When Johnny Gets His Gun.

There's coming up the path of Time a gracious epoch when
The better motives of the heart shall rule the deeds of men;
When politicians cease with lies to mend their party fence,
And office-holders heed the wish of their constituents;
When every one shall have the thought to watch the word they say;
When all our deeds and motives shall be open as the day;
When thieving, trickery, deceit and fraud we shall have done,
In that uncertain period when Johnny gets his gun.

The men will cease to smoke and chew and drink and rudely swear,
And girls be taught to bake and mend and cease to bang their hair,
And he who peddles milk will put no water in his can,
While then the hackman, even, may become an honest man.
How gladly we shall greet the day when these things come to pass!
But there is still one cloud of doubt in hope's fair sky, alas!
New York will still be found with all her monuments undone,
They'll still be just as they are now, when Johnny gets his gun.

AN AMERICAN GIRL.

"Of course, it was very little," hesitated Miss Belinda; "but—but I could not help seeing that he was drawing comparisons, as it were. Octavia was teaching Mr. Poppleton to play croquet, and she was rather exhilarated, and perhaps exhibited more—freedom of manner, in an innocent way—quite in an innocent, thoughtless way—than is exactly customary, and I saw Mr. Barold glance from her to Lucia, who stood near; and when I said, 'You are thinking of the contrast between them,' he answered, 'Yes, they differ very greatly, it is true'; and of course I knew that my poor Octavia could not have the advantage in his eyes. She feels this herself, I know. She shocked me, the other day, beyond expression by telling me that she had asked him if he thought she was really fast, and that she was sure he did. Poor child; she evidently did not comprehend the dreadful significance of such terms."

"A man like Francis Barold does understand their significance," said Lady Theobald, "and it is to be deplored that your niece cannot be taught what her position in society will be if such a reputation attaches itself to her. The men of the present day fight shy of such characters."

This dread clause so impressed poor Miss Belinda by its solemnity that she could not forbear repeating it to Octavia afterwards, though it is to be regretted that it did not produce the effect that she had hoped.

"Well, I must say," she observed, "that if some men fought a little shyer than they do, I shouldn't mind it. You always *do* have about half a dozen dangling around, who only bore, and who will keep asking you to go to places, and sending you bouquets, and asking you to dance, when they can't dance at all, and tear your dress, and stand on your feet. If they would 'fight shy,' it would be splendid."

To Miss Belinda, who certainly had never been guilty of the indecorum of having any member of the stronger sex "dangling about" at all, this was very trying.

"My dear," she said, "don't say 'you always have'; it—it really seems to make it so personal."

Octavia turned around and fixed her eyes wonderingly upon her blushing countenance. For a moment she made no remark, a marvellous thought shaping itself slowly in her mind.

"Aunt Belinda," she said, at length, did anybody ever——."

"Ah, no, my dear. No, no, I assure you!" cried Miss Belinda, in the greatest possible trepidation. "Ah, dear, no! Such—such things rarely — very rarely happen in—in Slowbridge—and besides, I couldn't possibly have thought of it. I couldn't, indeed!"

She was so overwhelmed with maidenly confusion at the appaling thought, that she did not recover herself for half an hour at least. Octavia, feeling that it would not be safe to pursue the subject, only uttered one word of comment:

"Gracious!"

CHAPTER XIX.

AN EXPERIMENT.

Much to her own atonishment, Lucia found herself allowed new liberty. She was permitted to spend the afternoon frequently with Octavia, and, on several occasions, that young lady and Miss Bassett were invited to partake of tea at Oldclough in company with no other guest than Francis Barold.

"I don't know what it means, and I think it must mean something," said Lucia to Octavia, "but it is very pleasant. I never was allowed to be so intimate with any one before."

"Perhaps," suggested Octavia, sagely, "she thinks that, if you see me often enough, you will get sick of me, and it will be a lesson to you."

"The more I see of you," answered Lucia, with a serious little air, "the fonder I am of you. I understand you better. You are not at all like what I thought you at first, Octavia."

"But I don't know that there's much to understand in me."

"There is a great deal to understand in you," she replied. "You are a puzzle to me often. You seem so frank, and yet one knows so little about you, after all. For instance," Lucia went on, "who would imagine that you are so affectionate?"

"Am I affectionate?" she asked.

"Yes," answered Lucia, "I am sure you are very affectionate. I have found it out gradually. You would suffer things for any one you loved."

Octavia thought the matter over.

"Yes," she said at length, "I would."

"You are very fond of Miss Bassett," proceeded Lucia, as if arraigning her at the bar of justice. "You are *very* fond of your father, and I am sure there are other people you are very fond of—*very* fond of, indeed."

Octavia pondered seriously again.

"Yes, there are," she remarked; "but no one would care about them here—and so I'm not going to make a fuss. You don't want to make a fuss over people you l—— like."

"*You* don't," said Lucia. "You are like Francis Barold, in one way—but you are altogether different, in another. Francis Barold does not wish to show emotion, and he is so determined to hedge himself around that one can't help suspecting that he is always guarding himself against one. He always seems to be resenting interference; but you don't appear to care at all, and so it is not natural that one should suspect you. I did not suspect you."

"What do suspect me of now?"

"Of thinking a great deal," answered Lucia affectionately. "And of being very clever and very good."

Octavia was silent for a few moments.

"I think," she said, after the pause "I think you'll find that's its a mistake."

"No, I shall not," returned Lucia, quite glowing with enthusiasm. "And I know I shall learn a great deal from you."

This was such a startling proposition that Octavia felt decidedly uncomfortable. She flushed rosy red.

"I'm the one who ought to learn things, I think," she said. "I'm always doing things that frighten Aunt Belinda, and you know how the rest regard me."

"Octavia," said Lucia, very naively indeed, "suppose we try to help each other. If you will tell me when I am wrong, I will try to—to have the courage to tell you. That will be good practice for me. What I most want is courage and frankness, and I am sure it will take courage to make up my mind to tell you of your—of your mistake."

Octavia regarded her with mingled admiration and respect.

"I think that's a splendid idea," she said.

"Are you sure," faltered Lucia, "are you sure you won't mind the things I may have to say? Really, they are quite little things in themselves—hardly worth mentioning ——."

"Tell me one of them, right now," said Octavia, point-blank.

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Lucia, starting. "I'd rather not—just now."

"Well," commented Octavia, "that sounds as if they must be pretty unpleasant. Why don't you want to? They will be quite as bad to-morrow. And to refuse to tell me one is a bad beginning. It looks as if you were frightened, and it isn't good practice for you to be frightened at such a little thing."

Lucia felt convicted. She made an effort to regain her composure.

"No, it is not," she said. "But that is always the way. I am continually telling myself that I *will* be courageous and candid, and the first time anything happens, I fail. I *will* tell you one thing."

She stopped short here, and looked at Octavia guiltily.

"It is something—I think I would do if—if I were in your place," Lucia stammered. "A very little thing indeed."

"Well?" remarked Octavia, anxiously.

Lucia lost her breath, caught it again, and proceeded cautiously, and with blushes at her own daring.

"If I were in your place," she said, "I think—that, perhaps—only perhaps, you know—I would not wear—my hair—*quite* so low down—over my forehead."

Octavia sprang from her seat, and ran to the pier glass over the mantel. She glanced at the reflection of her own startled, pretty face, and then, putting her hand to the soft blonde "bang" which met her brows, turned to Lucia.

"Isn't it becoming?" she asked breathlessly.

"Oh, yes!" Lucia answered. "Very."

Octavia started.

"Then why wouldn't you wear it?" she cried. "What do you mean?"

Lucia felt her position truly a delicate one. She locked her hands, and braced herself; but she blushed vividly.

"It may sound rather silly, when I tell you why, Octavia," she said; "but I really do think it is a sort of reason. You know, in those absurb pictures of actresses, bangs always seem to be the principal feature. I saw some in the shop windows, when I went to Harriford with grandmamma. And they were such dreadful women—some of them—and had so very few clothes on, that I can't help thinking I shouldn't like to look like them, and——"

"Does it make me look like them?"

"Oh, very little!" answered Lucia; "very little indeed, of course: but——"

"But it's the same thing, after all," put in Octavia. "That's what you mean."

"It is so very little," faltered Lucia, that—that perhaps it isn't a reason."

Octavia looked at herself in the glass again.

"It isn't a very good reason," she remarked, "but I suppose it will do."

She paused, and looked Lucia in the face.

"I don't think that's a little thing," she said. To be told you look like an *opera bouffe* actress."

"I did not mean to say so," cried Lucia, filled with the most poignant distress. "I beg your pardon, indeed I—oh dear! I was afraid you wouldn't like it. I felt that it was taking a great liberty."

"I don't like it," answered Octavia; "but that can't be helped. I didn't exactly suppose I should. But I wasn't going to say anything about *your* hair when I began," glancing at poor Lucia *coiffure*, "though I suppose I might."

"You might say about a thousand things about it!" cried Lucia, piteously. "I know that mine is not only in bad taste, but it is ugly and unbecoming."

"Yes," said Octavia, cruelly, "it is."

"And yours is neither the one nor the other," protested Lucia. "You know I told you it was pretty, Octavia."

Octavia walked over to the table, upon which stood Miss Belinda's work-basket, and took therefrom a small and gleaming pair of scissors, retuning to the mantel glass with them.

"How short shall I cut it?" she demanded.

"Oh!" exclaimed Lucia, "don't—don't."

For answer, Octavia raised the scissors, and gave a snip. It was a savage snip, and half the length and width of her love-locks fell on the mantel; then she gave another snip, and the other half fell.

Lucia scarcely dared to breathe.

For a moment, Octavia stood gazing at herself, with pale face and dilated eyes. Then suddenly the folly of the deed she had done seem to reveal itself to her.

"Oh!" she cried out, "Oh, how diabolical it looks!"

She turned upon Lucia.

"Why did you make me do it?" she exclaimed. "It's all your fault—every bit of it"; and flinging the scissors to the other end of the room, she threw herself into a chair, and burst into tears.

Lucia's anguish of mind was almost more than she could bear. For at least three minutes, she felt herself a criminal of the deepest dye; after the three minutes had elapsed, however, she began to reason, and called to mind the fact that she was failing as usual under her crisis.

"This is being a coward again," she said to herself. "It is worse than to have said nothing. It is true that she will look more refined, now one can see a little of her forehead, and it is cowardly to be afraid to stand firm when I really think so. I—yes, I will say something to her."

"Octavia," she began, aloud, "I am sure you are making a mistake again." This as decidedly as possible, which was not very decidely. "You—you look very much—nicer,"

"I look *ghastly!*" said Octavia, who began to feel rather absurd.

"You do not. Your forehead—you have the prettiest forehead I ever saw, Octavia," said Lucia, eagerly, "and your eyebrows are perfect. I—wish you would look at yourself again."

Rather to her surprise, Octavia began to laugh under cover of her handerchief; reaction had set in, and, though the laugh was a trifle hysterical, it was still a laugh. Next she gave her eyes a final little dab, and rose to go to the glass again. She looked at herself, touched up the short, waving fringe left on her forehead, and turned to Lucia, with a resigned expression.

"Do you think that any one who was used to seeing it the other way would—would think I looked horrid?" she inquired, anxiously.

"They would think you prettier—a great deal," Lucia answered, earnestly. "Don't you know, Octavia, that nothing could be really unbecoming to you? You have that kind of face."

For a few seconds, Octavia seem to lose herself in thought of a speculative nature.

"Jack always said so," she remarked, at length.

"Jack?" repeated Lucia, timidly.

Octavia roused herself, and smiled with candid sweetness.

"He is some one I knew in Nevada," she explained. "He worked in father's mine once."

"You must have known him very well," suggested Lucia, somewhat awed.

"I did," she replied calmly. "Very well."

She tucked away her pocket-handkerchief in the jaunty pocket at the back of her basque, and returned to her chair. Then she turned again to Lucia.

"Well," she said, "I think you have found out that you *were* mistaken, haven't you, dear? Suppose you tell me of something else."

Lucia colored.

"No," she answered, "that is enough for to-day."

CHAPTER XX.

PECULIAR TO NEVADA.

Whether or not Lucia was right in accusing Octavia's Bassett of being clever, and thinking a great deal, is a riddle which those who are interested in her must unravel as they read: but whether the surmise was correct or incorrect, it seemed possible that she had thought a little after the interview. When Barold saw her next, he was struck by a slight but distinctly definable change he recognized in her dress and *coiffure*. Her pretty hair had a rather less "professional" appearance; he had the pleasure of observing, for the first time, how very white her forehead was, and how delicate the arch of her eyebrows; her dress had a novel air of simplicity, and the diamond rings were nowhere to be seen.

"She's better dressed than usual," he said to himself. "And she's always well dressed—rather too well dressed, fact is, for a place like this. This sort of thing is in better form, under the circumstances."

It was so much "better form," and he so far approved of it, that he quite thawed, and was very amiable and very entertaining indeed.

Octavia was entertaining, too. She asked several most interesting questions.

"Do you think," she inquired, "that it is bad taste to wear diamonds?"

"My mother wears them—occasionally."

"Have you any sisters?"

"No."

"Any cousins—as young as I am?"

"Ya-as."

"Do they wear them?"

"I must admit," he replied, "that they don't. In the first place, you know, they haven't any, and, in the second, I am under the impression that Lady Beauchamp—their mamma, you know—wouldn't permit it if they had."

"Wouldn't permit it!" said Octavia. "I suppose they always do as she tells them?"

He smiled a little.

"They would be very courageous young women if they didn't," he remarked.

"What would she do if they tried it?" she inquired. "She couldn't beat them."

"They will never try it," he answered. dryly. "And, though I have never seen her beat them, or heard their lamentations under chastiment, I should not like to say that Lady Beauchamp could not do anything. She is a very determined person—for a gentlewoman."

Octavia laughed.

"You are joking," she said.

"Lady Beauchamp is a serious subject for jokes," he responded. "My cousins think so, at least."

"I wonder if she is as bad as Lady Theobald," Octavia reflected aloud. "She says I have no right to wear diamonds at all, until I am married. But I don't mind Lady Theobald," she added, as a cheerful afterthought. "I am not fond enough of her to care about what she says."

"Are you fond of any one?" Barold inquired, speaking with a languid air, but, at the same time glancing at her with some slight interest, from under his eyelids.

"Lucia says I am," she returned, with the calmness of a young person who wished to regard the matter from an unembarrassed point of view. "Lucia says I am affectionate."

"Ah!" deliberately. "Are you?"

She turned and looked at him serenely.

"Should *you* think so?" she asked.

This was making such a personal matter of the question that he did not exactly enjoy it. It was certainly not "good form" to pull a man up in such cool style.

"Really," he replied, "I—ah—have had no opportunity of judging."

He had not the slightest intention of being amusing, but to his infinite disgust he discovered as soon as he spoke that she was amused. She laughed outright, and evidently only checked herself because he looked so furious. In consideration for his feelings she assumed an air of mild but preternatural seriousness.

"No," she remarked, "that is true—you haven't, of course."

He was silent. He did not enjoy being amusing at all, and he made no pretence of appearing to submit to the indignity calmly.

She bent forward a little.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "you are mad again—I mean you are vexed. I am always vexing you."

There was a hint of appeal in her voice, which rather pleased him, but he had no intention of relenting at once.

"I confess I am at a loss to know why you laughed," he said.

"Are you," she asked, "really?"—letting her eyes rest upon him anxiously for a moment. Then she actually gave vent to a little sigh. "We look at things so differently, that's it," she said.

"I suppose it is," he responded, still chillingly.

In spite of this, she suddenly assumed a comparatively cheerful aspect. A happy thought occurred to her.

"Lucia would beg your pardon," she said. "I am learning good manners from Lucia. Suppose I beg your pardon."

"It is quite unnecessary," he replied.

"Lucia wouldn't think so," she said. "And why shouldn't I be as well behaved as Lucia? I beg your pardon."

He felt rather absurd, and yet somewhat mollified. She had a way of looking at him, sometimes, when she had been unpleasant, which rather soothed him. In fact, he had found of late, a little to his private annoyance, that it was very easy for her either to soothe or disturb him.

And now, just as Octavia had settled down into one of the prettiest and least difficult of her moods, there came a knock at the front door, which, being answered by Mary Anne, was found to announce the curate of St. James.

Enter, consequently, the Rev. Arthur Poppleton,—blushing, a trifle timorous, perhaps, but happy beyond measure to find himself in Miss Belinda's parlor again, with Miss Belinda's niece.

Perhaps the least possible shade of his joyousness died out when he caught sight of Mr. Francis Barold, and certainly Mr. Francis Barold was not at all delighted to see him.

"What does that fellow want?" that gentleman was saying, inwardly. "What does he come simpering and turning pink here for? Why doesn't he go and see some of his old women, and read tracts to them? That's *his* business."

Octavia's manner towards her visitor formed a fresh grievance for Barold. She treated the curate very well indeed. She seemed glad to see him, she was wholly at her ease with him, she made no trying remarks to him, she never stopped to fix her eyes upon him in that inexplicable style, and she did not laugh when there seemed nothing to laugh at. She was so gay and good-humored that the Reverend Arthur Poppleton beamed and flourished under her treatment, and forgot to change color, and even ventured to talk a good deal and make divers quite presentable little jokes.

"I should like to know," thought Barold, growing sulkier as the others grew merrier—"I should like to know what she finds so interesting in him, and why she chooses to treat him better than she treats me—for she certainly does treat him better."

It was hardly fair, however, that he should complain; for, at times, he was treated extremely well; and his intimacy with Octavia progressed quite rapidly. Perhaps, if the truth were told, it was always himself who was the first means of checking it, by some sudden prudent instinct which led him to feel that perhaps he was in rather a delicate position, and had better not indulge in too much of a good thing. He had not been an eligible and unimpeachably desirable *parti* for ten years without acquiring some of that discretion which is said to be the better part of valor. The matter-of-fact air with which Octavia accepted his attentions caused him to pull himself up sometimes. If he had been Brown, or Jones, or even Robinson, she could not have appeared to regard them as more entirely natural. When—he had gone so far, once or twice—he had deigned to make a more than usually agreeable speech to her, it was received with none of that charming sensitive tremor to which he had been accustomed. Octavia neither blushed nor dropped her eyes.

It did not add to Barold's satisfaction to find her as cheerful and ready to be amused by a mild little curate, who blushed and stammered, and was neither brilliant, graceful, nor distinguished. Could not Octavia see the wide difference between the two?

Regarding the matter in this light, and watching Octavia as she encouraged her visitor, and laughed at his jokes, and never once tripped him up by asking him a startling question, did not, as already has been said, improve Mr. Francis Barold's temper, and by the time his visit was over, he had lapsed into his coldest and most haughty manner. As soon as Miss Belinda entered, and engaged Mr. Poppleton for a moment, he rose and crossed the little room to Octavia's side.

"I must bid you good-afternoon," he said.

Octavia did not rise.

"Sit down a minute, while Aunt Belinda is talking about red flannel night-caps and lumbago," she said. "I want to ask you something. By the way, what *is* lumbago?"

"Is that what you wished to ask me?" he inquired, stiffly.

"No. I just thought of that. Have you ever had it, and what is it like? All the old people in Slowbridge have it, and they tell you all about it, when you see them. Aunt Belinda says so. What I wanted to ask you was different——."

"Possibly Miss Bassett might be able to tell you,' he remarked.

"About the lumbago? Well, perhaps she might. I'll ask her. Do you think it bad taste in *me* to wear diamonds?"

She said this with the most delightful seriousness, fixing her eyes upon him with her very prettiest look of candid appeal, as if it was the most natural thing in the world that she should apply to him for information. He felt himself faltering again. How white that bit of forehead was! How soft that blonde, waving fringe of hair! What a lovely shape her eyes were, and how large and clear, as she raised them!

"Why do you ask *me?*" he inquired.

"Because I think you are an unprejudiced person. Lady Theobald is not. I have confidence in you, Tell me."

There was a slight pause.

"Really," he said, after it, "I can scarcely believe that my opinion can be of any value in your eyes. I am—can only tell you that it is hardly customary in—an—in England for young people to wear a profusion of ornament."

"I wonder if I wear a profusion."

"You don't need any," he condescended. "You are too young, and—all that sort of thing."

She glanced down at her slim, unringed hands for a moment, her expression quite thoughtful.

"Lucia and I almost quarreled the other day," she said,—"at least, I almost quarreled. It isn't so nice to be told of things, after all. I must say I don't like it as much as I thought I should."

He kept his seat longer than he intended, and when he rose to go, the Reverend Arthur Poppleton was shaking hands with Miss Belinda, and so it fell out that they left the house together.

"You know Miss Octavia Bassett well, I suppose," remarked Barold, with condescension, as they passed through the gate. "You clergymen are fortunate fellows."

"I wish others knew her as well, sir," said the little gentleman, kindling. "I wish they knew her—her generosity and kindness of heart and ready sympathy with misfortune!"

"Ah!" commented Mr. Barold, twisting his mustache with somewhat of an incredulous air. This was not at all the sort of thing he had expected to hear. For his own part, it would not have occurred to him to suspect her of the possession of such desirable and orthodox qualities.

"There are those who—misunderstand her," cried the curate, warming with his subject, "who misunderstand, and—yes, and apply harsh terms to her innocent gayety and freedom of speech; if they knew her as I do, they would cease to do so."

"I should scarcely have thought——" began Barold.

"There are many who scarcely think it—if you will pardon my interrupting you," said the curate. "I think they would scarcely believe it if I felt at liberty to tell them, which I regret to say I do not. I am almost breaking my word in saying what I cannot help saying to yourself. The poor under my care are better off since she came, and there are some who have seen her more than once, though she did not go as a teacher or to reprove them for faults, and her way of doing what she did was new to them, and perhaps much less serious than they were accustomed to, and they liked it all the better."

"Ah!" commented Barold again. "Flannel-under-garments, and—that sort of thing."

"No," with much spirit, "not at all, sir, but what, as I said, they liked much better. It is not often they meet a beautiful creature who comes among them with open hands, and the natural, ungrudging way of giving which she has. Sometimes they are at a loss to understand, as well as the rest. They have been used to what is narrower and more—more exacting."

"They have been used to Lady Theobald," observed Barold, with a faint smile.

"It would not become me to—to mention Lady Theobald in any disparaging manner," replied the curate, "but the best and most charitable among us do not always carry out our good intentions in the best way. I dare say Lady Theobald would consider Miss Octavia Bassett too readily influenced, and too lavish.'

"She is as generous with her money as with her diamonds, perhaps," said Barold. "Possibly the quality is peculiar to Nevada. We part here Mr. Poppleton, I believe. Good-morning."

(To be Continued).

Pillows of Paper.

All England is crazy on the subject of paper pillows. You tear the paper into very small pieces, not bigger than your finger nail, and then put them into a pillow-sack of drilling or light ticking. They are very cool for hot climates, and much superior to feather pillows. The newspapers are printing appeals for them for hospitals. Newspaper is not nice to use, as there is a disagreeable odor from printers' ink; but brown or white paper and old letters and envelopes are the best. As you tear them, stuff them into an old pillow-case, until you can get enough. The easiest way is to tear or cut the paper in strips about half an inch wide and then tear or cut across. The finer it is the lighter it makes the pillows.

His Reasons.

Mrs. Gibblegabble—Doctor, there is something the matter with my tongue; it pains me badly at times, and I don't know what to do for it.

Physician—Place a little cotton pillow under it between meals; it may be tired and need rest.

Mrs. Gibblegabble—But I couldn't talk then.

Physician—That is why I prescribe the pillow.

Polonius and His Lost Chance.

"Polonius was a splendid bit of character work."

"Yes; but he had his drawbacks. When he started off and said, 'Neither a borrower nor a lender be,' he lost the best chance in the world to show off his wisdom."

"How's that?"

"Why, he should have gone on and said, 'but if thou must do one or t'other, let it be borrowing. There's money in it.'"—*Harper's Bazar.*

What They Eat.

A physician could many a queer tale unfold. One of Ottawa's leading practitioners is authority for the statement that young girls and women, but in particular the former, are addicted to peculiar practices in eating. Here are a few of the things they continually munch: Chalk, old tea leaves, blue clay, starch, clay pipes, lime, slate pencils and slate stone. They eat many other extraordinary articles and as a consequence frequently call upon the skill of the doctor.

Mrs. Leland Stanford is said to have the most valuable private collection of diamonds in the world. One of the necklaces is worth $600,000.

The richest woman in Wisconsin is Mrs Alexander Mitchell, whose husband left her an estate worth many millions. She is the widow of the late President of the Milwaukee & St. Paul Road.

—A woman of great weight died last week. She was Mrs. Price, Barnum's fat woman.