Mr. Magsdale's Courtship

CHAPTER I.—HE PROPOSES.

Mrs. Cornelia Bunshaw sat in her armchair by the fire, dividing her attention about equally between the book on her lap and the clock on the mantlepiece. 'A quarter to twelve, and Peter not in yet,' said Mrs. Bunshaw; 'nearly midnight, and that precious pair still gadding about. It's disgraceful, scandalous! Once in a way, I shouldn't mind it, perhaps; but this makes the third late night in one week. I won't go to bed till I give Peter a bit of my mind, if I sit up till daylight to do it.'

This harangue which was apparently addressed to the cat, referred to the lady's brother Mr. Peter Magsdale, and her cousin Mr. Allan Magsdale, who had gone out immediately after dinner 'for a stroll,' with a parting injunction to her not to sit up for them.

We will take advantage of the opportunity offered by Mrs. Bunshaw's temporary quietude to describe her appearance and circumstances, the first being somewhat remarkable. She is a tall angular woman, of about fifty, with hard features, and large thick-lipped mouth. Gray hair, cut short, and rather unkempt. She wears a plain black stuff dress and an ancient shawl. She is a clever strong-minded woman, who has taken a prominent part in organising and promoting a 'Society for the Protection of Women's Rights,' the members of which still regard her as its moving spirit. She seldom takes an active part in its proceedings now, however, except at the annual meeting, when Mrs. Cornelia Bunshaw's speech is looked forward to as the feature of an occasion whose importance is not yet fully recognised by the world on which the Society's operations are destined to have a stupendous and far-reaching effect. An unlovely being is Mrs. Bunshaw, and we see her at her worst as she sits bolt upright, listening with wrathful eagerness for the footsteps she expects to hear every moment on the gravel path outside.

The late Mr. Bunshaw departed this life many years ago, taking with him a wide theoretical knowledge of the rights of women, and a burning practical sense of the wrongs of man, for which he was indebted to the principles and teachings of the wife he left behind him. His childless relict now resided with her brother and cousin at Astley Villa, Putney. The former, Mr. Peter Magsdale, was thirty-three years of age, a small retiring person, the very meekest and most timid of Somerset House clerks. His sister, who was left a considerable fortune, made him heir to her property on the condition that she was to take up her abode with him when and for so long as she pleased—a stipulation he often deeply regretted, but had not courage to repudiate. Mr. Allan Magsdale, the cousin, aged twenty-six, was an architect by profession. He possessed a boundless fund of animal spirits, and his guiding principle in life was to obtain as much enjoyment from it as possible. It would be hard to find two men more dissimilar in every respect than Peter and Allan; but they lived together in the most perfect concord, until Mrs. Bunshaw's arrival at Astley Villa wrought a change in the spirit of their dream, and drew them even more closely together than before.

'Peter would never behave like this if he were left to himself,' soliloquised his sister. 'It's Allan I have to thank for leading him astray. But it shan't go on. I'll let Peter understand that Master Allan must look out for other quarters. He shan't stay here another week.'

It would not be easy to define Mrs. Bunshaw's objections to her brother's doings. They could not have caused her any inconvenience, and her task of sitting up for him was purely self-imposed. It is probable that the intense dislike she had for her cousin was the motive which prompted her to interfere, for she was perfectly correct in assigning Peter's misconduct to him. Without him, Mr. Magsdale would have known the orgies called smoking concerts only by name; the music halls of the metropolis would have been untrodden ground; whilst the idea of snug but rather uproarious little suppers after such entertainments would hardly have entered his mind. Now, thanks to Allan, he 'knew his way about;' and he reaped a fearful joy from his little wickednesses, which derived additional piquancy from the fact that the sister who ruled him knew little of the manner in which his evenings were spent. But though Mrs. Bunshaw was ignorant of the exact nature of his nocturnal pastimes, and disdained to question him on the subject, the late hours he affected furnished her with ample grounds for the indignant wrath she cherished against the hardened sinner who led him astray. Latterly, she had observed a discreet intimacy in her intercourse with Allan; his buoyant soul and unfailing good temper rendered him impervious to patronage and snubs alike; whilst his aggravating habit of turning her most cutting sarcasms into ridicule, had forced her to conclude that it was safest to leave him alone.

It was past midnight when Mrs. Bunshaw's strained attention caught the sound of a latchkey being stealthily inserted in the lock, and she drew herself up to receive the delinquents, whose hushed movements in the hall betrayed their belief that the occupants of the house were in bed.

'We might have a little drink before turning in,' said Mr. Magsdale as he opened the drawing-room door. 'Go and get the things from the sideboard, like a good fellow.'

Allan departed on his errand, leaving his unsuspecting relative to enter the drawing-room and encounter Mrs. Bunshaw by himself.

'Are you aware of the hour, Peter?' she asked the startled man, with a tragic wave of the arm in the direction of the clock.

'About twelve, isn't it?' he replied with rather sickly nonchalance. He could never muster up courage to face his sister unless supported by Allan; she carried far too many guns for him.

'About twenty-five minutes past twelve, Peter,' said the lady in measured tones which conveyed a world of meaning.

Mr. Magsdale drew out his watch, and after looking earnestly at it, acknowledged the impeachment.

'Ah, perhaps it is about bedtime,' he said, listening anxiously for Allan's approach—' Missed the train—sorry we're so late,' he added in a penitent murmur.

Mrs. Bunshaw turned upon him with awful calmness began:'I must leave your house, Peter. I came here with the wish and the intention of guarding your interests; but the life of debauchery which you lead—which you have been led into, I should say—makes my residence here impossible. I must go.'

She paused. Her brother would have given half his income for courage enough to bid her go and never return, but nature had not endowed him with it, so he sighed sadly and said: 'Oh no, Corney; I couldn't think of it.'

This, of course, was the answer she expected, and she resumed: 'I should be most unwilling to go—most unwilling; my duty is to remain with you. But unless Allan Magsdale leaves the house, I must do so. You see that yourself.'

Mr. Magsdale did not see it at all, but only replied again more faintly than before: "Oh no, Corny; I couldn't think of it.'

At this juncture the door flew open in response to a vigorous kick without, and Allan entered with his tray. 'I can't lay hands on a bottle of soda-water,' he said testily. 'I suppose Cornelia'—

Mrs. Bunshaw, who had escaped his observation in the dim lamplight, emitted a warning cough; and Allan altered his tone to one of presuasive sweetness as he addressed her: 'Have you any in the house, Cornelia?'

'None,' curtly responded the lady.

'Oh, never mind,' said he, taking her favourite armchair and stooping forward to turn up the lamp.—' Tell me when to stop, Peter,' he continued, pressing a glass into his kinsman's hand and grasping the decanter; whilst Mrs. Bunshaw looked on in speechless rage.

There was not in all London and its suburbs a more temperate man than Peter Magsdale; but at this moment he was so absorbed in his sister's threatening attitude, which presaged an immediate storm, that he accepted half a tumbler of brandy before he noticed what had been given him. As he held it mechanically up to the light, Mrs. Bunshaw strode forward and took it from his hand.

'Are you going to drink all this, Peter?' she asked, striving to speak calmly. She was furiously angry; but so well did she succeed in controlling herself, that the obliging Allan mistook her meaning, and courteously rose, offering to bring a tumbler for her. He had not the least intention of giving offence; it was not unusual for her to join them in a 'nightcap,' but he could not have selected a more unpropitious time to remind her of it. Mrs. Bunshaw cast a withering look upon him, but did not deign to make any reply. She possessed herself of the decanter, carefully replaced the contents of her brother's glass in it, and, still retaining the decanter, swept from the room, leaving the two to enjoy what refreshment they might want from the water-jug. Having locked up the spirits, she returned, and, ignoring her cousin's presence, reiterated the announcement she had made before: 'Either I leave the house, or Mr. Allan Magsdale goes; and I shall be glad if you will make up your mind on the point to-night, Peter.'

(To be Continued.)

THE COMPETITION OF WOMEN.

How It Is Affecting the Morals of the Male Population in Lancashire.

So advanced an advocate of woman's rights as Lady Dilke has more than once warned women workers not to compete against their husbands, fathers, and brothers, lest their last state should become worse than their first. The social and the physical results of women's forsaking the home for the factory have in various parts been anything but encouraging to the sticklers for equality between the sexes. In Lancashire women's labor in factories has almost entirely destroyed the home life of the operative class, and led to an alarmingly high rate of mortality among infants. It is tending also to the enervation and the moral degeneracy of the male population. Among Lancashire weavers it is not an uncommon thing for the young men to select for wives mill-hands who can maintain them in partial or entire idleness. Many families there rely more upon the women bread-winners than upon men.

The physical and the social consequences of the system are deplorable and the new factory act will not tend to improve things much. From the wages point of view, the workers, as a class, gain nothing by it. The competition by women tends to keep wages down. Among the weavers, although, as the machinery is driven faster and payment is made by the piece, more is earned to-day than formerly, the rate paid is virtually the same as it was forty years ago. In nearly every employment which does not suffer from competition by women the rate of wages is from fifty to seventy per cent. higher now than it was then. It is only among the weavers that the rate of payment rules so low in Lancashire. In the spinning and other departments of the cotton industry the men have by their unions more generally kept women out, and as a rule the workers earn nearly double the wages of the weavers. Their homes, consequently, are more comfortable, and their womenfolk more generally cultivate the domestic virtues. The cotton trade is only one illustration of many that might be cited to show the ill results of the abandonment by women of what has hitherto been deemed the sex's natural functions in order to enter men's sphere of labor. Similar effects will doubtless be observable elsewhere as man is dispossessed by his competitors.

Unappreciated Liberality.

You are going to be tried before a very liberal judge, said a lawyer to his client.

I am glad of that.

You needn't be. If you are found guilty he'll give you all the penalty the law allows.

A WONDERFUL COUNTRY

SOMETHING ABOUT BEAUTIFUL ARGENTINE.

Mr. J. Arthur Maguire, Consul-General for Canada, Speaks Well of It—Immense Wheat Crops and a Grand Climate—Six Millions of People and a Stable Government.

The adaptability of the Irish character to environment is well illustrated in the case of Mr. J. Arthur Maguire, who, starting out as a Quebec boy of Irish parents, finds himself to-day Consul-General of Argentine for the Dominion of Canada, with Spanish for his normal tongue, with an Argentine lady for wife, and children who call him father in the liquid accents of Castile. Spanish, indeed, is only one of Consul-General Maguire's acquirements; he speaks half a dozen languages; he has travelled pretty nearly all over the world; he is an accomplished and observant gentleman. But Spanish is the official language of Argentine, and the heterogeneous population of which it is composed find it necessary to acquire it. It would appear to be easily mastered, for, according to Mr. Maguire, the foreign population, which is such a large factor in Buenos Ayres, may be heard in business and social relations doing their best with it shortly after landing in the country.

If you had the eyes and ears of Mr. Maguire, for example, you would enjoy this little bit of human nature:

Two men are walking along the streets of Buenos Ayres. They have fallen out about something. Their words are hot and rapid; they make violent gesticulation. Chiefly, they speak Spanish with an accent that is startlingly like the rich tongue of the Wicklow valley. The war of words becomes fierce; you expect to see the two men come to blows.

"Arrah, give us the English spache, if ye plase, and don't bother us any more with that lingo," suddenly cries one of the two, and immediately afterwards they become friends in

THE OLD TONGUE.

The truth is, we know little about Argentine. If we did, according to Consul-General Maguire, a great many more of us would visit the beautiful country, where life is safe and pleasant, where the climate is beautiful, and where we might extend our trade.

Not long ago it took you six weeks to reach Buenos Ayres by way of Europe, not to speak of the expense. Now there is a line of steamers from New York, which does the journey in twenty-four days, for a sum of $137.

And when you reach Buenos Ayres you see the finest harbor in the world; you see docks which put those of Liverpool to shame; you see a population which is representative of every race under heaven; you see a beautiful city of three quarters of a million of inhabitants, who are orderly and peaceable and prosperous; and you may travel through a country in which life is as sacred as in any European city—a country of immense distances, where for thousands of miles the plain is as level as asphalt, without a stone, and without an undulation, and through which the plough has only to be lightly run to yield up immense harvests.

Something will happen some day in Argentine which will make an immense change in the destiny of the country. The native Spanish race, which is dominant, and which rules the country, is too fiery for stability. It is too fond of fighting. It likes heroics. Heroics do not build ships or make roads. Heroics are bad colonizers. There is a law passed now by which all persons born in Argentine,

OF WHATEVER PARENTS,

will be eligible for the highest offices in the state, from the president down.

"We should have had this long ago," said Consul-General Maguire. "The result of this will be in time the growth of a people who will be an intermediary between the fiery impulsiveness of the native race on the one hand, and the coldness of the Anglo-Saxon on the other."

When this race attains to number and power, the Spaniards will disappear as the North American Indians are disappearing. Government will be stable. The country will be opened up. The rifle will be exchanged for the ploughshare.

Meantime, there is a government modelled upon that of the United States; there is a national guard of seven hundred thousand men; there is a free press which numbers in its ranks fourteen English journals; and there is more wheat than the people can handle.

There would have been two million tons last year, Mr. Maguire says, if there had been enough labour to handle the crop. Wheat is something rather new with Argentine. The republic depended upon the horses and sheep. There were tentative attempts at wheat-growing, indeed, but it was not till after the Barings failure, which threatened to bring about a general collapse, that the people took to wheat-growing in earnest. You only need to prick the ground with your plough, sow your seed, and—wait. The harvest will be so abundant that you will not know what to do with it.

And then there is maize and linseed. India once had the palm for linseed; now it has been wrested from the east.

Mr. Maguire is very anxious that the trade relations between the

ARGENTINE AND CANADA

should be encouraged. He thinks there might be a great expansion of these for mutual benefit. He has tried to do something in this way personally, and he relates, with a grim humor, the result of a most elaborate effort to induce Canadians to send their shipments by Quebec instead of through New York. He chartered a ship at Quebec on his own responsibility, and went amongst the prominent exporters. There was the Massey-Harris Company, of Toronto, for example, which treated him well, and promised to send their next shipment of agricultural implements by Quebec. And this promise was made in good faith, but so wedded was the house to the idea that there was only one way of reaching Buenos Ayres, that he shipped twenty-four carloads of exports by New York—never dreaming of poor old Quebec. This venture was a failure.

But there are six millions of people; there is a stable government; there are banks as strong as you could wish; there is natural wealth which is past calculation; and there is opportunity for exchange upon a more generous scale.

This is how they manage the bankrupt in the Argentine Republic—When a man is in difficulties he reports his state to the commercial judge, who goes to his place of business, closes it, puts his official seal on the door, makes rigid examination. If the man has merely been unfortunate, the commercial judge recommends him to the clemency of his creditors, who help him out of his difficulties, and set him on his feet, if that be possible. If, on the other hand, he has been guilty of secreting or squandering the estate, he is relegated to the criminal judge, who

COMMITS HIM TO PRISON.

As has been stated, the natives are excitable. There is a little dispute between Chili and Argentine over the boundary lines. Of course, there is no immediate danger; but the Spaniards love fighting, and do not wait for large provocation. It is curious, too, that though both peoples are Spanish, they hate each other like poison.

"I was in a theatre in Valparaiso, and a beautiful young woman came out and sang the Chili national anthem. Well, the applause was something which you could not appreciate. It was a delirium of delight. On the other hand, when another young woman undertook to sing the Argentine national hymn, the audience rose as one man, hissed and yelled, broke the chairs, threatened,—well," said Mr. Maguire, simply, "I left as quickly as possible."

Amongst those who succeed well in Argentine are the Irish. The latter took at the start to sheep farming, and have prospered marvellously. They have a club in Buenos Ayres, where the great sheep farmers congregate when they come in from the country. They have many millions of dollars invested in this industry.

Mr. Maguire is of opinion that the best thing which could happen the Central American republics would be the formation of a zollverein, which would give them stability, and put an end to the constant fighting in which these little republics all delight.

"And the worst of it is that they can fight; that they are greatest fire-eaters you can imagine; that, as I saw in Valparaiso, they take off even their shirts to the business; and fight with their bare bodies streaked with blood. This passion for war is horrible; a joining together of the petty republics would put an end to it."

HOW THIEVES ARE TRAINED IN NAPLES.

Babies Taught to Beg and Steal—They Must Know How to Sing as Well—Organized Gangs Fight in the Streets.

An interesting account of the way in which young children are prepared to enter the Camorra is given by Dr. de Blasio, a Neapolitan physician who has been studying the habits of criminals. The Camorra at Naples, like the Mafia in Sicily, is an organization of criminals and associates of criminals that is centuries old. The Camorra begins its work with the infants who are abandoned by their parents, or who are lent out to the impostors who beg in the streets of Naples. These children, for the most part those of persons in prison, are taught to beg for the end of a cigar or a soldo, and infest the cafes. In winter they sleep in holes and stables, in summer on the church steps, under archways, or on the benches in the public gardens. When they are six or seven years old they are instructed in begging and thieving by older children. At ten years of age the little Camorrista, or little thief, becomes a cantatore (singer). He must know how to improvise a song to the girls, and reply with an extemporaneous verse to the verse of a companion or of an antagonist. In Naples there are two armies of cantatori, one belonging to the streets in the older part of the city, and one to those of the west end. They constitute the neophites of the Camorra, and compete in public, passing their examinations by night in the streets. They choose for the subject of their chants anything that takes place in the city, and very often the object of derisive songs is an old man or

A POOR IDIOT.

The better class hear these scoffs, but do not interfere, and often laugh at the wit which is scarcely ever missing. The two bands are naturally great rivals, and once a year at least they defy each other to a series of battles in which stones are the weapons, and at the close of the fray knives too often come into play. This practice of battles with stones among boys can be traced back as far as 1625, for at that period the Duke of Alva caused thirty "stone throwers" to be arrested in Naples. The war cry of the boys is "Aniella, Aniella," the derivation of which is not certain. After the war cry comes the challenge in the form of a verse, to which the enemy responds in like wise. Then the younger boys commence the attack. The passers-by flee, but at no great distance stand old and young men, who incite the rival bands, and if necessary, rescue one or the other of them from an arrest by the police. Two years ago there was a famous battle of this kind in Piazza Mercato, which ended in a fight between the police and the stone throwers, during which the trams were stopped for some time. This duel ceases at the first drawing of blood—a slight scratch received by one of the members of the two parties puts an end to the battle. The wounded boy is surrounded by his friends and taken to his mother, real or adopted, to be bound up and nursed. The songs sung by the boys have always a chorus; and generally there are two soloists, who sing a verse in turn, which is ended by a refrain sung by the chorus, a mere "Ah oh! Ah oh!" In poetical form these youths express the knowledge they have of the worst evils and vices of human life, but the verses are realistic and without the least gleam of sentiment.

She Is But Second Best.

Next to newspapers, women are the best advertising mediums that we have.

SOME CURIOUS THINGS.

FEATURES OF ACTUAL LIFE THAT HAVE LATELY OCCURRED.

Swallowed His False Teeth—A Dog That Puts Out Lights—Hercules and the Hawk—Death from the Bicycle Hump—In Collision With a Shark, Etc.

Captain H. C. Wagner, of Allendown, Penn., is in a critical condition as a result of swallowing his false teeth. When Captain Wagner retired the other night he did not remove his artificial teeth, as was his custom. At three o'clock in the morning he was awakened by a choking sensation in his throat. He sat up in bed, when he was seized with violent spells of vomiting, but it was not until some time later that he discovered that he had swallowed his teeth and that they had lodged in some very uncomfortable place. A physician was summoned, but the pesky teeth were beyond the reach of the doctor's appliances. Captain Wagner was advised to hasten to St. Luke's Hospital at Bethlehem, six miles away, and have an operation performed. He lost no time in starting out on the terrible ride, during which it was frequently feared he would choke to death. Arriving at the hospital the Captain learned that the surgeon would not operate, and he hastened home. Subsequently several doctors tried to fish out the teeth with probes, but they could not be reached, and they expressed the opinion that they had passed into the stomach. The doctors advise Captain Wagner to go to Philadelphia and have them taken out by a surgical operation. It is feared that unless this is done peritonitis will result.

I have a fox terrier whose idiosyncrasies excite much interest, writes a correspondent. Prof. Lloyd Morgan, of University College, Bristol, chronicled the same in one of his articles dealing with animal instinct. This dog never sees a match lighted without attempting to put it out, and jumps and snaps at it in a most excited manner. When he was quite young I dropped something on the floor, and as it was growing dark, lit a candle and stooped down to look for it. The dog jumped at the candle and extinguished it. I thought it was done by accident and relit it. The animal snapped again at the flame, and again put it out. He has often singed himself subsequently, but has always persevered, when permitted, till he has put out a match lighted and held within jumping reach, or a lighted candle, but as paraffin lamps are used in our house, we have thought it rather dangerous to encourage his proclivity, lest it might lead to accident.

Some passengers over one of the Berlin Canal bridges the other day noticed the sudden appearance of two black points in the sky at a considerable distance away, which developed into two ducks. Behind them, at a lower level, flew another bird, which suddenly rose into the air above the ducks, and then shot down upon them like an arrow. One of the ducks flew sideways toward the Thiergarten; the other, closely pursued by its enemy, flew slanting into the canal, and, reaching the water exactly behind the bridge, dived, while the hawk, in his blind haste, struck against the head of a statue of Hercules and fell, once more flapping its great wings, dead on the pavement of the bridge. The bird was a splendid specimen, the wings having an expansion of more than three feet.

Young Waterstraw was riding up Plymouth avenue, Rochester, after dark Thursday evening. He was not riding overfast, but he was bent over his handle bars as if he were racing, in the fashion so generally affected by bicyclists. His eyes were turned toward the ground, and he could not see where he was going. The canal bridge was up and the wheelman rode straight to the brink, over it and into the water. He was drowned. His death seems to be the direct result of his manner of sitting on his wheel.

George Holbrook's three-year-old child, while playing near the home of its parents in Letcher County, Ky., was stung by a yellowjacket. The little one screamed and its mother ran to its assistance. The sting had entered its left leg below the knee. The limb began to swell rapidly, the child went into spasms, and in ten minutes after the insect had stung it the little one died.

"A curious thing," writes a Westminster Gazette correspondent, "occurred on the last homeward voyage from Australia of the P. and O. Royal Mail steamer Himalaya, when the ship while steaming up the Red Sea, ran into and killed an enormous shark. The sea was dead calm at the time, and the brute must have been basking in the sun upon the surface. The ship's sharp prow cut the shark almost in two. The fish was about 25 feet long."

Mr. William Adkinson, of Harrodsburg, Penn., aged 81 years, surprised the Court-day crowd by riding a bicycle down and then up Main street Monday while that thoroughfare was crowded with vehicles. He says he felt like a bird on the wing, and was so pleased by the sensation produced that he will at once order a wheel.

Little Charley Albert, of Stroudsburg, Penn., climbed up a rod on the bridge that spans Broadhead's Creek. In sliding down his right leg caught on a sharp projection and he hung for some time by his flesh. Finally the flesh gave away, and he fell to the bridge, sustaining serious injuries.

Offered a Reward.

Mrs. Grumpps—Did you advertise for poor, dear little Fido?

Mr. Grumpps—Yes.

Did you give a full description of him?

Yes.

And did you say our address was on his silver collar?

Yes.

And did you offer a reward?

Yes.

What did you offer?

I said if the finder would return the collar he might keep the dog.