FOR EVER.

"And it's positively tomorrow, Dick!" exclaimed my cousin Flo. And she sighed rather heavily.

"If I were a dull man, Flo," I observed, "I should resent that sigh."

"I was only thinking—"

"As it is, I sympathize with it. I was thinking too."

"What were you thinking of, Dick?"

"I do not see," said I, "any use in running over their names."

"Of course," said Flo, hastily, and with a blush, "this is the real one, and all those—"

"Only were the real ones," I interrupted. "The tensity of love is even more remarkable than its intensity."

"Tensity? What does that mean?"

"Henceforward to both of us, nothing," I cried. "But when I remember Daisy,"

"Daisy what?" asked Flo.

"When, I say, I remember Daisy, and Amy, and Philippa, and Mrs.— no, no, hang it! I don't mean Mrs."—

"I'm glad of that, anyhow," said Flo "I shan't tell you mine, Dick."

"You're dying to do it," I pronounced after a minute's close examination.

"Mamma says," remarked Flo, "that when one is really in love one forgets everything—everything, you know. Dick—that had happened before."

"I'm so glad that nothing is invariably true," said I, with a retrospective smile.

"And when one is actually married—"

"I asked Philippa Worsley about that," said I, nodding.

"Oh, Dirk, what did you say?"

"She said that she remembered them with a mixture of shame and amusement," said I, inhaling a mouthful of smoke from my cigarette.

"I wonder," said Flo, with a sceptical smile.

"Which is miles better than not remembering them at all. Heavens, Flo! Is matrimony a sponge? I said this with some warmth.

"Captain Worsley, told me," Flo observed, taking no notice of my question, "that they were sad, but sweet memories."

"If he had meant it," said I, "I should respect him. But probably you extorted it from him."

"Well, you didn't get anything so nice out of Philippa," rejoined Flo, with a slight appearance of irritation.

"Yes I did. She told me that I was just suited to you," and I caressed Flo's hand in the most affectionate manner.

"How stupid you are Dick! Of course she meant that to be horrid."

"Then she should express herself more lucidly,"

"Now, Captain Worsley hinted—oh, quite delicately, you know—that I was thrown away on you Dick."

"He's never forgiven me," said I with much gratification. "He knows that Philippa"—

"Nonsense, Dick, I know why he said it," and Flo smiled with a parade of mystery. But I was not to be inveigled into asking any questions on the subject. I rose and warmed myself at the fire, observing:

"In the long winter evenings, Flo when you have been a little trying, it will be very soothing to sit and think forlornly how different it would have been with—"

"I shall be in the other corner," interrupted Flo, sturdily.

"Yes, yes," I cried, "pretending to be busy with your needlework, but dropping a furtive tear while you wonder—"

"Whether he," said Flo, "would have behaved to me as you do."

"Every word they spoke," I continued "every sweet walk, every charming talk we had with them will come back to us, and we shall feel how intolerable—"

"Is the actual life we are leading compared to—"

"What we might have led I cried, and I flung my cigarette into the fire. Then I sat down, facing the grate, and continued: "Decidedly the Sponge Theory is an obnoxious one. For, look again at the other side. If you chance ever to be pleasant, or to look at all pretty, or—"

"What an imagination you have, Dick! Now suppose you were by accident to seem nice, or to look nice, Dick, or—"

"Why then we shall cry Thank Heaven we escaped! This is our Heaven!" and I laughed,

"What are you laughing at?" asked Flo.

"A touch of sentiment I detected somewhere," I answered, stretching out my legs to the blaze.

"Mamma thinks we're being sentimental all the time," observed Flo.

"It is part of the Sponge Theory," said I tolerantly.

It will be perceived, from what I have said about my attitude, that Flo was behind me and I did not see what she was doing during the pause which followed my last remark. But presently I heard quite close to my ear:

"Dick."

"Yes, my darling," said I, cheerfully.

"Dick."

"Yes, Flo; what's up?"

"Oh, nothing," said Flo. It's much better to look at it sensibly, isn't it? Not to expect too much, I mean. Of course, marriage isn't paradise, is it?"

"Some say not," I answered,

"That's the comfortable thing about you, Dick. You're not one of those absurd people who think they're going to marry an angel and—tell her so—and—and—"

"And then round on her afterward, I hope not, indeed."

"I'm not that sort of person, either," said Flo. "I know all your faults, Dick. I just like you, you see; and that's the best basis isn't it?"

At this moment I felt something passing over my head and just touching my hair very lightly. I took no notice.

"It prevents all soreness—all sense of having been deceived," I observed.

"And it's really just as pleasant as being—silly?" remarked Flo in a most sensible tone.

"Just," said I, with much apparent conviction.

"It was so natural we should marry one another—from knowing each other so long, and being cousins, and so on, that we needn't"—Flo stopped.

"Needn't what?" I asked in curiosity.

"Why—why, needn't pretend that it's more than it is," said Flo, and again I felt that little something on my hair. I sat still.

"Yes, it's much the best," said Flo again. "Most permanent, you know, Dick."

"And much the most reasonable," I added.

Another pause followed; then I perceived something on the side of my neck, and another thing on the other side of my neck.

"Dick," was said quite close to my ear—and fortunately so, for the tone was very low.

"Is this reasonable?" I protested.

"Well?" said I helplessly regarding first one and then the other of the white things around my neck.

"Wouldn't you like, just by the way of a change," asked the voice at my ear, "to tell me a little bit of the truth.

"What have you been doing to my hair?" I demanded, sternly.

"No, but wouldn't you, Dick? Just a little bit, you know."

"This," said I, "is a very sad breakdown."

"Were any of them as nice as me, Dick?"

I had to say no, you know.

"Or as charming, Dick?"

I couldn't say they were, could I?

"Or—or as pretty, Dick?"

"I shall have to look round to answer that," said I.

"Oh, well then, never mind, Dick—no, never mind. Because there's something else."

"More still?" I exclaimed in expostulation.

"Yes, Dirk. Did you ever care for any of them one-quarter so much?"

"So much as what?"

"You know. Did you?"

I eyed the fire. The fire seemed to wink with twinkling eyes at me. I believe the fire understood how I was situated.

"Did you? Because you know, Dick, I never cared, oh, anything like so much for anybody as—"

"Not a hundredth part as much!" I cried, fervently; and then I looked up—well, I meant to look up at the ceiling but a face came between the ceiling and me—a face with smiling lips and eyes like water in the sunshine. I did what the position appeared to suggest.

"Then why do you pretend you don't" asked Flo.

I was now in a position to answer the question that had been passed by.

"So far as my memory serves me," said I, "I don't think they were as pretty either."

"You don't think?"

"No, I don't think they were."

"You don't—"

"No, they weren't," I cried hastily. "Nothing like."

"You see, you can be nice when you like," observed Flo, as if I had denied it.

"How long am I to be nice for?" I asked.

"Forever," said Flo. "Because there's still time to put it off, you know, if—"

"I will be nice forever!" I cried, appalled at this threat.

"I am afraid Dick, I shall, too!" whispered Flo. She deviates now and then into a most becoming confusion. "Yes, forever!" she repeated.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," I observed.

"You may say what you like now," retorted Flo, beginning to smile again, for she had ceased for a moment or two.

"Then I venture to say that we have been very absurd."

"Very, Dick."

"Just as absurd as most people are."

"Just, Dick," said she triumphantly.

"And that it was not my fault."

"You couldn't help it. That's just it!"

"Just what?" I asked.

"It," said Flo, radiant, triumphant irresistible.

"Then," said I, "I'll bid you good-night."

"Good-night, Dick."

"Oh—er—we meet tomorrow?"

"Yes," nodded Flo, with a wonderful blush.

"A demain, then!"

"A demain!" nodded Flo.

On the stairs I chanced to meet the Colonel. The Colonel smirked, smiled, winked, jerked his thumb toward the room I had left, chuckled, dug me in the ribs.

"You are deplorably right," said I, "but you might have put it less offensively,"

"Well" observed the Colonel, "it's uncommonly jolly, my boy, but you can't expect it to last, don't you know?"

I looked at the Colonel. He is much my senior, and was about to be my step-father-in-law. Still, I said to the Colonel:

"Go to the devil. Good-night."

Which shows that man is a very queer sort of creature.

And I walked home thinking of things dead and gone, and of things that, as had been agreed, were to live forever, And the two sets of things were—well, were they?—just alike.

A GALLANT CROOK.

Ada—Why does Dolly call Jack her—darling highwayman?

Blanche—Because he held her up so nicely when she thought she was going to faint the other evening.

NOBILITY IN HARD LUCK.

HOLDERS OF BRITISH TITLES SADLY DOWN AT THE HEELS.

One Grinds an Organ, While Another Is a Groom — An Irish Earl in Pennsylvania — Monarch Without Thrones.

Time, the great leveler, has played many cruel pranks with noble European families, and the lordly race which in one century has risen to highest honor and vast possessions, may, in the next, be driven back by fate into the lowest strata of society, The year 1898 has just shown us Lord William Neville, son of the English marquis of Abergavenny and direct descendant of the great "King Maker," Warwick, a convicted felon, entering upon his term of imprisonment at Wormwood Scrubs. Who can prophesy what position in life the descendants of this degenerate Neville will hold? When released from jail he will probably change his name and betake himself to some distant colony. His father is a Knight of the Garter, England's highest decoration, his sons may descend to any level in tthe scale of society.

OLD TITLES IN STRANGE PLACES.

Many old British titles are to-day found in curious places. Far away in Hindostan, there is a lonely little village, Munowta by name. The head man of this petty settlement is a swarthy half-breed, whose rightful name and style, as admitted by the clerk of the house of lords is "The Right Honorable Lord Gardner, Baron Gardner in the peerages of the united kingdom and of Ireland." Lord Gardner's immediate ancestors ,having lost their estates, went out to India, where they intermarried with dusky Hindu maidens, embraced Brahminism, and founded a Eurasian line of peers. The present baron has the right to take jhis seat in the house of lords, but Caesar like, he prefers to be chief magistrate in tiny Munowta, to remaining a titled nonentity in England.

Down in Maryland—at Northampton, Bladensburg, Prince George Co., Md., to be exact—resides a country physician and small farmer, who prefers to be known as "Dr. John C. Fairfax," But in reality, he is the "Rt. Hon. John Contee Fairfax, 11th Lord Fairfax," and a descendant of the famous Lord Fairfax, who commanded the Puritan forces in the English civil war. The great estates once owned by the Fairfax family in England passed out of their hands when the elder branch died out at the end of the last century. To-day little but the barren title remains to this English-American peer. Lord Fairfax's brother and predecessor in the barony was better known as Charles Fairfax one time clerk to the legislature of California. A son of the doctor-baron holds the position of salaried clerk in a New York business house.

America also owns an adotped British baronet, Sir Charles Stuart-Menteth, Bart., has long been a resident at Canandaigua, N.Y., and is married to a New York lady.

A LONG-LOST EARL.

The present Earl of Aberdeen, governor-general of Canada, may not be Earl of Aberdeen after all. At any moemnt his elder brother and predecessor in the title, may put in an appearance. The earl was a wild, wayward lad, who went to sea and has never been heard of since. The British courts after waiting a certain length of time, allowed his brother to claim the title and estates by default. There has never been, however,i any absolute proof of the late earl's death. In the same way the death of the Archduke Johann, of Austria, who went to sea under the name iof "John Orth," has never been proved.

The present Earl of Buchan, before succeeding to the title, was a groom and occasional jockey; while the ninth Earl of Seafield, while actually in possession of his title was forced to earn a living in New Zealand as a "hedger and ditcher." For years this nobleman's weekly wages rarely rose above a few shillings. Eventually he was appointed bailiff in a little backwoods court of justice.

AN ORGAN-GRINDING VISCOUNT.

Viscount Hinton, son and hair of the Earl of Winchelsea and Nottingham, grinds a piano organ through the streets of London and Brighton, with a large placard asking for alms. He takes this course in order to spite his father, who has disowned him, and, while public curiosity concerning him was rife, he managed to earn a good living. Nowadays, jhe is said to be so wretchedly poor, that the piano organ has been pawned.

The present Earl of Caithness, head of the great house of St. Clair, was born the son of an Aberdeen bank employe of small means. His father sent him to the United States, and for years he "punched cattle in Idaho. Eventually, in 1890, his father succeeded a far-off cousin in the earldom; and—hey, presto, pass!—plain "Jack Sinclair, cowboy," became Viscount Berriedale ,and heir to one of the oldest o fScotch peerages. Within twelve months after his return from Idaho his father's death made him Earl of Caithness.

The son and heir of an English earl and himself a viscount by courtesy, is at the present writing working in a stable in the Boer republic. He holds a subordinate position among the grooms, where his knowledge of horses, acquired during his (captaincy in a "crack" cavalry regiment, stands him in good stead. Losses on the turf and the inevitable "woman in the case' are said to have been the causes which drove this viscount to serve as stable boy in the Rand.

A BARONET POLICEMAN.

A constable in the royal Irish constabulary at Dublin is Sir Thomas Fenton Echlin, a seventh baronet. The Echlins lost all their estates in chancery and the head of the house is thus forced to act as a common policeman. Sir J. H. Rivett-Carnac is a writer in the inland revenue office at Somerset house, one of the lowest and worst paid offices in the British civil service.

Only a few months ago a great sensation was brought about in England b ythe succession of a hall porter named Percival to the title of Earl of Egmont.

Sir Harry Yelverton, Goring, the eleventh holder of a baronetcy created in 1627, was, when he succeeded to the title, the keeper of a little tobacconist's shop in Tamworth, Derbyshire. He had served as a common soldier in the Twelfty Suffolk regiment, and his large family worked in the factories and mills around Tamworth.

SCATTERED IRISH NOBILITES.

Perhaps the present holders of the old Irish titles ,Norman or Milesian, are the most scattered of all the world's nobilities. The rightful Earl of Clancarty ,is Justin MacCarthy, a carpenter, until recently resident in eastern ennsylvania, Theobald Butler, Viscount Galmoy, is an innkeeper in the small French city of Chalons. The chieftains of many of the great clans may be found among the peasantry of Ireland, or in the nobility of foreign countries. The Duke of Tetuan, recently Spanish foreign minister, is recently the O'Donnell, prince of Tyrconnell and lord of Donegal. Frenchmen claim the titles of Earl of Limerick, Viscount Clare, Viscount Kilmallock and Baron Upper Ossory. The ex-prime minister of Austria, Count Taaffe, is an Irish peer and holds rank as Viscount Taaffe.

The rajah of Sarawak, in Borneo, is an Englishman—Charles James Brooke. In 1844 the "wild men of Borneo" elected James Brooke, a British traveler, their sovereign. England permitted Brooke to take the Dyak throne. Rajah Brooke was succeeded by his nephew, the present monarch.

The march of civilization, so called, dethroned many rulers of primitive nations. Ex-Queen Liliuokalani, of Hawaii is a case in point, So also is ex-Queen from her domains by the French. Ex-King George, of the Mosquio coast, deposed by Nicaragua, is living under the protection of the British government at Jamaica. He gets an allowance from England of six shillings or about $1.50 a day, and spends most of this pension in strong drink. Ex-King Dina Salifon, whom the French banished from his hereditary realms on the Rio Nunez, lives in Senegal, upon about $4 a week. Yet he once ruled over millions of subjects. The son and heir of Cetewayo, king of the Zulus, is a British prisoner at St. Helena; and Prince Iturbide, the descendant and heir of Emperor Iturbide, of Mexico, is a clubman or rather an ex-clubman at Washington, D. C.

Many continental nobles of the highest rank have abandoned their rights to enter monasteries. Count von Waldberg-Wolfegg, for instance, gave up his estates and rank to his younger brother, Count Maximilian, in order to become a monk. There is one abbey in Suabia where every inmate, from the prior down to the humblest lay brother, is a "mighty and well-born" nobleman.

THE EVE OF HER WEDDING.

Hush! Let me hide my happiness,
A little while let grief hold sway,
And sweetness blend with bitterness,
Before I give myself away.

Soon, soon, must pass for evermore
The scenes of old; new paths I choose;
Oh, let me count my treasures o'er,
That, winning love's delights, I lose.

Dear home! How all its nooks and trees
Recall my childhood's joys and tears,
Mixed with immortal memories
Of twenty tranquil, transient years.

Familiar sounds of birds and bees
On summer evenings fair and still,
Set to the music of the breeze,
Or twilight tinkling of the rill.

O babbling brook, O darling glade,
Old church beside thine ancient yew,
Where oft mine childish feet have strayed,
I bid you all a last adieu!

Dear simple souls, so stanch and true,
In cottage homes, o'er hill and dell,
A distant home is mine; to you
And yours I bid a last farewell!

A last farewell! Though all appear
Part of my very being's whole,
Linked with my whole life's sojourn here,
Knit to each fiber of my soul.

Linked with the golden dreams of youth,
And all its gay and gladsome things,
When childhood's innocence and truth
Lent to each buoyant day its wings.

My father smiles, and chides in vain
The tears my mother's love lets fall;
My sister's heart is wrung with pain—
Good-by! I soon must leave you all!

This little hour I give to grief,
With tender thoughts mine eyes are wet;
I almost seem to find relief
In reminiscences and regret!

One little hour! My woman's eyes
With waning childhood's dews are dim.
Away! Love calls! I must arise,
And hasten forth and follow him.

HEARTLESS WRETCH.

Oh, dear, sighed the young mother, I do wish I knew what to give the baby to keep him quiet.

Why don't you try arsenic? growled her bachelor brother, who was trying to read the evening paper.

STARTLING PILL STATISTICS.

Some Idea of the Consumption of Medical Pellets by the English Public.

The British appetite for pills can only be gauged from the revenue receipts relating to the stamp duties paid for patent medicines, which last year in the aggregate amounted to almost a quarter of a million pounds, and by making allowances for the pills, dispensed by doctors and chemists, which are not dutiable.

An allowance of a trifle over half an ounce of pills for each inhabitant of the United Kingdom for the year, cannot be said to be an extravagant estimate; indeed, such an allowance means but thirty-two doses a year, or one and a half pounds of pills to last a lifetime of sixty years.

Placed in a straight line, says Tit Bits, the pills of a lifetime would extend through some forty feet, and there would be some 1,920 of them. The latter figure may seem rather large, but if sixty years of pills were combined into one sphere, it would have a diameter of less than four inches and a circumference of under one foot.

It is not until we make calculations regarding the bill as a national delicacy that we arrive at any figures of magnitude, and then we find that something like 1,280,000,000. pills are swallowed annually. If these British pills were put in a straight line they would extend from London to Lucknow.

The placing of the pills in a lengthy line of 5,050 miles would afford occupation for a pair of idle hands during eighty-one years,at the head of which time the owner of the hands would probably find the task of laying down three pills every second during an eight hours' day somewhat monotonous. If in place of putting them into an extended line we placed the pills in rows of 1,085 pills, and having arranged the same number of rows as there were pills in a row as a base, we could use the rest of the pills in making 1,085 similar layers, the resultant cube would have each of its dimensions rather more than 22 1-2 feet.

Having performed this feat, we could proceed to stir up the lot in a gigantic mortar, and having thoroughly mixed the ingredients—and what a mixture it would be!—roll the mass into one splendid spherical pill weighing 637 tons, and possessing a diameter of over 28 feet, and a circumference of over 88 feet. Five men, six feet in height, standing on one another's shoulders—not heads, that would be too painful, especially for the one on the ground—would require the services of a small boy to crown the human Eiffel Tower in order to get level with the top of the monster pill.

WHAT TWO OFFICERS SAW.

The Strange Story of an Authenticated Ghost.

In the whole record of so-called "supernatural appearances" there is not one which is more thoroughly authenticated than the following:

John Cope Sherbroke and George Waynyard were two officers in the Thirty-Third Regiment, and at the time of the extraordinary occurrence here related the regiment was on service in Canada. One evening, as usual, they went into a little room adjoining Waynyard's bedroom and commenced reading.

After a few minutes Capt. Sherbroke looked up from his book and saw standing in a doorway of the room a man who was a perfect stranger to him. At a loss to account for the intrusion, Capt. Sherbroke turned to his companion to ask if the stranger was an acquaintance of his. Waynyard was as pale as death and apparently incapable of speech. Seeing this, Capt. Sherbroke made no effort to stop the figure, which slowly crossed the apartment and passed through a door leading to Waynyard's bedroom. As soon as the man was out of sight Waynyard recovered his faculties and cried out, "My brother!"

"Your brother!" repeated Sherbroke. "What can you mean, Waynyard? There must be some deception. Follow me."

They then went into the bedroom, a room from which the only possible means of exit was the one door already referred to. They found the room empty!

This incident produced a profound impression among the officers of the regiment, who knew that both Sherbroke and Waynyard were sober, cool-headed men of unblemished integrity. Waynyard declared that the apparition was the spirit of his brother, and expressed the conviction that his brother was dead.

When time had elapsed sufficient to allow inquiries to be made it was discovered that Waynyard's brother was dead, and that he had died on the very night on which his spirit had appeared to the astonished officers in Canada.

Of the two witnesses of this strange episode one became Gen. Sir John Cope Sherbroke, G.C.B., and the other Lieut.-Col. Waynyard, of the Twenty-Fourth Light Dragoons.

THEORY AND PRACTICE.

Good Minister—I don't see how I am to get through my sermon to-day. It's almost church time.

Fond Wife.—What is the text?

It is about the wise and foolish virgins.

But you were writing at that sermon last night. Why didn't you finish it?

I couldn't; the lamp went out.