very heartily; nay, more, when they told their story, and Mr. Huntingdon frowned angrily on hearing Maurice had connived at the criminal's escape, he spoke up for Maurice. "You did not expect the young gentleman, sir, to put the handcuffs on his old pal; it is against human nature, you see."

"Perhaps so," returned Mr. Huntingdon, coldly; "but I should have thought better of you, Trafford, if you had sacrificed feeling in the matter. Well, it may rest now. I have struck off George Anderson's name as defaulter out of my book and memory, and I will tell Dobson to add his salary to yours. No thanks," he continued in rather a chilling manner, as Maurice's eyes sparkled, and he attempted to speak; "it is a fair recompense for your sagacity. Go on as well as you have begun, and your future will be assured. To-morrow I shall expect you to dine with me at Belgrave House. Dobson is coming, too," and with a slight nod Mr. Huntingdon dismissed him.

That night Maurice laid his head upon his pillow and dreamed happy dreams of a golden future. To-morrow he should see the dark-eyed girl who had spoken so sweetly to him; and as he remembered her words and glances of gratitude, and the touch of her soft white hands, Maurice's heart gave quick throbs that were almost pain.

He should see that lovely face again was his first waking thought; but when the evening was over Maurice Trafford went back to his lodgings a sadder and a wiser man.

He was dazzled and bewildered when he saw her again—the young girl in the white gown was changed into a radiant princess. Nea was dressed for a ball; she came across the great lighted room to greet Maurice in a cloud of gauzy draperies. Diamonds gleamed on her neck and arms; her eyes were shining; she looked so bewilderingly beautiful that Maurice grew embarrassed, all the more that Mr. Huntingdon's cold eyes were upon him.

Maurice never recalled that evening without pain. A great gulf seemed to open between him and his master's daughter; what was there in common between them? Nea talked gaily to him as well as to her other guests, but he could hardly bring himself to answer her.

His reserve disappointed Nea. She had been longing to see him again, but the handsome young clerk seemed to have so little to say to her. He was perfectly gentlemanly and well bred, but he appeared somewhat depressed.

Nea's vanity was piqued at last, and when Lord Bertie joined them in the evening she gave him all her attention. Things had not progressed according to Mr. Huntingdon's wishes. Nea could not be induced to look favorably on Lord Bertie's suit; she pouted and behaved like a spoilt child when her father spoke seriously to her on the subject. The death of one of Lord Bertie's sisters had put a stop to the wooing for the present; but it was understood that he would speak to Nea very shortly, and after a long and angry argument with her father, she was induced to promise that she would listen to him.

Nea was beginning to feel the wright of her father's inflexible will. In spite of her gaiety and merry speeches, she was hardly happy that evening. Lord Bertie's heavy speeches and meaningless jokes oppressed her—how terribly weary she would get of him if he were her husband, she thought. She was tired of him already—of his commonplace handsome face—of his confidential whispers and delicately-implied compliments—and then she looked up and met Maurice's thoughtful grey eyes fixed on her. Nea never knew why she blushed, or a strange restless feeling came over her that moment; but she answered Lord Bertie pettishly. It was almost a relief when the carriage was announced, and she was to leave her guests. Maurice, who was going, stood at the door while Lord Bertie put her in the carriage—a little gloved hand waved to him out of the darkness—and then the evening was over.

Mr. Huntingdon had not seemed like himself that night; he had complained of headache and feverishness, and had confided to Dobson that perhaps after all Dr. Ainslie was right, and he ought to have taken more rest.

Somehow he was not the man he had been before his accident; nevertheless he ridiculed the idea that much was amiss, and talked vaguely of running down to the sea for a few days.

But not even that determined will of his could shake off the illness that was creeping over him, and one night when Nea r turned from a brilliant reunion she found Belgrave House a second time in confusion. Mr. Huntingdon had been taken suddenly ill, and Dr. Ainslie was in attendance.

By and by a nurse arrived—a certain bright-eyed little Sister Teresa—and took charge of the sick man. After the first few days of absolute danger, during which he had been tolerably submissive, Mr. Huntingdon had desired that he should be kept informed of all matters connected with an important law suit of his at present pending; and during the tedious weeks of convalescence Maurice Trafford carried the daily report to Belgrave House. It seemed as though fate was conspiring against him; every day he saw Nea, and every day her presence grew more perilously sweet to him.

She had a thousand innocent pretexts for detaining him, little girlish coquetries which she did not employ in vain. She would ask him about her father, or beg him to tell her about the tiresome law-suit, or show him her birds and flowers, anything, in fact, that her caprice could devise to keep him beside her for a moment: very often they met in her father's room, or Mr. Huntingdon would give orders that Mr. Trafford should stay to lunchon.

Nea, in her blindness, thought she was only amusing herself with an idle fancy, a girl's foolish partiality for a face that seemed almost perfect in her eyes; she little thought that she was playing a dangerous game, that the time was fast approaching when she would find her fancy a sorrowful reality.

Day by day those stolen moments became more perilous in their sweetness; and one morning Nea woke up to the conviction that Maurice Trafford loved her, that he was everything to her, and that she would rather die than live without him.

It was one afternoon, and they were together in the drawing-room. Maurice had come late that day, and a violent storm had set in, and Mr. Huntingdon had sent down word that Mr. Trafford had better wait until it was over. To do Mr. Huntingdon justice, he had no idea his daughter was in the house; she had gone out to luncheon, and he had not heard of her return.

The heavy velvet curtains had been drawn to shut out the dreary scene, and only the firelight lit up the room; Nea, sitting in her favorite low chair, with her feet on the white rug, was looking up at Maurice, who stood leaning against the mantlepiece talking to her.

He was telling her about his father's early death, and of the sweet-faced mother who had not long survived him; of his own struggles and poverty, of his lonely life, his efforts to follow his parents' example. Nea listened to him in silence; but once he paused, and the words seemed to die on his lips. He had never seen her look like that before; she was trembling, her face was pale, and her eyes were wet with tears; and then, how it happened neither of them could tell, but Maurice knew that he loved her—knew that Nea loved him—and was holding her to his heart as though he could never let her go.

CHAPTER IX.

THE AWAKENING.

That thrilling, solemn, proud, pathetic voice,
He stretched his arms out towards that thrilling voice,
As if to draw it on to his embrace.
I take her as God made her, and as men
Must fail to unmake her, for my honor'd wife.
E. B. Browning.

Paradise itself could hardly hold an hour of purer and more perfect bliss than when those two young creatures stood holding each other's hands and confessing their mutual love.

To Nea it was happiness, the happiness for which she had secretly longed. To Maurice it was a dazzling dream, a madness, an unreality, from which he must wake up to doubt his own sanity—to tremble and disbelieve.

And that awakening came all too soon.

Through the long hours of the night he lay and pondered, till with the silence and darkness a thousand uneasy thoughts arose that cooled the fever in his veins and made him chill with the foreboding of evil.

What had he done? Was he mad? Had it been all his fault that he had betrayed his love? had he not been sorely tempted? and yet, would not a more honorable man have left her without saying a word?

How could he go to Mr. Huntingdon and acknowledge what he had done? that he, a mere clerk, a poor curate's son, had dared to aspire to his daughter, to become the rival of Lord Bertie Gower—for Nea had confided to him her father's ambition. Would he not think him mad? groaned Maurice, or would he turn with that hard dark look on his face that he knew so well, and give him a curt dismissal?

Maurice remembered George Anderson and trembled, as well he might; and then as the whole hopelessness of the case rushed upon him, he thought that he would tell his darling that he had been mad—dishonorable, but that he would give her up; that he loved her better than himself, and that for her own sweet sake he must give her up.

And so through the long dark hours Maurice lay and fought out his fierce battle of life, and morning found him the victor.

The victor, but not for long; for at the first hint, the first whispered word that he must tell her father, or that he must leave her for ever, Nea clung to him in a perfect passion of tears.

The self-willed, undisciplined child had grown into the wayward undisciplined girl. No one but her father had ever thwarted Nea, and now even his will had ceased to govern her; she could not and would not give up the only man whom she loved; nothing on earth should induce her now to marry Lord Bertie—she would rather die first; if he left her she should break her heart, but he loved her too well to leave her.

Poor Maurice! An honorable man would have nerved himself to bear her loving reproaches; would have turned sadly and firmly from her confused girlish sophistries, and reproved them with a word. He would have told her that he loved her, but that he loved honor more; that he would neither sin himself nor suffer her to tempt him from his sense of right. But Maurice did none of these things; he was young and weak; the temptation was too powerful; he stayed, listened, and was lost. Ah! the angels must have wept that day over Maurice's fall, and Nea's victory.

She told him what he knew already, that Mr. Huntingdon would turn him out of his office; that he would oppress her cruelly; that he would probably take her abroad, or condemn her to solitude, until she had promised to give him up and marry Lord Bertie.

Could he leave her to her father's tender mercies, or abandon her to that other lover? and she wept so passionately as she said this that a stronger man than Maurice must have felt his strength waver.

And so Nea had the victory, and the days flew by on golden wings, and the stolen moments became sweeter and more precious to the young lovers until the end came.

Mr. Huntingdon was better—he could leave his room and walk up and down the corridor leaning on Sister Teresa's arm.

There was less pain and fewer relapses; and when Dr. Ainslie proposed that his patient should spend the rest of the spring in the south of France, Mr. Huntingdon consented without demur.

They were to be away some months, Mr. Huntingdon informed Nea, and extend their tour to Switzerland and the Italian Tyrol. Lord Bertie had promised to join them at Pau in a month or so, and here her father looked at her with a smile. They could get the trousseau in Paris. Nea must make up her mind to accept him before they started; there must be no more delay or shilly-shallying; the thing had already hung fire too long. Lord Bertie had been complaining that he was not fairly treated, and more to the same purpose.

Nea listened in perfect silence, but it was well that her father could not see her face. Presently she rose and said that he was tired and must talk no more, for Mr. Trafford would be here directly; and then she made some pretext for leaving the room.

Maurice found her waiting for him when he came downstairs. As he took her in his arms, and asked her why she looked so pale and strange, she clung to him almost convulsively, and implored him to save her. Maurice was as pale as she long before she had finished; the crisis had come, and he must either lose her or tempt his fate.

Again he tried to reason with her, to be true to himself and her; but Nea would not give him up or let him tell her father. She would marry Maurice at once if he wished it; yes, perhaps that would be the wisest plan. Her father would never give his consent, but when it was too late to prevent it he might be induced to forgive their marriage. It was very wrong, she knew, but it would be the only way to free her from Lord Bertie. Her father would be terribly angry, but his anger would not last; she was his only child, and he had never denied her anything.

Poor Nea! there was something pathetic in her blindness and perfect faith in her father; even Maurice felt his misgiving silenced as he listened to her innocent talk; and again the angels wept over Maurice's deeper fall, and Nea's unholy victory.

They had planned it all; in three weeks time they were to be married. Mr. Huntingdon could not leave before then. On the day before that fixed for the journey, the bond was to be sealed and signed between them, so that no power of man could part them. Mr. Huntingdon might storm ever so loudly, his anger would break against an adamantine fate. "Those whom God has joined together no man can put asunder"—words of sacred terror and responsibility.

The next three weeks were very troubled ones to Maurice; his brief interviews with Nea were followed by hours of bitter misgiving. But Nea was childishly excited and happy; every day her love for Maurice increased and deepened. The shadow of his moral weakness could not hide his many virtues. She gloried in the thought of being his wife. Oh, yes, her father would be good to them, perhaps after all they would go to Pau, but Maurice and not Lord Bertie would be with them.

Nea never hesitated, never repented, though Maurice's face grew thin and haggard with anxiety as the days went by.

They were to be married in one of the old city churches; and afterwards Maurice was to take her to his lodging in Ampton street; and they were to write a letter to Mr. Huntingdon. Maurice must help her write it, Nea said. Of course her father would be angry—fearfully angry—but after a few hours he would calm down, and then he would send the carriage for her; and there would be a scene of penitence and reconciliation. Nea painted it all in glowing colors, but Maurice shook his head with a sad smile, and begged her not to deceive herself. Mr. Huntingdon might not forgive them for a long time, for he remembered George Anderson, and the inexorable will that would have condemned the young criminal to penal servitude.

And so one morning as Mr. Huntingdon was sitting by the open window watching the children play in the May sunshine, and wondering why his daughter had not been to wish him good morning, Nea had stolen out of her father's house, and was hurrying through the sunny square and green deserted park until she found Maurice waiting for her, who silently took her hand, and put her into the carriage.

Nea said afterwards that it was that silent greeting of Maurice's, and his cold touch, that first brought a doubt to her mind; during the long drive he spoke little to her—only held her hand tightly; and when at last they stood together in the dark old church with its gloomy altar and white gleaming monuments, the poor child gave a shiver that was almost fear, and suddenly burst into tears. It had come upon her all at once what she was doing, and why she was there; but already it was too late, for while she was clinging to Maurice with low frightened sobs, the curate had hurried from the vestry and had entered within the rails, and the pew opener was beckoning them to take their places.

Too late! too late! Ten minutes more and the knot was tied that no hand could loosen, and Nea Huntingdon had become Nea Trafford.

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But when they had left the gloomy old church in the distance, and were driving through the crowded streets with their babel of voices, Nea's courage and spirits revived; and presently she was tripping about Maurice's shabby rooms, rearranging the bowls of jonquils and lilac, with which the landlady had made some show of festivity, unlooping the stiff folds of the muslin curtains, and peeping into the corner cupboards with the gleeful curiosity of a child, until, at her young husband's gentle remonstrance, her seriousness returned, and she sat down to write the formidable letter.

And how formidable it was Nea never imagined, until she had tried and failed, and then tried again till she sighed for very weariness; and then Maurice came to her aid with a few forcible sentences; and so it got itself writen—the saddest, most penitent little letter that a daughter's hand could frame.

But when she had laid down the burthen of her secret, and the special messenger had been despatched to Belgrave House, Nea put off thought for a while, and she sat by the window and chatted to Maurice about the gay doings they would have at Pau, and Maurice listened to her; but always there was that sad incredulous smile on his face.

And so the day wore on, but when they had finished their simple dinner and the afternoon had waned into evening, Nea grew strangely quiet and Maurice's face grew graver and graver as they sat with clasped hands in the twilight, with a barrier of silence growing up between them.

And when the dusk became darkness, and the lamp was brought in, Nea looked at Maurice with wide anxious eyes and asked what it meant.

Were they not going to send the carriage for them after all? she wondered; must she go home on foot and brave her father's anger? he must be so very, very angry, she thought, to keep them so long in suspense.

"Hush!" exclaimed Maurice, and then they heard the rumbling of wheels that stopped suddenly before the door, and the loud pealing of a bell through the house.

"The carriage! the carriage!" cried Nea, and the flush rose to her face as she started to her feet, but Maurice did not answer; he was grasping the table to support himself, and felt as though another moment's suspense would be intolerable.

"A letter for Mrs. Trafford," observed the landlady in solemn awe-struck tones, "and a man in livery and the cabman are bringing in some boxes."

"What boxes?" exclaimed Nea, but as she tore open the letter and glanced over the contents a low cry escaped her.

"Maurice! Maurice!" cried the poor child, and Maurice taking it from her, read it once, twice, thrice, growing whiter and whiter with each perusal, and then sank on a chair, hiding his face in his hands, with a groan. "Oh! my darling," he gasped, "I have ruined you; my darling, for whom I would willingly have died, I have ruined you and brought you to beggary."

They had sinned, and beyond doubt their sin was a heavy one; but what father, if he had any humanity, could have looked at those two desolate creatures, so young, and loving each other so tenderly, and would not have had pity on them?

(To be continued.)

Food That Gives Muscle.

The lumbermen in the Maine forests work intensely in the cold snows of winter, and in the icy water in the spring. To endure the severe labor and cold, they must have food to yield a great deal of heat and strength. Beans and fat pork are staple articles of diet with them, and are used in very large quantities. The beans supply protein to make up for the wear and tear of muscle, and they, and more especially the pork, are very rich in energy to be used for warmth and work.

I cannot vouch for the following, which has just struck my eye in a daily paper, but, if it is true, the workmen were sound in their physiology:

"A lot of woodchoppers who worked for Mr. S—— in H—— stopped work the other day, and sent a spokesman to their employer, who said that the men were satisfied with their wages and most other things, but didn't like 'your fresh meat; that's too fancy, and hain't got strength into it.' Mr. S—— gave them salt pork three times a day, and peace at once resumed its sway."

The use of oily and fatty foods in arctic regions is explained by the great potential energy of fat, a pound of which is equal to over two pounds of protein or starch. I have been greatly surprised to see, on looking into the matter, how commonly and largely the fatter kinds of meat are used by men engaged in very hard labor. Men in training for athletic contests, as oarsmen and football teams, eat large quantities of meat. I have often queried why so much fat beef is used, and especially why mutton is often recommended in preference to beef for training diet. Both the beef and the mutton are rich in protein, which makes muscle. Mutton has the advantage of containing more fat along with the protein, and hence more potential energy. Perhaps this is another case in which experience has led to practice, the real grounds for which have later been explained by scientific research.—*Prof. Atwater in the Century.*

Bridesmaids in Germany.

In Germany the duties of the bridesmaids have just a tinge of superstition about them. It is one of their duties on the morning of the marriage day to carry to the bride a myrtle wreath, for which they had subscribed on the previous evening. This they place on her head, and at night remove it, when it is placed in the bride's hand, she being at the time blindfolded. The bridesmaids then dance around her, while she endeavors to place the wreath on one of their heads. Whoever is fortunate enough to be thus decorated will, it is believed, be herself a wife before another year has passed away.

In removing the bridal wreath and veil, the bridesmaids are careful to throw away every pin, or the bride will be overtaken by misfortunes; while any unwary bridesmaid who retains one of these useful little articles will materially lessen her chances of "getting off."

Like many other German superstitions, this has found its way into England, though it has not yet become a general belief.

Chinese Money-Raising Methods.

The *Christian Union* reports that the heathen in China have a practice that, if introduced into this country, would soon abolish church fairs, raffles, pound parties and the other questionable means of raising money to run the church. Dr. Corbett, a returned missionary, says: "The heathen never go to their temples to worship without carrying an offering of some kind as a proof of their sincerity. When they become Christians this conviction is not rooted out, but rather it is heightened in proportion as Christianity is regarded as superior to heathenism. I have seen them give to such an extent that I have felt it a duty to remonstrate and remind them that they owed duties to their homes which must not be forgotten."

Were it not for the danger attending the knowledge of our church methods it would be wise to have a few Chinese sent to this country as missionaries in this particular department of church work. The Chinese are so imitative that, on the whole, it is best for our people to confine the knowledge of their methods of raising money to our own shores.—*Christian Advocate.*

The First Speech of the Young Man.

"Mr. Chairman and gentlemen—The poet has beautifully said, in those words so familiar to you all, but which, unfortunately, have escaped me at this moment, he has said—in the words of the poet—the poet—has said—now, gentlemen, I did not expect to be called upon to speak at this banquet to-night, hence—though I could probably speak better hence than I can here—hence I feel—I mean I find myself—that is to say, you find me—and—and—realizing as I do—happiest moment in my life. Now, I didn't come here to make a speech—"

"We see you didn't," interrupted the Chairman, and the young man sat down amid thunders of applause.—*Texas Siftings.*

Work on the short line railway from Montreal to the sea is progressing satisfactorily. All the contracts in the State of Maine have been awarded, and the sections under contract are expected to be completed in November.

A Skye terrier belonging to a London gentleman, says the *Field*, is caring for eight little chickens. They occupy a basket and the chickens nestle in the dog's long hair and seem comfortable. They follow the dog about and the brute strives to give them all the personal care possible.