15,000 PEOPLE HOMELESS.

Vast Portions of Ottawa and Hull Destroyed by Fire.

Ottawa, Ont., Friday, April 27.—Fifteen thousand people are homeless here to-night, 3,000 dwellings have gone up in smoke, $20,000,000 worth of property has been destroyed. Ottawa and Hull to-night are suffering from the effects of the worst calamity in their corporate history. A fire began shortly before noon Thursday, and raged fiercely until one o'clock this morning, when it was got under control. At present the damage cannot be estimated with any great accuracy, but it will undoubtedly amount to several million dollars. Conservative estimates make it in the neighbourhood of $20,000,000. Many large manufacturing establishments and lumber almost beyond computation have been destroyed. A distressing feature of the situation is the position of a large portion of the labouring people, whose dwellings and sources of employment have disappeared together.

OTTAWA FIREMEN CUT OFF.

The fire started in the chimney of a labouring man's cottage in Hull. A very high wind was blowing at the time, but nobody had the slightest idea of the real extent of the danger. An hour later the main street of Hull was all in flames. The firemen of Ottawa hastened to the assistance of the neighbouring city, with the result that they were presently cut off and unable to return, when the fire leaped suddenly across the river, destroying in its course the planking of the bridge which formed the only communication.

This rendered the city of Ottawa to a certain extent helpless. Little could be done but watch the flames lead their way steadily all afternoon through the western part of the city. For a little while it looked as if nothing would be left of the capital of the Dominion, but, fortunately, the wind kept the fire away from most of the business districts and from the most pretentious residental streets. Those burned out are chiefly the working population, which fact serves to render the distress all the greater.

The vast lumber piles and mills of J. R. Booth, the lumber king of Canada and president of the Canada Atlantic railway, are gone completely. So, also, are millions upon millions of lumber belonging to the Hull Export Co., and the Export Lumber Co., two of which are heavy losers, as are likewise the Bronsons-Western Co., which had still mill lumber on hand. The Gilmour and Hughson lumber piles and mill are gone, together with the churches, schools, public buildings, and stores without number.

Edd's pulp mills were among the first to succumb to the flames. Shortly after in the afternoon the city has been almost cut off from the outside world through the destruction of the Canadian Pacific railway station and the wave of the track, the ties being set on fire and the rails spread by the heat of burning lumber piles. Most of the telegraph wires are also down.

Every effort is being made to relieve the distress of the homeless and ruined thousands who are wandering in the streets. The Dominion Government authorities have taken energetic hold of the problem, and the drill-shed and the public buildings have been thrown open as temporary shelters. Time has not yet permitted the organization of any further relief measure.

ORIGIN OF THE FIRE

The blaze is said to have originated in the house of A. Kirouac, on "Hell-there-street." A burning chimney is said to have been the cause. This house was in the thick of a lot of wooden buildings, and in a very short while more than thirty houses on Philomen, Bridge, Chaudiere, and Albert streets were in flames. The Hull fire brigade summoned assistance, and soon the E. B. Eddy firemen, the Union brigade of the Chaudiere, and a part of the Ottawa fire department were doing what they could to keep down the flames. The wind proved too strong and fierce, however, and, despite the many streams of water playing on the blaze, the fire spread rapidly. Even at considerable distances away from the original fire area many houses were set ablaze by burning embers.

It was thought at first that Main street, the business portion of the town, might be saved, but the fire came down there, destroying all the stores, the Bank of Ottawa building, the English church, the court-house, post-office, residence and offices of Mr Champagne, M.P., and everything else on the street.

The original area of the fire extended over four blocks from the south side of Philomen street to Wright street and between Chaudiere and Bridge streets. A fact that rendered the fire more destructive was that most of the buildings which were burned at first were of wood. People who lived two or three streets away, on becoming aware of the flying cinders, started to pour water on their houses in the hope of saving the buildings. Many more people commenced to move their household effects. In spite of all these precautions, however, the flames would get at the houses, and in a few minutes they were a DISTRESSING SCENES.

The entire day in Hull seemed to be unknown man found in C. P. R. station yard, lower extremities badly burned; John Matthews, 15 Division street, reported dead; John Dumple, Somerset street, said to be missing; —Drost, Water street watchman for E. B. Eddy Co., reported dead; Fireman Dann and Engineer Peter Hamilton, of Hull, reported missing. It is said several bodies have been seen in Hull.

HELP THE HOMELESS.

Fifteen thousand people have been rendered homeless by Friday's conflagration in Ottawa and Hull. It was the work of but a few hours. The fire commenced in Hull, swept through the streets of that city, licked up the lumber piles and the mills which separate Hull from Ottawa, and then drove with irresistible force through a populous district of the capital. The fire-fighters were powerless. Nothing could stop the progress of the flames. No time was given to the people to save any of their belongings. For them old and young, sick or well, it was luck if they escaped with their lives. Fifteen thousand of them are to-day without shelter. They are our own people. All Canadians with true Canadian hearts beating in their breasts ought to come liberally to their assistance. Let individuals, municipalities, in fact, all possible agencies, come at once to the relief of the homeless.

ruin with scenes of the most distressing nature. Many children who had been playing around their homes in their bare feet were compelled to seek safety without shoes or stockings. Scores of women carried babies in their arms and stood at a distance watching everything which they possessed go up in flames.

It was 1.30 when the fire was discovered on the Ottawa side of the river. It broke out in the lumber district adjoining the C.P.R. station, and tonight a vast area comprising the westerly section of Victoria Ward and practically the whole of Dalhousie Ward is destroyed.

ACROSS THE RIVER INTO OTTAWA.

When the blaze crossed the river, the lumber piles between the McKay mills and the river caught first, and in less than five minutes were a raging mass. It was only the work of a few seconds when the small buildings between the piles and the mills were burned, and the great elevators of the McKay mills were soon in the cauldron of fire. The brigade made a plucky fight to stop the fire at this juncture, and save the power-house and the Booth property, but it was in vain. The immense deluge of water had no more effect than if fired from a squirt-gun. The wind was blowing a gale of 60 miles an hour, fanning the flames into such fury that the massive structures were soon reduced to a heap of ruins.

While the brigade were fighting these, the embers were carried over to the C.P.R. station, and in an incredibly short time more than thirty houses were burning. The station and freight-sheds fell an easy victim, and on sped the greedy element until the whole district to Pooley's bridge was a veritable ocean of flame. The old frame houses, for which the district was noted, only served to add fury to the blaze, and hundreds of the poorest of Ottawa's people, with only the scant clothing on their backs. The household effects, upon which not one in a hundred had a cent of insurance, were all lost, and crying women and wailing children were struggling on every side. The men worked as with superhuman strength, and many moved their furniture three or four times, only at last to see it go up in smoke. The most pathetic sight was the aged women and helpless babes, who were without friends or shelter, and knew not where to turn for help.

EFFECT OF THE CALAMITY.

Ottawa, April 27.—A belt of over two miles, from north to south and from a quarter to half a mile wide is swept bare of everything except walls and chimneys, and during the night the fire simply burned itself out in the belly, which fortunately was separated by a large vacant area, from the most popular of the western suburb, Hinisouburg, towards which the flames were driving.

This area of Ottawa comprises probably 6000 people, who are homeless. In addition one-half of Hull is gone and probably 6000 more are homeless there. These are conservative figures.

The great majority are poor people. A very bad feature is that the manufacturing and industrial parts of Hull and the chief industrial part of Ottawa, the Chaudiere district, are destroyed and thousands of men deprived of wages for the present.

The Lumber Mills, which were all about to open, and which employed about 4000 men, are destroyed, with the exception of J. R. Booth's big mill, which was fire-proof, but the neighborhood is so blasted that even that mill will be delayed opening for a time. The loss to Mr. Booth, on his other buildings, lumber yards, offices, house and other property is estimated at half a million dollars.

Eddy's loss in Hull will be larger, the paper mills, match factory, industrated ware mills, the storehouse, yards, tramways and residence being gone.

McKay's Milling Co., is gone, loss $850,000. The main power houses of the Ottawa Electric Railway and Ottawa Electric Light Co., are gone, but auxiliary plants, which were saved, are giving enough power to maintain a partial service on both railway and lighting.

A great number of foundries, machine shops, factories, and other industries are utterly destroyed, as well as the Canadian Pacific station, freight sheds and yards.

THEIR ESTIMATE.

The morning papers estimate the total loss in Ottawa and Hull at $15,000,000. That is probably over the mark, as outside of the great mills and the main street and public buildings of Hull the greater part of the districts burned were of the poorer class. The insurance, which is impossible to estimate as yet, will be comparatively light for that reason, and for the reason that the lumbermen, owing to the high rates, did not carry heavy insurance.

Relief funds are being started in the city, and large numbers of subscriptions are being made, and arrangements to shelter and feed the distressed. Seven dead or missing are reported so far.

VICTIMS OF THE FIRE.

In addition to Mrs. Bessie Cook, cremated in a house on Wellington street, and the unknown man found at the C. P. R. depot, reported last evening, another unknown man was found dead on Broad street.

The list of the dead so far as known is as follows:—Mrs. Bessie Cook, Wellington street, cremated in house; unknown man found on Broad street, remains charred beyond recognition;

THE DYNAMITE OUTRAGE

Two Kidnappers Try to Abduct Chief Witness in the Canal Case.

A despatch from Niagara Falls, Ont., says:—The dynamite outrage attempt becomes a deeper mystery every day. A correspondent visited the scene of the attempt of a week ago on Sunday. The crowds are not so great as last Sunday, and the soldiers keep everyone as far away as possible. Several sensational turns may be sprung at the trial. The Crown has some splendid evidence, as the following details which have been kept as close as possible will show. The conspiracy is evidently a deep one, every effort being made by friends of the men in gaol at Welland to save them. Thursday evening two men dressed as women, in dark clothes, heavily veiled, are reported to have attempted to entice the 12-year-old Constable girl away. She is the Crown's chief witness. She was an eye-witness of the deed. The masqueraders decamped when the father of the girl appeared. He has since asked protection, and a couple of special guards now stand in front of his house day and night. Several suspicious people have appeared at the hotels and about town during the past few days, but the presence of the soldier guard makes them very careful. The two men in the feminine attire asked a couple of lads to show them where the little girl lived who saw the dynamiters drop the charge into the canal. No trace of them has been found as yet.

James Hoover, one of the men living near the blown-up lock, has identified Dullman as being in town the Tuesday before making enquiries about the canal. Saturday night a farmer was halted by the soldiers. He refused to comply, and the soldiers fired and all the guard ran to the spot. The poor, frightened farmer was held for some time, but finally allowed to go. About thirty witnesses have been subpœnaed for the trial at Welland, and a great number of townspeople will also be present.

It is stated that after the preliminary examination the prisoners will be removed to Toronto gaol for safe-keeping.

THE BOERS' STRENGTH

They Have Plenty of Ammunition, But Few Provisions.

London, Monday, April 30.—The Morning Post's correspondent at Bloemfontein sends a long detailed communication in reference to the strength of the Boers, and their re-Boer commissariat, through whose hands the returns passed." It contains the assertion that the Boers up to March 13 had lost 6,500 prisoners, 8,000 killed and wounded, and 14,000 had slunk to their homes. They are extremely short of waggons, and were short of wheat until their raid into the Wepener district, where the harvest has been the finest on record. Their mealies are in bad condition. Kaffirs are guard for their big guns is almost exhausted, but other stores and rifle ammunition are plentiful.

There are no positions south of Pretoria which cannot be turned by the British. Even the Vaal river does not offer any protection to the Transvaal, it being fordable at every dozen miles. The position at Biggarsberg can also be easily turned.

WILL HOLD THABA NCHU.

British Force Likely to Stay in That District.

A despatch from Bloemfontein, Monday, April 30, says:—It is understood that the British will continue to hold Thaba Nchu owing to its strategic importance, and especially with a view to checking future raids. The commandoes that have recently been operating in the direction of Thaba Nchu are melting away, the Boers quietly returning to their farms, and many of them taking the oath of allegiance. Experience has shown, however, in many cases, that this is only a pretence to enable the Boers to create disturbances on the rear of the British, and vigorous methods will probably be necessary to force real disarmament.

The Boers are now evidently returning in order to concentrate for opposing the British advance. Now that Thaba Nchu, as well as the approaches, is strongly held, Ladybrand, with the unfriendly Basutos lining the border, is rendered a position of extreme danger for the Boers, the gravity of which will be accentuated from the moment the British advance begins.

15,000 FULL KITS WEEKLY

Tommy's Clothing Being Rushed to South Africa.

London, April 27.—The army clothing factory at Millbank is sending to South Africa 15,000 full kits weekly. Up to March 200,000 pairs of drawers had been sent, and now 20,000 pairs are going out weekly in addition to vast quantities of socks and woollen jerseys. The orders are increasing, and it is expected that the factory will work at the present rate until the end of the war.

BOER PLANS IN NATAL.

Forces Arranged to Defend Any Pass British May Decide to Attack.

A despatch from Ladysmith, April 28, says:—The reports about the massing of the Boers at Tintwa pass appear to have no foundation. There are only small parties of burghers in that neighborhood.

Commandants De Beers and Vanniekerk have so arranged the Boer forces that they can be massed at any pass which the British might attempt to force.

BURNED AS PUNISHMENT.

Farm-House From Which Canadians Were Fired Upon.

A despatch from Bloemfontein says:—Richter's farm, near Leeuw kop, from which, while flying a white flag, the Canadians were fired upon, has been burned as a punishment. Richter is a prisoner.

MARKETS OF THE WORLD

Prices of Grain, Cattle, Cheese, &c., in the Leading Markets.

Toronto, May 1.—We had a light run of only 35 carloads of live stock, including 1,400 hogs, 500 cattle, about 70 sheep and lambs, 40 calves, and a few milkers.

The market was again dull and uninteresting and showing no improvement. Much of the cattle was held over for Friday's market.

There was little done in butcher cattle. The better stuff sold fairly well at from 3 3-4 to 4c, and occasionally 4 1-8c per pound. Other grades had a weakening tendency.

While stockers are quotably unchanged prices are weaker.

Bulls, feeders, and milkers are about the same as on Tuesday.

Being in such unusually light supply sheep and lambs were firm at the prices which have lately ruled here. There is not much enquiry yet for spring lambs, which sell at from $2.50 to $5.50 each.

Hogs are firm at the prices of last Tuesday.

For prime hogs, scaling from 160 to 200 lbs, the top price is 6 1-4c; light hogs are bringing 5 1-2c per lb.

Following is the range of quotations:

Cattle.	
Shippers, per cwt.	$4.25 $ 4.75
Butcher, choice, do.	3.60 4.12 1-2
Butcher, med. to good.	3.25 3.50
Butcher, inferior.	2.50 3.00
Stockers, per cwt.	3.75 3.62 1-2
Sheep and Lambs.	
Sheep, per cwt.	3.00 4.25
Yearlings, per cwt.	4.50 5.50
Spring lambs, each.	2.50 5.50
Bucks, per cwt.	2.50 3.00
Milkers and Calves.	
Cows, each.	25.00 45.00
Calves, each.	2.00 10.00
Hogs.	
Choice hogs, per cwt.	6.00 6.25
Light hogs, per cwt.	5.00 5.50
Heavy hogs, per cwt.	5.00 5.50
Sows.	3.00 3.25
Stags.	2.00 2.25

Toronto, May 1.—Wheat—There is a moderate demand and the market is about steady. Red and white are quoted at 65 1-2c west. Goose wheat is quoted at 69 1-2c west and 70 1-2c on a low freight to New York. Spring wheat is quoted at 68c east. Manitoba wheat is steady at 80c for No. 1 hard grinding in transit Sarnia, 68 1-2c afloat fort William May and 70 1-2c afloat New York.

Flour—Is steady. Cars of Ontario patents are quoted at $2.80 to $2.85 in barrels west, but the large mills are getting from 25c more. Manitoba flour is steady at $4 to $4.10 for patents and $3.70 for strong bakers.

Millfeed—The market is steady. Cars of shorts are quoted at $16 to $16.50 and bran at $15 west.

Barley—Is steady. No. 2 is quoted at 43c east and 42c west.

Buckwheat—Is steady at 51c to 52c east and 50c to 51c west.

Rye—Is steady at 52c west and 54c east.

Corn—Is steady at 40c for Canada yellow west, American is quoted at 47 1-2c for new No. 3 yellow Toronto.

Oats—The demand is fair and the market is steady. White are quoted at 28c, east; mixed are quoted at 26 1-2c and white at 27c bid and 27 1-2c asked.

Oatmeal—Is steady at $3.20 for cars of bags and $3.30 for barrels here.

Peas—Are steady at 62c east and 61c bid west.

Dressed hogs in waggon lots on the street here to-day were quoted at $7.40 to $7.60 per cwt.

Pork—Shoulders mess, $13.50 to $14.

Smoked and Dry Salted Meats—Long clear bacon, car lots, loose 8 1-4c, do cased 8 1-2c; ton and case lots, 8 3-4c; breakfast bacon, 11c to 12c; backs, 11c to 12 1-2c; shoulders, 9c; hams, 11c to 12c; rolls 9c to 9 1-2c; green meats out of pickle are quoted at 1c less than smoked.

Lard—Tierces 8 5-8c, tubs 8 3-4c and pails 9c.

Buffalo, May 1.—Spring wheat—Steady. No. 1 Northern, spot, 75 3-4c; No. 2 Northern, spot, 73 3 4c; No. 1 hard, 73 1-4c; No. 1 Northern, 71 1-4c; No. 2 Northern, 69 1-4c; No. 3 spring, 67 3-4c. Winter wheat—No. 2 red, 73; mixed, 72 1-2c; No. 1 white, 72c asked. Corn—No. 2 yellow, 45 1-4c; No. 3 yellow, 44 1-2c; No. 4 yellow, 43 1-2c; No. 2 corn, 44 1-4c; No. 3 corn, 43 3-4c. Oats—Firm; No. 2 white, 29 1-4 to 29 1-2c; No. 3 white, 28 1-2 to 28 3-4c; No. 4 white, 28c; No. 2 mixed, 29 1 2c; No. 3 mixed, 28. Rye—Easy, spot, 62 1-2 to 63c; asked. Flour—Quiet and steady.

Chicago, May 1.—Flaxseed closed:—North-West and South-West, cash, $1.73 bid; May, $1.72; September, $1.22 October, $1.15.

Detroit, May 1.—Wheat—Closed. No 1, white, cash, 71 1-2c; No. 2 red, cash 71 1-2c; May, 71 1-2c; July, 72 1-2c.

BOERS TO WINTER IN NATAL

Kaffirs Told They Must Furnish Forage for Burghers.

A despatch from Ladysmith, April 29, says:—The Boers are making preparations for spending the winter in Natal. They are visiting all the Kaffirs within the occupied sphere, demanding the payment of the hut tax and informing them they must not pay to the Natal Government in future, but to them.

The Boers are bringing their stock from the high veldt into Natal for the winter grazing, and have intimated to the Kaffirs that they require grass for their animals, and that the natives must work for them or move south of Sunday's river.

The enemy are busy on new positions north of Elandslaagte. It has been ascertained by means of rangefinders that they are not less than fifteen thousand yards distant from the station and the collieries, and therefore beyond the reach of our guns.

ADVICE TO BOERS.

Powers Tell Them to Sue for Peace - intervention is Impossible.

A despatch from London, April 29 says:—The Dresden Neuesta Nachrichten learns from the very best source that at the conference held between members of the Boer mission and Baron de Beaufort, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, the latter did his best to convince the Transvaal delegates of the hopelessness of their mission.

At the pressing request of the mission, Dr. de Beaufort put himself in communication with the Cabinets in Berlin, Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Paris, and naturally received from all of them the answer that any intervention was impossible.

All the powers, without exception, advised the Boers to make overtures of peace to England. Even if their independence should be sacrificed, the conclusion of peace would at least put an end to useless bloodshed.

IN MISERABLE CONDITION.

Boers Evade the Main Roads in Their Retreat North.

A despatch from Maseru, April 26, says:—Firing was heard in the direction of Thaba Nchu for some hours yesterday. Many Boers are retreating from Wepener and De Wetsdorp, proceeding by cross-roads instead of the main roads near the Basutoland border.

It is reported that they are in a miserable condition, disorganized and depressed. Many have deserted and are hiding on the farms.

The main body was in camp last night near Leuw river mills. They were unhampered by waggons, using pack horses, mostly for purposes of transport. It is believed that most of the Transvaalers have gone north. They told the natives that they had been called away by President Kruger.

MISS LETITIA'S TROUSSEAU

Letitia Houghton was going to be married; consequently many of her dear feminine friends said it was a shame, a scandal, for Letitia to think of such folly at her time of life. These same authorities declared she was 55 years old, adding there was no fool like an old one.

Letitia was on the sunny side of 45, but did not look as if she were 40, being handsome, with a pretty home, a tidy income, a kind heart and a sound head.

The beneficiaries of her bounty had become accustomed to consider her a spenster, too confirmed a devotee to single blessedness to change her state. What right had that old thing to be taken in by an impecunious adventurer when she had friends of her lifetime who naturally expected—she had no Kinspeople—to be remembered in her will, not that they were mercenary, but that they had a sort of claim upon her.

Remarks of this kind were freely indulged in when the invitations were received. Twenty-five or thirty women talking at once is rather confusing, and as the speakers became excited, the comments became more personal and assumed an ill-natured turn. It was at a church sewing circle; and tongues were flying faster than needles.

An exceedingly pretty and richly dressed woman, a guest of the society, now took up the cudgels in defense of the absent.

"Ladies, ladies, is this a modern school for scandal or a church society held in the basement of a sacred edifice? You all have cause to be grateful to Letitia; why should you speak of her so bitterly now, because she exercises the right we have all claimed?"

Mrs. Alyn Alden was a leader of society, whose dictum made or unmade a new-comer entering the charmed circle. There was not a woman present who was not anxious to retain her favor.

"Why, what have we said?" It is eccentric in Miss Letitia to get married at the time of life, now isn't it, Mrs. Jennie?"

"I do not know why it should be considered so; Letitia is a very pretty woman."

Mrs. Jennie, as Mrs. Alden was generally called, was a power, and with promptitude they proceeded to eat their words with marvelous celerity.

Mrs. Jennie smiled and bade them good morning, the way to Miss Letitia's she made a gesture as if she had touched an ill-smelling weed.

"What a power of harm such women can do when they do not mean to a reformer, but I really would like to recall the ducking stool for their benefit. Poor Letitia! I hope she has not chosen a coward."

Her musings ceased as the coachman drew rein before the pretty old-fashioned garden of the Houghtons. Mrs. Jennie was a young woman of the bride-elect, whose fresh and fair complexion had defied the ravages of time. With her bright hazel eyes and wavy light brown hair she might have passed for 35 at most.

"Come into the house, Jennie; it's lovely out here amongst the flowers, but I have some things I wish to show you; the dress has come; I am too old to be married in white satin, so I selected a pink brocade trimmed with lace. I have never had so many pretty clothes made at one time in my life, for I never needed to. I don't think I'm envious, but when I saw all my friends' handsome outfits it occurred to me that it would be an inducement to marry. Do you not like it?"

She lingered the glistening folds lovingly, and Mrs. Alden looked and admired, then said:

"But where did you meet the man you expect to marry, Letitia? I would not give my life into the keeping of an utter stranger."

"You needn't be uneasy about me; he is a very pleasant man, and I'm positive we will get on very well together; as for love, we are not young people and have said nothing about that; but we will do well enough as friends. Did you notice that black and gold visiting silk, Jennie?"

Mrs. Jennie perceived that the bride-to-be preferred to talk about her clothes instead of the man she had promised to marry and made no other effort to drag him into conversation. Miss Letitia brought every article for Mrs. Jennie's inspection and said as that lady rose to go:

"Do stay to lunch; I've so much to tell you yet. I want it understood that I meant what I said when I wrote on the cards I didn't want presents; please make my friends understand that; you will, I know they will want to give me presents; you can't know how glad I am that I am liked, Jennie."

Mrs. Alden would not shake Miss Letitia's faith in the professions of friendship she believed sincere, but when their spiteful comments were recalled it angered her afresh with them.

"I am always at home to give Alyn his lunch; he does not enjoy it when I am absent, Letitia. I shall let it be known that you do not wish presents."

For that purpose Mrs. Jennie drove back by the church, where she made the society disperse. She did not alight, but told them of Miss Letitia's wish. She of the sharp tongue gave a shrill little cackle, and said:

"That means we must give them present fail; she's afraid we won't give anything, and takes that means to make sure."

"Was that the reason you had 'no flowers' on the cards when your daughter graduated? Letitia's bouquet was weighted with a jeweled butterfly. So glad you enlightened me; I have wondered why that clause was inserted, but had no idea it meant exactly opposite what it said. Thanks to you, I understand. It is never too late to learn—wisdom. Good morning, I must go home."

The extreme bonhommie of this speech made the clique stare at one another; they were never sure what Mrs. Alden meant; that her shaft hit the mark there was no doubt. Mrs. Ponsonby gazed after the carriage, and said to her dear familiar friend:

"Mrs. Alden does have the knack of taking one by surprise; she confuses presents? I thought you didn't mean—that is, I didn't intend to own—"

"That you took that way of assuring Sophy a number of bouquets and presents? I thought you didn't mean to say that, dear, did you?" suggested the friend, sweetly.

Mrs. Ponsonby translated the remark as it was intended, and treasured it for future use.

* * * * * * *

Miss Letitia's wedding night had arrived. She was looking extremely handsome, and accepted the effusive compliments of her friends in apparent good faith; they declared she did not look a day over 40.

As yet the groom had not made his appearance. Miss Letitia had excused herself a moment or two, but as the minutes lengthened into an hour without her returning, significant glances were exchanged and the buzz of many voices was heard.

It is astonishing how much pleasure some people derive from the distress or mortification of their friends. Mrs. Ponsonby and her coterie were insinuating that something was wrong, voicing pity which their eyes and countenances belied.

Mrs. Alden was becoming worried over the prolonged absence of Miss Letitia from the room, and wished she would return and silence the malicious tongues.

"She's prevailing on her swain not to become faint-hearted," giggled Mrs. Ponsonby.

Thoroughly exasperated, Mrs. Jennie was about to give a crushing retort, when Miss Letitia reappeared.

She was slightly pale, her demeanor a mixture of regret and dignity, while a blending of defiance was depicted in her erect attitude.

"I've had a telegram from Mr. Langworthy, on business of a family nature, which I shall not be at liberty to divulge indiscriminately, compels him to start for Europe as he sent the message; consequently there will be no marriage to-night. That need not interfere with our enjoyment of the supper; the presents will be returned to their donors tomorrow. Mr. Alden, will you see me to the table? The minister will take you, Jennie."

Her astounding revelation called forth a chorus of ohs and ahs, and a dozen excited women began to ply her with questions, protesting against her returning the presents, but she waved them aside.

"The marriage is indefinitely postponed through no fault of either bride or bridegroom, so you need not imagine he's absconded or jilted me. Under the circumstances I will not keep the presents. Who ever heard of bridal gifts when there is not much likelihood of the marriage being performed? I confess I was very much grim smile that somehow made certain ladies feel uncomfortable, "if the marriage does take place, that I will expect nothing from you. Now, come to supper; that will not be a disappointment, if the wedding is."

She gave her guests no time to discuss her affairs on grounds, but marched them into the dining-room, some wearing from the undiminished pangs of curiosity an expression as if they were being led to instant execution.

Miss Letitia was the life of the party, and the theory that she had been jilted did not gain ground; her explanation was accepted as true—as far as it went. More than one face became blank when Miss Letitia said:

"Jennie, be sure to come around tomorrow and help me pack those presents; some are so—valuable I will not be satisfied until they are returned; fortunately, all are labeled."

"I will come with pleasure, Letitia," replied Mrs. Alden, while Mrs. Ponsonby whispered dolefully, "If she would ask me."

Early next morning Mrs. Jennie accordingly put in her appearance, finding her friend in exceedingly good spirits.

While tying up a gaudy plated cake stand, a gift from Mrs. Ponsonby, Mrs. Alden said:

"Letitia, why return the presents? Were you in earnest when you said there was not much likelihood of there being a marriage?"

Miss Letitia was bending over the bed, replacing a handsome silver ladle in its velvet box.

The constrained position may have been the cause of her heightened color. Her face as she turned toward Mrs. Alden wore conflicting expressions; triumph, shame, and over all a weary, almost defiant look. Her first words were apparently irrelevant.

"I've learned much, Jennie," she said as she folded a dozen fine thread cambric handkerchiefs and placed them with lingering regret in the costly box they came in; "how exquisite these are, and like the donor! Oh, yes, I have learned so much! I had learned since I had sent out those tickets. I've always had a too confiding disposition, and while I'm not now a cynic, I've had eye-openers, plenty of them.

"Going about to different stores, riding windy days, veiled, on the cars, have given me an insight into people's characters that has been both painful and profitable; I needn't tell you whom I mean, for I see you know. I have no regret for them; I am not a sentimental fool; the only regret is self-contempt that I've been taken in by them so long, but I've never outgrown a girlish pleasure in being liked.

"You had your husband and children, and God knows I never begrudged wives and mothers their happiness, for my life had been a healthy, happy one, and so completely am I a spinster that I believe I was born one; I've never seen the man I have ever imagined I could fancy, but there was one thing I did want."

Mrs. Alden had listened sympathetically; as Miss Letitia paused for breath she ventured to speak. "What was that, Letitia?"

"You may laugh, Jennie, if you wish, but that was no more nor less than a trousseau!"

"What? Do you mean that——"

"I mean, and I know it will go no further, that I couldn't have a trousseau without a marriage, and that way why I sent out cards. Don't you understand, Jennie? The marriage could not take place—because there was no bridegroom at all; now it's out."

For once Mrs. Alden was surprised beyond the power of expression, but when she did recover her merry laughter was delightful to hear and was joined by Letitia.

"What a good joke," gasped Mrs. Jennie, "wouldn't it make the Richmond dames open their eyes? It shall go no further, though I would like Alyn to know, if you have no objection. What would Mrs. Ponsonby say?"

"Embellish it until we wouldn't know it; but there's one thing she won't enjoy any more; expectations of sharing my fortune. I shall leave my money as a fund for old maids' trousseaux."

ENGLAND'S ROW WITH ASHANTI.

The "Golden Stool" Figures in the Present Uprising of the Natives.

The British are now sending a few hundred troops from the coast to Cumassi, the old capital of Ashanti, to punish the natives there who have taken up arms against their white rulers, killed and wounded a number of the British police and prevented the missionaries and other whites from leaving the town. An official report received at the coast says the uprising is due to the efforts of the British to obtain possession of the golden stool of Ashanti. At the time King Prempeh surrendered to the British expedition which defeated him four years ago, it was asserted that the King had buried the golden stool with thousands of dollars' worth of other valuable property, hoping that some time he might be able to regain these treasures and use them to his own advantage.

The golden stool was the Ashanti substitute for a throne, and it was reputed to be made for the most part of gold. It was a large article of furniture and was perhaps worth some thousands of dollars. The British have been searching for this valuable relic and in fact have been digging holes far and wide around Cumassi in the hope of unearthing other treasures.

A great deal of gold was produced in Ashanti for many years and most of it found its way into the hands of the King and the nobles. The precious metal was worked up into rudely fashioned jewelry or adornments for the attire and furniture of the wealthy class and a great many of these products of the native goldsmiths were buried with every man of importance. The natives say their fathers have believed for hundreds of years that the burial of gold in their graves assured them of great blessings in the next world; and white men who have visited the country say that gold to the value of $5,000 or more, is hidden in many a grave. Perhaps these stories are exaggerated, but at any rate, there has been in the past three years, a good deal of this sort of gold mining near Cumassi.

It is possible that the whites in their efforts to bring the golden stool to light have been getting quite near the object of their search and this fact may have incited natives who are in the secret to begin disquarrel with the foreigners. King Prempeh is now in exile in Sierra Leone, far from his native land, and though he promised, when he gained the British to make peace with him, that he would reveal the hiding places of his buried treasures, he did not keep his word. He is still permitted to retain the rude but valuable jewelry which was in his possession when he surrendered, and he is quite a gorgeous object when he shows himself in state at Freetown wearing his yellow satin trousers and a weight of gold ornaments that makes him appear like a beast of burden.

SOME OTHER KIND PREFERRED.

Your system is generally run down, said Dr. Kanard, the eminent specialist, but I think I can promise a cure in a short time, if you follow directions. Would you prefer a home treatment?

I think not, responded Mr. Meeker, involuntarily lowering his voice. "It's—it's my home treatment, I am afraid, that really ails me.

ABUSIVE.

Mrs. Rings—You must be careful what you say to the cook, dear, or she will leave.

Bongo—Why, was I hard on her?

Mrs. Rings—Yes; you called her a fool.

Why, when she wants to look down on him she won't have to look up.

THE JUDGE'S ADVICE.

Given to a Man Who Wavered Between Religion and Politics.

A well known western representative in congress, pleading an engagement, left a small group of talkers in an up town hotel lobby, and an elderly man, whom he had introduced to the party, made bold to tell a story about the departed.

"I have known him," he said, "ever since he was a boy, and when he came out of college he was undecided whether to become a lawyer and politician or go to a theological seminary and become a clergyman. He was fond of politics and thought that with a little law and more religion on the side he might become a great moral reformer. You know that's the way most all very young men feel when they undertake politics for the first time.

"However, before he had had time to determine finally what he would do, his friends came after him to run for the legislature, as he had the availability and a pretty fair amount of cash. This brought him face to face with the question he had been much disturbed over, and he went to Judge Blank, a veteran in politics and a man of the highest character, for assistance in solving the problem. He stated his case in full to the judge, and the grand old man put his hand on the young man's shoulder.

"'My boy,' he said, as only he could say it, 'it can't be politics and religion. It must be one or the other. You can't fit yourself for heaven and for the legislature at the same time, and there's no use trying. That is all I can say, and you will have to make your own choice.'"

A KAFFIR SMOKER.

The Native Women Are Enthusiastic Devotees of the Weed.

In South Africa the native women smoke incessantly. Your native servant smokes as she cooks and as she washes. The tobacco she likes is rank. The dainty cigarette an English or Russian lady of fashion enjoys, smoked through a quill so that no alcoholic stain either teeth or fingers, would be smeared at by a Kaffir. "Give me a pipe and something in it I can taste," is in effect what she says.

The men Kaffirs are beyond tobacco. They smoke something so rebement that it makes them cough and sputter, lose their breath, choke and sneeze to an alarming degree. They like snuff, too, and are fond of offering and taking pinches of it ("schnif" they call it) when they meet and visit one another.

Regarding tobacco as too mild for their taste, the Kaffirs take another weed and smoke that. They proceed to arrange a smoking party by squatting on the ground and getting ready their "pipe," a cow horn with a thin tube in it inserted half way down at right angles to the horn. The end of the tube is in a basin, and it is from it that the smoker sucks the strong stuff that makes him incapable of anything but a series of coughs and chokes for some time after he has had his turn at the pipe, which is passed round from man to man until a perfect chorus of coughs rends the air.

The tobacco the Boers smoke looks like poor tea and is peculiar in flavor, yet Englishmen who have become used to it acquire such a taste for it that they never ask for any other kind.—London Mail.

Fasting.

Personal experience is the best teacher. I have fasted 48 hours at a time without the slightest discomfort, but drank that period many gallons of water, of the plainest, most Croton kind. I once had acquaintance of a pig that fasted 160 days. A dog can fast two months without being much the worse. Rabbits live three weeks without food, while cold blooded animals can go for years without eating.

The vitality of the lower creation in hibernation passes into a kind of trance, so we shall not count him. The alligator likewise "dies" in the long months of winter, craving no food. There is a fish called the father lasher that can live a month out of water. That is fasting. We have heard the tradition about the toad that was sealed in a rock for 5,000 years and hopped about in lively fashion when released from his archæonomous prison. A horse has been known to fast for a month.—Exchange.

Is Alaska Growing Warmer?

Prospective visitors and gold seekers in the Klondike region may extract some comfort from the discovery, made by the Harriman Alaska expedition, that most of the glaciers which abound in that territory are receding. The fact is an indication that the general weather there is growing warmer. If it were growing colder the glaciers would be advancing, while if it were about the same one year with another they would maintain the same general position, neither creeping nearer to the sea nor melting away from their terminal moraines. The rate of glacial recession is so slow, however, that for overcoats and warm sleeping bags are likely to remain as a part of the necessary equipment of Alaskan travel for some years to come.—Leslie's Weekly.

COMMON BUT COURTEOUS.

I notice that the new husband of the Princess Stephanie is much shorter than his bride.

That's nice of him.

How so?

Why, when she wants to look down on him she won't have to look up.

NIGHT IN THE WOODS

EFFECT OF THE AWFUL SOLITUDE WHEN FIRST EXPERIENCED.

The Awe Inspiring Stillness Makes Sleep an Impossibility For Many and Brings Visions of Terror to Haunt the Tired Senses.

The awe inspiring stillness of the first night in camp! You lie on your back vainly courting sleep. Vainly, I say, because of the very intense stillness which should woo it, but does not, as you are unused to it. Your guide lies motionless, only his heavy breathing denoting that he is alive. It is second nature to him to sleep in the heart of the wilderness, and his tired body no more than touches the sweet scented pine boughs when he slumbers.

It will be so with you when you have accustomed yourself to the preternatural quiet so different from the rumble of passing vehicles over paved streets and which affects you not. But tonight your eyelids are opened wide, and instead of the blissful forgetfulness which you anticipated, your every sense is on the alert to catch and divine the meaning of the strange noises which fill the woods of northern Maine.

In front of your rude camp, which is left open, the smoldering dre smokes and crackles, each snap of charred embers sounding to your ears like the report of artillery. It is a strange sensation, this first night in the woods. Away up on the mountain side a fox barks. The weird howl echoes and re-echoes down the mountain side until it seems to reach the lake and float over its glasslike surface until it is swallowed up in the dark water.

A night owl makes bold to disturb your already troubled mind by perching on a big pine not a hundred feet away and sending forth a screech that curdles your blood until you realize what it really is. Directly back of you is the lake shore.

Suddenly comes a soft tread over dried brush. Surely some one is stealing up to your camp. You rise to a sitting position and await the marauder's next move. Then once more you hear the snap, snap, snap of his feet as he cautiously draws near. Louder and louder, you cannot be mistaken this time; this is no trick of the imag