AT THE STROKE OF ONE!

Altogether it was a very curious affair. He had been paying her such marked attention for some time, and she had seemed only too pleased to receive it. Whether she went, he went too, if possible, and if by any chance he was not there she was dull and restless and found things slow. All the town knew about it, and was on the tiptoe of expectation for the announcement. Then, suddenly, without apparent rhyme or reason, he went back to town and there there was no talk of any engagement. Her sisters could not understand it any better than did the gossips of the town, for from hints she had let fall they felt sure that she would not be unwilling to exchange her position of eldest daughter in the large family of a doctor whose practice was greater in dimensions than in lucrativeness for the position of wife to a rising young lawyer with expectations. She was not very young, either; twenty-seven is getting on, and four other grown up sisters did not appear to make one appear any younger. Besides, she "hated helping in household work and always having to tidy up after tiresome children," and openly declared that she would do anything to get away from it all.

The gossips of the town were very impartial in their remarks. They said if he had not proposed to her he ought to have done so, after making such an obvious fuss over her, and therefore he must be very much to blame, for she certainly would not have said "No," but they further stated that if he had proposed to her and she had refused him, then she was also very much to blame for having encouraged him to such an extent. One thing was certainly clear, that there ought to have been an engagement, and they shook their heads and said they had always before thought he was such an honorable young man, and no flirt, while they had also considered her a very sensible girl, who knew on which side her bread was buttered. And there was a good deal of truth in these reflections.

Yet he—Roger Blake—was a young man with right intentions, and, he had been very much in love with her, and had wished to marry her, and she—Julia Viccars—was as fond of him as she could be of anybody, and was not only waiting, somewhat impatiently, for the momentous question.

And this was how the little town was disappointed of its fashionable wedding.

They had been at the vicarage garden party, and he had resolved to get a quiet half hour with her there, and put the words to her which had lain for days at the tip of his tongue, and yet, somehow, he never got a chance, though both were willing parties. Once they had really escaped from the crowd and were strolling towards a sequested part of the shrubbery, when the vicar's second son, a very obtuse youth, espied them. He was anxiously looking for a fourth to make up a good tennis set, and rushed up.

"I say, Blake, make a fourth in this set, will you?"

"I'd rather not, thanks. I've just been playing. Find some one else."

"I can't find any one good enough. Jones is playing on the other side, and we have no one his equal but you. Do come, there's a good fellow. I am sure Miss Viccars will spare you."

"Oh, certainly," said Julia; but if a tone could be frigid enough to freeze any mortal, the vicar's son would have then and there been turned into solid ice.

Her persisted in his request, and they were obliged to go back to the tennis lawn.

However, that evening as Roger Blake escorted Julia and her sisters the short distance home, he found opportunity to say:

"I suppose you will take your usual constitutional to-morrow morning in the park? Perhaps I may see you there."

Just lately, Julia, usually so indolent, had given it out that she had headaches and required a brisk walk every day, and had carefully chosen time and place, so that she might be likely to accidentally meet Roger Blake and have him for a companion.

The next morning she dressed herself with unusual care, chose her most becoming hat, and went to the extravagance of putting on her best gloves and shoes—"a lady is always judged by her gloves and shoes"—and borrowed her sister's crimson parasol, for it was of a newer fashion than her own, and, moreover, it lent a becoming pink shade to the whole effect. She strolled along toward the park, expecting every moment to hear a manly step behind her, and a morning greeting in the well-known voice, and as she strolled visions of her future grandeur occupied her thoughts. She resolved that there should be no unnecessary delay in fixing the wedding day, though, of course, she must show a little girlish hesitation. Her wedding dress should be white satin and—yes—her bridesmaid should certainly wear pink, and the children could come in, too—nothing was so pretty as children at a wedding, and simple little frocks could be easily made at home. Ugh, how glad she would be to get away from the little brats, with their everlasting teasing and noise, and from the endless contriving how to make one dollar do the work of five. The folks should see she knew how to do the proper thing!

The town clock struck twelve, and then the quarter, and she began to wonder where Roger was and to feel a little apprehension, and she mentally abused the vicar's son for his tiresome interference the day before, for she was certain that Roger would have been brought to the point in the shrubbery. Presently she looked back through the trees in the park and to her great relief saw him coming. He had not seen her, and he walked in unconcernedly, and her little start of surprise when he caught up to her was quite perfect.

"I was half afraid I might miss you this morning," he said. "My aunt kept me talking a long time over her business matters."

He was staying with the aunt, from whom he had "expectations."

Julia knew that she was very rich, and had ascertained that he was her favorite nephew.

"I know you do so much for her. She has often told me what a clear head you have for business."

Julia threw a glance of admiration at him, and at the same time noticed with satisfaction that he was hot and flushed, and had evidently hurried to meet her.

"A man must not be muddle headed these days if he means to do any good," returned Roger naturally pleased at her little compliment.

"I don't know what she will do when you have to go away again. I hope it will not be yet. She will be quite lost without you," and Julia gave a sigh, as if to imply that his aunt would not be the only one to miss him.

"Oh, she will be all right, I hope. Indeed, I had a letter this morning from my firm saying that urgent business would require me to return this week to town—to-morrow if possible."

"Not so soon!" Julia's tone of regret and anxiety was really genuine.

"I'm afraid so. It is a horrid nuisance. I should hate to leave the country, and—and the people here." Roger blushed. "I think I never liked it so much before." Roger paused and went a little deeper crimson under his sunburn.

"I—we shall miss you dreadfully," faltered Julia, casting down her eyes.

They had arrived at the top of the long avenue and began their walk back in silence. Roger was thinking. He hardly knew how to begin, even with all Julia's help. He was a nervous young man with great ideas of woman's sweetness and unselfishness, and he indulged in a chivalrous reverence toward the weaker sex which is fairly rare in these days. To him women were all ministering angels meet to be enshrined in a secluded home circle and whose proper vocation was to make home happy and oil the wheels of life for men. He had got his notions from his mother who was all this and more—a veritable pearl among women, and it was an apt illustration of the blindness of love that he should have selected Julia Viccars as the woman who most nearly approached his ideal.

The minutes passed. Only an odd desultory remark was interchanged, and the bottom of the avenue was reached, and yet he had not spoken as she longed to hear and as he, too, strove in vain to fine words to speak.

Julia, though inwardly chafing under the delay was very quiet, too, having a shrewd idea of the purport of his thoughts.

As they turned again he suddenly drew himself up and bent toward her, the very words trembling on his tongue. At that instant the town clock boomed one—decisive, distinct. Roger started, for the silence had been so deep a moment before, and the words were arrested ere spoken.

"One o'clock! Will they be waiting dinner for you?" he asked.

He knew that the doctor's family dined at one punctually, for the children had afternoon school, and he remembered—he was the very soul of consideration for others—that the busy mother had once told him how put about the household was if dinner were by any chance late. His was one of those well regulated minds which never under any circumstances allow feelings to run away with them.

Julia was at high tension, and his question made her forget herself for a moment.

"I don't care if they are," she said, sharply, with a little scornful laugh. "Let them wait. I'm tired to death of considering them."

The next moment she could have bitten her tongue out, for she saw that she had made a false step.

Roger looked at her amazed. Was this the woman he had endowed with every virtue, who was the unselfish, devoted eldest daughter—a second mother to her youngest sister? Like a flash certain hints he had heard whispered about her, but had disbelieved, came into his mind; certain little actions of hers he had seen, but had overlooked, arranged themselves before his eyes, and she stood before him in a new light. He felt as if he had received an icy cold shower bath and the scales fell from his eyes.

"At any rate, I am sure, Mrs. Viccars would not like me to detain you. I had no idea it was so late, and now I think of it my aunt will be expecting me," was the answer as he turned homeward decisively.

Julia noticed his change of tone, and tried to smooth over her slip. But it was too late, and, though he made no further comment on her remarks, he was jarred to the very core. Her true nature was revealed to him, and she had lost her chance.

When they arrived at her father's door, he shook hands with her and said:

"I think this is our good-by, Miss Viccars. I return to town to-morrow."

Long afterward he confided the tale to a friend and ended with: "By Jove! I thought a girl who could speak like that of her home people would not long want to 'consider' a husband. It was a narrow escape, though."

And that was why "it" never came off.

PRAYING BICYCLES FOR BUDDHISTS.

To so great an extent have the Japanese adopted European methods and models that an enterprising Buddhist has adopted the bicycle to serve the needs of the praying wheel as used by the followers of his creed. Instead of attaching the written prayer to the customary wheel which is generally turned by a convenient stream of running water, the new vogue is to fix the prayer to the hub of the bicycle wheel, so that the faster the rider can pedal the better he can pray. Although there appears to be a spice of sacrilege in the practice, it is apparently catching on, for rumor has it that American firms are already preparing machines with Buddhist collects embossed on the tires, so that the bicycle will become an instrument of pleasure and a prayer-book combined.

A REVOLUTION IN GLASS.

NEW METHODS OF WORK HAVE LATELY BEEN ADOPTED.

Old Art of Blowing and Pressing Superseded by Recent Inventions—No Limit to the Size of Pipes and Jars.

What is practically a new art has been developed in France within the past two years. It is a process for working glass vessels and pipes to large sizes. The process is in itself so simple that it is hard to realize why it was not discovered years ago. The glass industry is one of the oldest known to man and yet centiries passed and the use of the substance was confined to plates for windows and vessels of small sizes, which was made by pressing or blowing. Heretofore the glass manufacturer has considered it an achievement to make by the old methods a vessels which would hold more than six gallons.

To one of the leading scientists of France is due the credit for the discovery of the new and valuable process by which glass pipes can be made to compare in size and strength with those of iron and earthenware, and glass vessels can be manufactured of any needed dimensions and fashioned to almost any shape from a simple jar to a bathtub or coffin. This is done by moulding.

MOULDING GLASS.

The problem of moulding glass is an old one that many ingenious men tried in vain for years to solve. The best illustrations that can be given of this successful process is the casting of a section of a drain pipe. The cylindrical mould is placed in an upright position, with a core at the lower end ready to be shoved upward. A large lump of the molten glass is then placed in the bottom of the mould resting on the head of the core.

When the core is pushed upward the viscous substance flows down about its sides, filling all the space between it and the mould. The glass is allowed to harden partially, and then the core is withdrawn and the mould split off. The product is a splendid piece of glass pipe, uniform in strength and thickness, and perfectly smooth on its surfaces. All the other forms into which the glass is worked are made on precisely the same principle, that of forcing the core upward into a mould. By this method is attained what has hitherto been unknown in glass vessels — uniform strength and thickness.

The old methods of expanding the glass in a mould by air or forcing it into a mould about a core have proved utterly impracticable in any vessels other than those a few cubic feet in size, for when in the former process, the glass blower places his sphere of the viscous substance in a square mould and blows, the glass necessarily expands unevenly in filling the corners.

It is obvious that glass must in the future occupy an enormously extended field of usefulness as a result of this revolution in the art of manufacturing it. It possesses four qualities which insure this—it is cheap, impervious to all acids except hydrofluoric, cleanly, and, if properly cared for, it is practically indestructible.

GLASS DRAINS.

No better sanitary drainage can be conceived than that which will be afforded by glass pipes. Iron pipes rust out, and the glaze on clay pipes, now so generally used, cracks, and the pipes absorb the refuse matter flowing through them and become unhealthy. Again the problem of sewage will be greatly simplified. The sewers in most cities are simply brick ducts. They constantly get out of repair, as the brick and mortar absorb the sewage and consequently decay. Glass sewers will be absolutely unaffected by these conditions and will allow the passage of a greater volume of sewage than any other kind of duct of equal cross section, since the skin friction is very small. France has been the first country to utilize glass for this purpose, for already several of its cities are laying glass pipes.

A decade ago there was great opposition in large cities to the introduction of electricity as a means for transmitting energy. This arose in part from the fact that the heavy currents which traverse the earth as a consequence destroy by the process of electrolysis the iron pipes with which they come in contact. The fact that the electrolysis does occur is well known, and the pecuniary loss caused to gas and water companies is not small.

NON-CONDUCTORS.

This trouble will be done away with by the introduction of glass pipes which will be totally unaffected by electrical currents, as glass is a non-conductor. The actual transmission of electrical energy underground will be rendered easier and cheaper. At present when wires are carried underground they are encased in iron pipes which magnetize with the ultimate result of causing a resistance to the passage of the current in the wire itself. The loss of energy resulting is considerable. This trouble will be eliminated by the use of glass pipe, the non-conducting properties of which warrant its introduction to this field. It is expected to prove of particular value in protecting wires carrying high tension currents.

It is interesting to note that a glass the same size and strength as an iron pipe can be had at almost the same cost.

The manufacturers of electrical storage batteries have hailed the new process with delight since one of the knotty problems they have had to deal with has been that of getting suitable vessels for the immersion of the battery plates. The largest glass jars that have been made in this country for storage batteries have been a foot in cube, a size greatly inadequate for the proper working of a large battery.

GLASS BATH TUBS.

Consequently the electricians have been compelled to use large vessels made of wood lined with lead. These are difficult to keep clean and to insulate properly. The great glass tanks which have been put in use recently have proved admirably suited to the purpose, as they are clean, afford excellent insulation and are absolutely impervious to the acids used in the batteries.

Pottery will find in glass a powerful rival, for the latter will supersede it in all works where chemicals are used, in canning and pickle factories and creameries. Heretofore the manufacturers of chemicals have used clay pots glazed inside. Quantities of these are destroyed yearly by the powerful acids. In handling many of these acids it has been necessary to use tubs of platinum, a very costly metal. As glass tubs can now be moulded, these primitive vessels of earth must of necessity to the past.

The glass bathtub, too, is a novelty. The faults of iron and porcelain when used for this purpose are well known. Glass tubs will be cleaner and stronger than porcelain, and can be used also for sulphur baths. It is said that the influence of this glass revolution will extend even to the undertaker, for the glass coffin is a possibility.—N.Y. Sun.

DONALD THE DEER.

He Was the Pet of a Famous British Regiment.

"Donald," the deer, was for several years the pet of the "Auld Forty-Twa," the historic regiment of Highlanders known as the Black Watch. He went with the regiment to Dublin, where one day, without any previous training, he took his place at the head of the troops alongside of the sergeant-major, and marched with them wheresoever they went.

He did not care for manoeuvres and evolutions and was often a mile away, feeding, while the troops were drilling; but when the time came for going home he was always found at his post.

When the regiment had the duty of guarding the castle, Donald went with them, making his way through the dense crowd of Dublin idlers as one who could take care of himself. Once a rough offende dhim. Donald instantly singled out the man and chased him through the crowd. Fortunately for himself, the rough escaped, for Donald had an unpleasant way of using his antlers, which though cut, were still formidable.

Donald had several infirmities. The soldiers of another regiment, the Bays, annoyed him and the deer declared war against all of them. So thoroughly did he back his declaration that no Bay trooper would cross the square without making sure that Donald was not around.

On the march from one town to another, Donald would become footsore and get out of temper—then woe to the hostler in the stable-yard who interfered with him after a tiring day's march!

"Donald had another failing, a great liking for alcoholic liquids," writes Archibald Forbes in his history of the Black Watch. "His particular 'wanities' were whiskey and sherry. At Limerick, as soon as the officers' dinner-pipe sounded, he made his way to the mess-room windows, which were on the ground floor, in search of strong drink until at length a severe fine had to be enforced on any one giving it to him."

When the regiment went to Corfu it was arranged that Donald should have the run of a nobleman's park, as his temper made it inexpedient for the pet to accompany the troops to a land of strangers. He was tied, put into a cart and carried off, bleating pitifully and even shedding tears.

In the nobleman's park he sought out-of-the-way places and declined intercourse with man or beast. He attacked all who approached, and finally had to be shot. The separation from his beloved troopers made him a pessimist.

A SANITARY CENSUS.

Great Undertaking of the Parisian Board of Health.

A gigantic work is being undertaken by the board of health of Paris, which is taking a census of all Parisian dwellings and buildings from a sanitary standpoint. This work was begun on March 1, 1894, and will not be completed until 1900. The census is taken on cards and in a peculiar way. On each card are the following facts: 1. A short description of the building, comprising a sketch or diagram indicating the situation of the drainage, cesspools, connections with the water mains, gas mains, etc.; 2. a statistical list indicating the deaths in the houses from ordinary maladies, as well as from infectious diseases; 3, a record of all actions of the board of health having become necessary in the particular building in the course of time, and indicating whether and how, disinfections became necessary and were performed by the board of health; 4, the results of analysis of air, water and dust which may have been made in the respective building. All this information given on the card is contained in an envelope for each house, which is numbered and bears the address of the particular building. Envelopes for new buildings are added as they are being constructed the architect being required to fill out the necessary blanks, and in this way an immense mass of valuable information is kept in a comparatively small space. These cards are kept up to date, and all sanitary information is referred to and disinfecting expeditions ordered by the board of health in the slums make their reports to this office. A number of employes of this particular office are detailed to go to certain districts known as unhealthy to complete plans of some properties which are missing from the list and to gather other information in the respective districts. At the present time complete statistics for 35,000 houses and partial statistics for 14,000 more are filed in this office.

TERROR IN MIDAIR.

Dan Rice Describes the Sensations of a First Leap from a Balloon.

"Circus life has its incidental dangers, as I found out in my experience of more than half century under the canvas." The speaker was Dan Rice, the veteran clown and circus proprietor. "One of the dangers I encountered was recalled by a paragraph in a paper the other day about an aeronaut being killed in making a jump from a balloon with a parachute. I had a narrow escape from a similar death.

"I was always willing to act as general emergency man, to do any work and fill any place in any circus with which I have been connected, and, in such cases, have been in imminent danger many a time. I have been in grave danger of being devoured by lions, crushed by elephants, and 'skinned' alive by candy butchers and other employees who handled my money, but the occurrence I am about to relate was as interesting as anything in my career.

"I believe I was the first circus proprietor in the world to employ a professional to make a balloon ascension and a parachute jump prior to each afternoon performance, picking up an aeronaut named Ed Billings.

"Now Ed was a good aeronaut, entirely devoid of fear, and made leaps with the parachute from greater heights than had ever been made before. The only trouble was that Ed was too jovial, and at times

DRANK TOO MUCH WHISKEY.

More than once I had spoken my mind to him on the subject, and, as he did not heed my remarks, I made every preparation for o--ortunely advertising my circus on the day when he should in the natural course of events fall from his balloon or parachute and be killed. With the same foresight I made a study of aeronautics and parachute, leaping, until I felt competent to fill his position when made vacant. The occasion for my services came at White Water, Mich., when, at ascension time, Billings lay under a wagon suffering from 'sick headache.'

"When it became evident that I must make the ascension and jump, I did not hesitate, but, donning a tinsel suit, entered the car and began my first journey skyward, amid a chorus of half-suppressed exclamations of admiration from an immense throng of spectators. As I saw the earth dropping from me and the human forms below growing shorter and smaller, until they appeared like the tinest insects, I contrived to maintain my nerve, and, leaning over the edge of the basket or car, bravely threw kisses to the gaping crowd beneath. When I had ascended nearer heaven than I had even been before—say 1,200 or 1,500 feet—I prepared to make my maiden leap, being particularly careful that my every movement should be seen by the crowd of spectators away down beneath on the earth.

"After a time I pulled open the escape valve of the balloon, which slowly began to descend after remaining stationary for a brief moment. Then I clutched the trapeze bar, which was attached to the parachute, kissed my hand to the expanse of upturned faces below, shut both eyes and made a bold jump out into space, and shot like an arrow earthward. My feelings at that critical moment can best be described as one of all-goneness, but grimly and desperately I clutched the bar in my hand, and, with

MY HEART IN MY MOUTH,

anxiously awaited the sharp snapping sound which would announce the opening of the parachute. But the sound did not come. Great God! how the seconds flew by, and still the accursed canvas did not open. Though darting earthward fatally, hope did not desert me.

"My mind, under the excitement, became unusually active, and, as I looked below and saw the earth rapidly approaching, I concluded that my chance of escape from figuring as the chief object of interest at a funeral was too small to mention. I resolved that my death should be the best advertisement Dan Rice's circus ever received, but the thought of how well the show was prepared to herald the sad event far and near was poor consolation at that moment."

"Suddenly the sharp, snapping sound rang upon my ears. Thank God! the parachute had opened I was saved and that, too, at the last possible moment. My descent was at once checked, and the earth was not 200 feet away It was with assumed ease that I finally landed upon the ground, and I doubt if any, save the circus people, in that great crowd knew how near I had been to death."

"When Billings subsequently learned of my perlious leap with the parachute and narrow escape from a terrible death, he came with tears in his eyes and, taking my hand, vowed that he would never again touch intoxicant. He was true to his vow, and remained in my employ until his death from natural causes several years later. Always I have been a stickler for temperate habits on the part of my employees of all kinds, and on settling with them always made an allowance of money for those who had refrained from overindulgence in strong drink. As a result I had better control over my company than had the average circus proprietor. If you want sobriety to prevail in a circus, or anywhere else for that matter, make it an object to the people to keep sober."

BIG PRICES FOR STAMPS.

Some recent high prices paid for postage stamps in London were: Moldavia, 81 paras, $495; Tuscany, 8 lire yellow, $300; St. Vincent, 6 pence, yellow-green $90; Reunion, 30 cents, first issue, $250, for both a used and an unused specimen; Newfoundland, 2 pence, carmine $190; 4 pence, carmine, $67; New Brunswick, 1 shilling, violet, $100; Great Britain, 1 penny, black, $100, and a strip of three, Queensland, 2 penny, blue, $390.