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STRANGELY WEDDED.

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CHAPTER VII.

A GHOST OF THE PAST.

"When anything remains to be explained rather confess ignorance, then offer an explanation which explains nothing."

The hut which had been occupied by Major Lawrence happened to be a particularly good one and Major Dennis set about having it well cleaned and decorated at once.

"My wife has a fancy to live in camp," he explained to Jack, "and as we shall be here for nearly two years, we may as well have it made as comfortable as possible. We've had furnished houses before, but there don't seem to be any decent ones in Chertsey and I detest living in an hotel—one never knows how one may be annoyed or who is staying in the house."

"Oh, it's much more comfortable in camp, Sir," said Jack, who had not been long enough in the service to hate a barrack—"it's so much handier in every way; and the Major's hut is such an exceptionally good one, and the garden quite a little paradise. Major Lawrence took infinite pains with it."

"Yes, and my wife is very fond of a bit of garden," Major Dennis replied. "So I am having the place papered and painted and made as comfortable as possible, and you must help my wife to get settled. I'm told you're a great hand at anything of that sort."

"Well, Sir, I'll try to make myself useful, anyhow," returned Jack modestly. "I've been helping Mrs. Stratton."

"Oh, yes. She showed us her furniture," said the Major taking the words out of Jack's mouth, "and though Mrs. Dennis won't exactly want you to do that sort of thing, I daresay she'll be very pleased if you'll advise her about one or two little things, her pictures and plants and so on."

"I shall be only too delighted, Sir," said Jack in all good faith.

"I am really out of all that sort of thing," the Major continued with an air of great good humor, "and when I get into any kind of a shop, except it's a saddler's or a boot shop, I always feel like the proverbial bull among the china. I daresay I look like it too, ha, ha."

He walked away laughing heartily and Jack Trevor stood looking curiously after him.

"Well, you're a queer fish, upon my word you are. And to think you married my little friend, Ethel Mordaunt! Poor little soul, no wonder she looks so miserable every now and then and talks about Blankhampton and the Cliffe, as if the old days were paradise."

Then he, too, turned on his heel and went about his own business, which at that moment happened to be something concerning one of his horses. While he was talking to the groom, Monty Carlton passed the door and seeing him came in, and as men do, they looked at the sleek satin-coated horses together.

"You've heard the news," said Carlton, as they walked towards the Mess together.

"No. I've heard nothing except that the Dennises are going to live in camp," Jack answered.

"Oh, I've heard that, too. You knew her when she was a child, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"What did she marry him for?"

"Oh! I don't fancy she had much choice about it," Jack said carelessly. "Her mother was the sort of woman who does not give anyone within her range too much rope. As a little girl, Mrs. Dennis was let to go her own way pretty much, but as a young lady I believe she had the devil's own time. You see the title [illegible] good deal with her."

"With the mother, I suppose."

"Of course."

"H'm! What an odd thing it is that titles do weigh so heavily with women, as they do. I should [illegible] all the titles under the sun would never have gilded a blatant brute like that, let alone it's being only a title in prospective."

"Yes. It's rough on her anyway," said Jack with a sigh. "By the bye, what was your news?"

"Oh! [illegible] is going to be married."

"[illegible] you don't say so! And who is [illegible]?"

"[illegible] Drummond," said Carlton, looking [illegible] in front of him.

"[illegible] Drummond! Nonsense," cried Jack.

"[illegible] true," Carlton [illegible] positively. "I had it from [illegible] this morning."

[illegible]

"[illegible] something like [illegible] I had to apologise [illegible] I didn't [illegible] anything personal, [illegible] that soldiers [illegible] out of the [illegible]."

[illegible] a jolly old [illegible] and [illegible] in love [illegible] just think of [illegible].

"[illegible] My dear chap, I can't [illegible] imagine any woman [illegible] knowing her [illegible] to be in love with her."

"[illegible] the chance fast enough, [illegible] Carlton calmly.

"[illegible] I daresay they would. But, Monty, [illegible]," laughed Jack. "You [illegible] word for this, you'll go [illegible] well enough, and then one of these [illegible] you'll get bitten before you know where you are; and oh! by Jove, won't you have it bad, no mistake about it."

"[illegible]," returned Carlton as [illegible] door of the mess room, "[illegible] I shall have it badly. You [illegible] quite right about that—quite right."

[illegible] about two hours after this, Jack [illegible] was walking briskly along the narrow High Street in which the principal shops at Chertsey may be found, when he literally ran [illegible] Mrs. Dennis who came out of [illegible] attended only by the majestic Crummles.

"My dear Ethel, I ask a thousand pardons [illegible] I had no idea that you or anyone [illegible] was coming out of that shop. I didn't hurt you, did I?"

"Not a bit, Jack," she said laughing. "And if you had it wouldn't have been your fault. Where are you going?"

"With you, if I may," he answered promptly.

"Oh, yes, indeed you may. I am going to the florist's and then to a sweet little shop where they have odds and ends, to make my drawing-room look pretty."

"The Major tells me that you are going to be tremendously grand in your new quarters," Jack said as they walked along together.

"Oh! I don't think so. I have chosen very cheap simple furniture and we are obliged to have the hut papered and painted. I cannot think," she went on wonderingly, "Why Cosmo wanted to live in camp. He has always set his face against anything of the kind before [illegible] always insisted on having a furnished house."

"But he could not get one in Chertsey."

"Oh! yes [illegible] a nice little house to let [illegible] Cosmo would not hear of it. He says I shall enjoy [illegible] life and so I dare say I shall," she added smiling.

"I think it will be glorious to have you in camp," Jack declared. "And do you know, Ethel, I do think it is so awfully good of the Major to be so open and jolly about our old friendship. Some men in his place might have said, 'Oh! I'm not going to have any old playfellows hanging around' and that would have made just all the difference in our friendship, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, that is so," Mrs. Dennis assented.

It must be owned that Jack Trevor took full advantage of the Major's permission [illegible] he should make himself useful to Mrs. Dennis; he went with her that afternoon from one shop to another, helped her in the choice of various things, carried her smaller parcels, those at least that she wished to take with her, and finally escorted her back to the hotel and gracefully accepted her offer of a cup of tea.

And over the cup of tea and a plate of hot buttered muffins, they had a delightful half-hour's chat before anyone came to disturb them—a half-hour during which Crummles sat on the sofa beside his mistress and Jack took charge of the tea-tray and ministered to her comfort. They went back to old times, of course, and Ethel took off her sailor hat and flung it down on the bank of the river which ran at the bottom of the Cliffe gardens.

But no time, however delightful, lasts for ever—the half-hour came to an end and visitors were shown in—Mr. and Mrs. Stratton. Mrs. Dennis jumped up, upsetting Crummles in her haste, and Jack got on to his feet likewise, and than there followed a few minutes of somewhat formal conversation which in turn was interrupted by the entrance of Major Dennis himself. He gave the Strattons a very loud welcome with that kind of manner which had made Carlton describe him as blatant, and Jack Trevor somehow became impressed with an idea that he was annoyed to find anyone there and was wishing them all at perdition. His words, however, contradicted this.

"It's so good of you to come and see my wife," he said to Mrs. Stratton. "Ethel, have you no tea?"

"I have ordered some fresh tea, what we had here was almost cold," she answered, then looked at him in an anxious way, and presently Jack heard her whisper, "Is anything the matter? Are you not well?"

"Oh! yes—yes," he replied impatiently, "don't worry me. I'm all right."

Yet presently, when Jack carried him a cup of tea, he noticed that his hand was trembling and that he set it on the corner of the chimney-shelf where he left it untasted. He kept on talking however, fast and loud until the Strattons had betaken themselves away—then Mrs. Dennis's anxiety would be restrained no longer.

"Cosmo, I am sure something is the matter," she said.

"Not at all," he answered, "but the fact was, I saw—I saw something that turned me completely over—that was all."

"An accident?" she asked.

"No—a ghost!" he answered.

"Cosmo?" she cried.

Major Dennis began to laugh noisily. "There, I didn't quite mean that—but I did see a woman so like a woman I knew years ago, that—well, it give me a turn."

"And was she dead?"

"The woman I saw in the street just now was alive enough—that is to all outward appearances. The woman I knew years ago I don't know whether she is alive or dead."

"Perhaps it was the same woman."

"Perhaps, but I think not. I ——" and then a violent shiver took possession of him and the sentence remained unfinished.

"Cosmo, you are ill," Mrs. Dennis cried. "I am sure of it."

"Oh! no—but——"

"Have a strong brandy and soda, Sir," suggested Jack, who had jumped at once to the conclusion that the Major had unexpectedly fallen in with an old love, whose presence might prove to be exceedingly awkward for him.

"Yes, ring the bell, will you please," said the Major, with an air of relief, then turned round to his wife, "I hope I didn't frighten you, Ethel, but I was reminded suddenly of a most horrible episode in my life and—and it turned me over a bit."

His tone brought something very like tears into Mrs. Dennis's eyes. "What was it?" she asked in a shaking voice.

"Well, I was spending a long leave abroad—on the Riviera to be particular. It was a deuce of a while ago. I was only about two-and-twenty in fact. And one day I was with some people when the conversation turned on fortune-telling. I happened to say I didn't believe in it. I didn't—I don't now, it's all the most utter rot imaginable. However, a young lady of the party asked me to show her my hand and said that she would tell me my fortune, and that whether I believed it or not it would come true all the same."

"And what did she tell you?" Ethel asked.

"That I had the devil's own temper for one thing," he answered shortly, "which was true enough."

"But there's nothing very wonderful in her telling you that," cried his wife wonderingly, thinking that a woman who couldn't see that would indeed be a poor hand at fortune-telling.

"She told me a lot more, and the last thing was that I should die by the hand of a woman before I was fifty."

"Cosmo!" Ethel cried. "And you saw that woman to-day?"

"Or some one very much like her," the Major replied. "And silly as it may seem, I would rather have seen the Devil himself."

He tossed off the brandy and soda which the waiter brought him and declared himself better. "I feel like an ass now. I wish I had not told you," he said with a glance at his wife's scared face. "I daresay it wasn't the woman at all, only some one a bit like her. I'll trust you, Trevor, not to say a word about it."

CHAPTER VIII.

A PLATONIC FRIENDSHIP.

"The road of love is that which has no beginning nor end; take heed to thyself, man, ere thou place foot on it."

"Jack," said Carlton a few days afterwards, "come and sit by me. I've got something to tell you."

The officers were all streaming into the mess room for luncheon, and Jack Trevor took his seat beside Carlton smiling already in anticipation of something good to come.

"What is it, Monty?" he asked.

"Dennis said to Jervis yesterday," naming the two majors—"'Jervis you're an ass.'

"'Dennis,' said Jervis, 'you're drunk.'

"'Yes, I know I am,' answered Dennis, 'but I shan't be drunk to-morrow, and you'll always be a fool, Jervis.'"

Trevor burst out laughing. "Did you hear that yourself?"

"Yes, I heard it from Quin."

"But you didn't hear Dennis and Jervis?"

"Well no, I didn't," Carlton admitted, "but it has a great air of probability about it."

"Oh! it's a good story, I'll allow," Trevor returned with a laugh.

"By the bye," said Carlton, "I'm going over to Highflight to-day to see a mare Hutton has for sale. Will you go with me?"

"Why does Hutton want to sell her?" Jack asked.

"Not quite up to his weight," Carlton answered carelessly, "he has put on flesh awfully the last six months, but he says the mare is just as clever as daylight and as handsome as paint."

"The usual thing," Jack laughed.

"Well I am going to have a look at her anyway," said Carlton decidedly. "Will you go or not?"

"This afternoon?"

"Yes. I'm going over directly after lunch."

"Well, I'm awfully sorry, old chap. I should have liked to go immensely but I can't to-day."

"Why not?"

"Because I've promised to go somewhere else," said Jack mildly.

"Ugh!" grunted Carlton in disgust. "Where?"

"I'm going to Mrs. Dennis's," returned Jack. "She's got an afternoon on. Didn't she ask you?"

"Oh, yes, she asked me right enough," said Carlton crossly, "but I've got more sense than to go to what is euphoniously called 'an afternoon' in a stuffy hut with fifteen women all wanting tea and only two drivelling idiots of men to give it to 'em."

"What an old bear you are," cried Jack with a gay laugh.

"Yes, I know—but I'd rather be a bear than a cat's-paw any day," the other growled. "You look out what you're doing my friend. I've seen a good many of these tremendous friendships between subalterns and field officers' wives before, but I never knew one that didn't come to a bad end sooner or later."

"Oh, pooh—Monty, old man, you're sane enough on some points but you're as mad as a March hare on certain others, and on women you are maddest of all."

"You mark my words," Carlton persisted—"and when anything happens, don't forget that I warned you."

"All right," carelessly. "Only I wish I was as sure of the command of the Fifteenth as I am that nothing of that sort will happen at all. Why man alive, Mrs. Dennis and I were children together, babies almost. I've known her all my life; we couldn't get up an 'affair' if we tried, and I'm sure we shall not try."

"H'm—of course not—of course not—they never do—I've seen plenty of that sort of thing," returned Carlton gloomily.

Jack Trevor, however, being a young man of decided views, not to say exceedingly strong-willed, was not to be growled out of his friendship with the Major's wife. Indeed if it had effect of any kind, Carlton's opposition only fanned the flame and made him the more determined to see as much of his old playfellow as the circumstances of their lives permitted.

And it must be admitted from the very beginning that the circumstances of their lives allowed of a good deal of intercourse. Jack very soon found that Major Dennis did not in the smallest degree permit the fact of his wife's existence to hamper his movements. Within the boundaries of her own hut Mrs. Dennis was apparently supreme—that is to say she asked whom she chose there, she went out when she liked, and came in to suit her own pleasure. She had her own carriages, a neat single brougham and a very smart victoria, and very seldom indeed was Major Dennis to be seen in either of them.

But outside their hut Major Dennis seemed to consider that his wife had no claim upon him whatever—he frequently went up to London, but beyond telegraphing his address to the orderly-room, he did not often trouble to communicate with his wife during his absences.

"The Major gone to London *again*," remarked Jack Trevor one day, in accents of involuntary surprise—"but—but how is it you are not going, Ethel? Don't you like London?"

"Yes—I am very fond of London," she replied, "but Cosmo did not suggest my going—and—and—I like Chertsey very much."

"Well, I dare say London is a bit hot and dusty at this time of year," Jack rejoined feeling that he had trodden on what must be painful ground to her. "And after all, Chertsey isn't half bad, is it? Supposing we go down to the Recreation Ground and watch the people—the band is playing, you know."

"Oh! I should like it immensely," she cried, brightening up in a moment. "Shall we walk down?"

"Just as you like. I'll go and get out of my paint and come back for you, eh?"

"Yes—that will be quite charming."

Therefore, about half an hour afterwards, Mr. Montagu Carlton who was smoking a last pipe before going out somewhere, had the gratification of seeing his great friend and chum, Jack Trevor, faultlessly arrayed in an exceedingly light suit, a white hat, flower in his button-hole and a jaunty air of enjoyment about his whole bearing, go across the open space between the officers' quarters and the married officers' huts and open the little gate which led into Mrs. Dennis's tiny garden. Then after a few minutes he saw them come out together and go happily off in the direction of the gates.

Carlton followed them with disgusted eyes until they turned the corner of the mess hut and were out of sight. "Pretty business brewing," he muttered. "The Major off to Town—leaves his wife behind—Trevor consoles her, old friend, and all that humbug. Ugh! hope they won't want me to condole with any of 'em, whatever happens; and something will happen before long mark my words. I suppose he's telling her this moment that *he'd* never go to London and leave her in Chertsey camp all by her little self. Ugh! it's disgusting, disgusting. And to think it should be poor old Trevor, of all others, that's never given a woman a second thought since he's been in the regiment. Bah, it's simply sickening."

However, as it happened, Jack Trevor was saying nothing of the kind to Mrs. Dennis. At that precise moment he was saying—"And how is it you go home so seldom?"

Mrs. Dennis blushed a little. "Cosmo doesn't care for Blankhampton, and since Lord Frothingham married he does not get on so well with my mother as he did. And really, as I tell her, he couldn't help his uncle marrying again and having children and all that."

"Of course not. Then why don't you go by yourself?"

Mrs. Dennis shook her head. "No—my mother and I get on very well when we are apart, but—but—well, I don't care to go home much. I am best here."

"Mother, I don't care for Major Dennis," she had wailed in her despair—"I never shall care for him, never could care. It is wicked to marry a man you loathe———"

"Ethel,"—cried Mrs. Mordaunt—"you are really quite indelicate. I can listen to no more of this raving—you are nervous, hysterical, unstrung, but I should not be doing my duty as your mother, if I allowed you to say any more. If you felt like this about Captain Dennis, you were very wrong indeed to accept him—indeed, I do not understand your doing so. As it is, everything has gone too far to draw back now—the Mordaunts never break faith—and your father would be the first to blame you if you disgraced him like that. Pray, let me hear no more of this—you had better go to your room and try to forget that such words have ever passed your lips."

Ethel got up from her knees without a word, with no more than one long reproachful look at her mother, a look which saw all too plainly through her assumption of sham indignation. And in that moment all her girlhood seemed to shrivel up and die, all her love of home seemed to fade into nothing in the oppressive magnitude of her despair.

How well she remembered it all that bright summer afternoon as she and Jack Trevor walked down to the Recreation Ground together. She and Jack, just as they had been used to go down to the river's bank at home, there to sit watching for fish that they seldom caught—the best of friends, the most faithful and entertaining of companions. Well, well, it was all gone by for ever and, after all, they were friends still—that was something—it was more than something to her, indeed although she hardly owned as much to herself, it was nevertheless true, that their friendship was almost everything to her.

However, as she reminded herself bitterly, it was no use thinking about that now—the past was past and what was done could not be undone. After all, her life might have been more unendurable than it was, her husband let her go her own way pretty much, if he neglected her and led her in some senses a dog's life, treating her as an incident, a chattel to ornament his house, feeding her and clothing her, leaving her behind when he did not want her with him, intimating that she might go with him when her presence would not actually annoy him—at all events he did not trouble her with jealousy, and she was, on the whole, free to take her amusement how and when she liked.

So she decided in her own mind that she would make the best of her life and enjoy herself as well as she could, and since Jack Trevor was now in the same regiment and Major Dennis did not seem to mind her friendship with him, why life might not be so dull a business, after all.

For a long time they sat upon a garden seat under the shade of a group of big trees in the Recreation Ground, listening to the music, watching the people and chatting on all manner of subjects.

"I wonder who that strange-looking woman with the dark eyes is," she said at last, as a middle-sized dark-complexioned woman passed them for the third time.

"I don't know—I scarcely know a soul in Chertsey," Jack replied.

"And you have been here——?"

"Oh! not two months before you came—and I never make calls, except very occasionally on our own ladies; and as I don't go about much, of course I don't get to know people very much either. I don't fancy that lady belongs to the place."

"Why?"

"Because I've been watching her all the time we've been here and I havn't seen her speak to a soul yet. I havn't seen anyone take off his hat to her either."

"Then I daresay she is a stranger, or perhaps the wife of someone on the staff and only just come here—like ourselves, in fact."

"Very likely—oh, very likely," but all the same, Jack did not think that she looked much like an officer's wife and was not sorry when Ethel Dennis rose declaring that it was time for them to go home.

Strangely enough, the dark-eyed lady was leaving the Ground just as they were and twice they passed and re-passed each other during the time they were traversing the length of High Street.

"She seems very much interested in you, Jack," Ethel whispered teasingly when she passed them for the second time. "I suppose all soldiers have the most wonderfully romantic affairs every now and then—at least so Cosmo always tells me."

"Don't know, I'm sure," returned Jack rather shortly "some fellows may, but I never had an affair of any kind in my life. I never saw the woman before—and it isn't a bit of good her starting anything romantic with me, I'm no good at that sort of thing."

Mrs. Dennis laughed merrily. "What a disappointment you must be whenever you go to a fresh town—why, you are a perfect detrimental, to be reckoned out of the running always. There, now she is looking in that window. She wants us to pass her again."

"Then let us look in this window until she is bound to go on—she can't stand looking in a window for long."

"Neither can we."

"No, but we can talk and put in a much longer time than she can—much longer," he answered.

Already they had stopped before the window of a very old-fashioned shop filled with old pictures, china, and other curiosities. The dark lady was looking at a jeweller's and was apparently deeply interested in what she saw there.

"Oh! there is such a lovely old plate—I should so like it," Ethel cried, "don't you see, the old Lowestoft—I must have that—I really must."

"Then come in and get it," Jack replied. "It will give our mysterious friend a chance of coming in after us to look at old china."

They went in to the shop and Mrs. Dennis was soon lost in admiration over half-a-dozen old plates which were quickly brought out for her inspection. Jack was interested too, not in the old plates for he had no eye for such things except as they hung on the dainty walls of Mrs. Dennis's little drawing-room, but in Ethel herself, who was wildly enthusiastic over all manner of quaint things and was then softly feeling the old plates with the tips of her delicate fingers very much as a blind man passes his fingers over the face of a person whose lineaments he wishes to be familiar with. And just then the little bell above the old-fashioned door went tinkle-tinkle and the two looked up at the same moment to see the dark-complexioned lady enter the shop.

"What is your pleasure, Madam?" asked the little woman who ruled over this quaint domain of antiquities.

"Will you be so obliging as to show me those miniatures which are in the window?" the lady replied.

"Certainly, Madam—pray, take a seat," answered the mistress of the shop.

Mrs. Dennis and Jack looked at one another involuntarily. It was a refined voice, clear and sweet, and there was a foreign ring about it—not a markedly foreign accent, but scarcely more than that resonance of the R which marks the English spoken rat ou own Court.

There were five miniatures upon the tray which the little woman took out of the window, and she set it down on the glass counter in front of the stranger. "Will you look at these, Madam, whilst I attend to this lady?" she said.

The stranger bent her head, and began to examine the little portraits carefully. Mrs. Dennis held up a plate as its owner returned to her.

"I will have this one—and those two and I think that one, also. How much will they be?"

"Twenty-five shillings, Madam," the little woman answered—"I will send them this evening."

"No, do them up in paper and I will take them," Mrs. Dennis returned, and in a tone which admitted of no further argument.

They went away in less than five minutes, Jack Trevor carrying the parcel by the string.

"Do you know who that lady is?" asked the stranger.

"Oh! yes, that is Mrs. Dennis."

"Dennis! Oh! She is very pretty. Is that her husband?"

"Oh! no, that is one of the officers—I don't know his name. No, Major Dennis is much older—very much older."

"Ah! Major Dennis! H'm! Well—now tell me the price of these miniatures. What are they?"

"They are all twenty-five shillings each, Madam, except that one which is not so well painted, I can let you have that for twelve shillings."

"I thank you, no. I will have these two," picking out the two best on the tray.

"I see you understand miniatures," said the little curio-dealer with a smile.

"I understand many things," said the stranger quietly.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Condition of Dakota Farmers.

Mr. W. A. Webster of Leeds, Ont., who has been acting as the agent of the Dominion Department of Agriculture during the past three years for the purpose of reporting on the condition of Canadians settled in the western United States, and furnishing information to them as to the facilities for homesteading in Manitoba and the territories, returned to Ottawa the other day. In conversation he said he went out to Dakota towards the end of last month and since that time had travelled for several hundred miles in South Dakota. The condition of the farmers there, he said, could not well be worse. The crops have been almost a total failure, caused by drought, and in July by a hot wind in particular. The farmers told me that at the beginning of July the crops looked as if they might produce something in the shape of a crop, but a hot wind—a kind of sirocco—came about the 20th and burnt up everything. You must bear in mind, however, that what they call a fair crop our farmers in Manitoba would consider barely half a crop. In Dakota they would be well satisfied with eight bushels of wheat to the acre. South Dakota has been settled for seven years, and during that time the farmers have had one or two fair crops, but matters have gradually been getting worse. Last year their crop produced nothing, and this year is simply a repetition of last. In South Dakota I saw hundreds of farms, and, having stood around the threshing machines, I am satisfied that the wheat crop in that state cannot possibly exceed on an average five bushels to the acre. Dozens of the farmers told me that they had finished threshing, and that their yield in many cases would not exceed one bushel to the acre. Not a man reported to me as high an average as four bushels. Scores told me that the time had come when they must get out. I attended a meeting of farmers held at Westport, Brown county, South Dakota, at which the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

"Whereas the crops in this section have been failing for years, and for the past two years have proved almost a total failure, we have decided that the time has arrived that we must emigrate somewhere, and having now heard W. A. Webster's description of Manitoba's agricultural resources; resolved that Mr. George Lounsberry be, and he is hereby appointed a delegate to accompany Mr. Webster to Manitoba and the western territories, and carefully examine their resources and the opportunities they possess for farmers and their families to settle, and report the facts to the farmers of this district on his return. Carried unanimously.

(Signed) J. Dymock, Secretary.
H. A. Jester, Chairman.

"The gathering was a large and representative one and consisted of farmers drawn from all parts of Brown and Macpherson counties. The resolution shows just what the feeling of the settlers is, and I could substantiate it if necessary by a score of clippings, from the Dakota newspapers, and Mr. Lounsberry, I should say, is a Canadian by birth. He comes from Elgin county, Ontario. He went with me to Manitoba, and I can tell you he was more than pleased with what he saw there. From what I saw and heard hundreds would willingly leave the country if only they had the means to get out. Many of them have their farms mortgaged up to the very last dollar, the rate of interest on real estate averaging 15 per cent., while on goods and chattels it runs all the way up from 20 to 60 and even 100 per cent. I tell you it makes one's heart bleed to see the way they have suffered. No wonder that many of them, loaded down with debt, are skipping out. Men whom you might see to-day are gone to-morrow. The committee of five which wrote from Leola, Macpherson county, to the Toronto board of trade last year asking for aid are all gone. I could not find a trace of one of them this year."

Russians at the Holy Sepulchre.

Russian pilgrims thronged the great building everywhere; peasants in fur cap, and caftan, and heavy boots, just as they had trudged from the steppe and the wilds; homely little women, with shawls or kerchiefs covering their heads. Their intent faces, full of worship and awe, their undoubting, untroubled devotion, the rapture in some, the overwhelming emotion in others, the passion of entreaty in which some of them were pouring out their hearts, were half as impressive to behold as if the pilgrim of another sort had been as sure as they were of everything he saw. One follows these poor peasants with wondering admiration and sympathy; there are perhaps some lookers-on who pity their all-belief, but there are many others who will find in the faces of these simple brethren the best inspiration and comfort that this great shrine can give them. When I penetrated into the strait chapel of the holy tomb, on an occasion when the crowd was less than usual, there was one woman with a basketful of books, pictures, crosses, and other little sacred things, meant, one could not doubt, to fill a far-distant village with holy memorials, at once tokens of human love and symbols of the deepest mysteries, which she was placing to hallow them upon the stone of the sepulchre; while another on her knees was praying, unconscious of all about her, in an agony of supplication, with moving hands and rocking form.

One could not understand the half-audible flood of broken words, but the eloquence of the hands, now held out in entreaty as if to a visible listener, now pressed upon the beating breast, now clasped in beseeching earnestness, could not be mistaken. What was her prayer? For the pardon of her own sins, or for some one dearer than herself, whose soul or whose life hung in the balance? He alone knew to whom, in fond human confidence of being nearer to Him in that spot where he had lain in death, she was pouring out her heart. That God might grant to her the answer and the consolation the granting of her petition, was the echo that rose from the soul of the lookers-on! We steal away in the gloom with only this and no more individual sentiment in our heart. She has gone home by this time, retracing the weary steps of her pilgrimage to the far-distant banks of the Volga or the Neva, over leagues and leagues of unknown roads, footsore and exhausted with the long, long, terrible journey. Perhaps some time or other, in the ages to come, we shall hear whether she got the thing for which she prayed.

YOUNG FOLKS

The Scarecrow.

It was a regular Scarecrow-man,
Made on the old and well-known plan:
A cross of sticks on a garb forlorn,
That stood on guard in the field of corn.
And, indeed, it made the old farmer smile
As he put it up and whistled the while;
It would look to the crows so very ferocious,
So truly astounding and atrocious
That it tickled his fancy to think how they
Would catch a glimpse and flutter away.

Well, two black crows sat off on a tree,
And the young crow said to the old one, "See!
Now, what is that frightful thing out there?
It's enough any honest crow to scare!"
But the old crow chuckled and then looked wise,
Shook in his feathers and winked his eyes;
Something tickled him, but if 'twas a joke
His voice didn't show it a bit when he spoke,
As looking down at the younger crow
He said, "What is it?" "Ah! don't you know?

Why, that, as we wise ones all suppose,
Is the special patron saint of the crows!
We watch for his coming every year,
To tell when the Feast of the Corn is here.
See how he stands with his arms stretched out!
He is calling the crows from all about!
Such a kind invitation is most alluring—
So very cordial and reassuring!
I think we had better accept—don't you?"
And down to the field of corn they flew.

WIDE AWAKE.

The First Chew.

The boy said it was a peculiar kind of tobacco, and was known as molasses tobacco because it was so sweet. The other boys did not ask how he came to know its name, or where he got it—boys never ask anything that it would be well for them to know—but they accepted his theory and his further statement that was of a mildness singularly adapted to learners without misgiving. The boy was himself chewing vigorously on a large quid, and launching the juice from his lips right and left like a grown person, and my boy took as large a bit as his benefactor bade him. He found it as sweet as he had been told it was, and he acknowledged the aptness of its name of molasses tobacco. It seemed to him a golden opportunity to acquire a noble habit on easy terms. He let the quid rest in his cheek, as he had seen men do, when he was not crushing it between his teeth, and for some moments he poled his plank up and down the canalboat with a sense of triumph that nothing marred.

Then all of a sudden he began to feel pale. The boat seemed to be going round and the sky wheeling overhead. The sun was dodging about very strangely. Drops of sweat burst from the boy's forehead; he let fall his pole and said that he thought he would go home. The fellow who gave him the tobacco began to laugh and the other fellows to mock, but my boy did not mind them. Somehow, he did not know how he got out of the canal boat and started homeward, but at every step the ground rose as high as his knees before him, and then, when he got his foot high enough and began to put it down, the ground was not there. He was deathly sick, as he reeled and staggered on, and when he reached home and showed himself, white and haggard, to his frightened mother, he had scarcely strength enough to gasp out a confession of his attempt to retrieve the family honor by learning to chew tobacco. In another moment nature came to his relief, and then he fell into a deep sleep which lasted the whole afternoon, so that it seemed to him the next day when he woke up, glad to find himself alive if not so very lively.

Perhaps he had swallowed some of the poisonous juice of the tobacco; perhaps it had acted upon his brain without that. His father made no very close inquiry into the facts, and he did not forbid him the use of tobacco. It was not necessary; in that one little experiment he had got enough for a whole lifetime. It shows that after all a boy is not so hard to satisfy in everything.

Harper's Young People.

"Black Beauty."

Have any of you read "Black Beauty" yet? It is a charming story of a horse, related by himself. In one chapter little Merrylegs, a pony that lived with the family "Black Beauty" belonged to, expresses his views on matters and things, and tells about an experience he had with some thoughtless boys. Here is the story. Remember it is "Black Beauty" that is talking:

"Our neighbor, the vicar, had a large family of boys and girls, and sometimes they would come and play with our girls, Miss Jessie and Miss Flora. When they came there was plenty of work for Merrylegs, for nothing pleased them so much as getting on him by turns and riding him all about the orchard and the home paddock, and this they would do by the hour.

"One afternoon Merrylegs had been out with them a long time, and when James, our kind-hearted groom, brought him in and put on his halter, he said:

"'There, you rogue, mind how you behave yourself, or we shall get into trouble.'

"'What have you been doing, Merrylegs,' I asked.

"'Oh!' said he, tossing his little head, 'I have only been giving those young people a lesson. They did not know when they had had enough, nor when I had had enough, so I just pitched them off backward—that was the only thing they could understand.'

"'What!' said I, 'you threw the children off? I thought you did know better than that! Did you throw Miss Jessie or Miss Flora?'

"He looked very much offended, and said:

"'Of course not; I would not do such a thing for the best oats that ever came into the stable. Why I am as careful of our young ladies as the master could be, and as for the little ones it is I that teach tem to ride. When they seem frightened or a little unsteady on my back, I go as quiet as old pussy when she is after a bird; and when they are all right I go on faster, you see, just to get them used to it. So, don't trouble yourself preaching to me; I am the best friend and the best riding-master those children have.

"'It is not our children. It is the boys. Boys,' said he, shaking his mane, 'are quite different; they must be broken in, as we were broken in when we were colts, and just be taught what's what. The other children had ridden me about for nearly two hours, and then the boys thought it was their turn, and so it was, and I was quite agreeable.

"'They rode me by turns, and I galloped them about, up and down the fields and all about the orchard for a good hour. They had each cut a great hazel stick for a riding-whip, and they laid on a little too hard; but I took it in good part till at last I thought we had had enough so I stopped two or three times, by way of a hint.

"'Boys, you see, think a horse or a pony is like a steam-engine or a thrashing-machine, and can go on as long and as fast as they please; they never think that a pony can get tired or have any feelings. So, as the one that was whipping me could not understand, I just rose upon my hind legs and let him slip off—that was all. He mounted me again, and I did the same.

"Then the other boy got up, and as soon as he began to use his stick I laid him on the grass; and so on, till they were able to understand—that was all. They are not bad boys; they don't wish to be cruel. Indeed, I like them very well; but you see I had to give them a lesson. When they brought me to your groom, James, I think he was angry to see such big sticks; he said they were fit only for drovers or gypsies, and not for young gentlemen.'

"'If I had been you,' said Ginger, 'I would have given those boys a good kick, and that would have given them a lesson.'

"Now, Ginger was a horse whose disposition had been soured by ill treatment.

"'No doubt you would,' said Merrylegs, 'but then I am not quite such a fool—begging your pardon—as to anger our master or make James ashamed of me; besides those children are under my charge when they are riding. Do you think I am such an ungrateful brute as to forget all the kind treatment I have had here for five years, and turn vicious because two ignorant boys use me badly?'

"'No, no, Ginger, you never had a good place, where they were kind to you, and so you don't know, and I'm sorry for you, but I can tell you good places makes good horses all the time. I wouldn't vex our people for anything; I love them, I do,' and Merrylegs gave a low 'ho, ho, ho,' through his nose, as he always did when he heard James' footstep at the door in the morning.

"'Besides,' he continued, 'if I took to kicking, where should I be? Why, sold off in a jiffy, that's where!'"

How to Treat a Sweetheart.

From an old New England scrapbook. When he comes to see you let me give you a few hints as to your treatment of him:

First of all, my dear, don't let him get an idea that your one object in life is to get all you can out of him.

Don't let him believe that you think so lightly of yourself that whenever he has an idle moment he can find you ready and willing to listen to him.

Don't let him think that you are going out driving with him alone, even if your mother should be lenient enough to permit this.

Don't let him think that you are going to the dance or the frolic with him; you are going with your brother, or else you are going to make up a party which will all go together.

Don't let him spend his money on you; when he goes away he may bring you a box of sweets, a book, or some music; but don't make him feel that you expect anything but courteous attention.

Don't let him call you by your first name, at least not till you are engaged to him, and then only when you are by yourselves.

Don't let him put his arms around you and kiss you; when he put the pretty ring on your finger that meant that you were to be his wife soon, he gained a few rights, but not the one of indiscriminate caressing. When he placed it there he was right to put a kiss on your lips—it was the seal of your love; but if you give your kisses too freely they will prove of little value. A maiden fair is like a beautiful, rich, purple plum; it hangs high up on the tree and is looked at with envy. He who would get it must work for it, and all the trying should be on his side, so that when he gets it he appreciates it.

Madrigal.

If my love shall prove unkind,
How may I reprove her?
Shall I tell her all my mind?
Will its pleading move her?
Or would silence golden be—
In my heart's mute anguish?
Might she not still careless be,
Though my love did languish?
If I, kneeling at her feet,
Tell my heart's desire,
Will her heart in union beat,
Moved by love's true fire?
Might she not mistake my sense,
Bid me cease my wooing?
So would all my eloquence
Be mine own undoing.
Better now than later know
If my wooing please her:
She may love me never, though
I might longer tease her.
Then no more will I delay;
Brave hearts do not tarry;
I will ask my love to-day
If she will not marry.

The Luxuries Possible on the Farm.

There is a large list of such things as are everywhere regarded as luxuries, which it is practicable to have upon the farm at the expense of little money but of some care and labor; and it is pertinent to inquire why these latter should not be given in return for some of those things which add refinement and pleasure to the somewhat retired life of the country? Others labor in the law, in medicine, and in trade, for money, some of which may be expended for things outside the bare necessities of life. It is to the farmer's great advantage that he can have these things much more easily than others can, and have them too, in much better condition, as a rule. What are some of these luxuries? Why, in the first place, fruit of all kinds, so far as the climate of one's particular region will admit. The only taste of fruit that a multitude of farmers' families get from one year's end to another, is of apples and a few wild berries the children pick in summer.

Nothing that can be said will probably reach that portion of this class who are too thriftless to make provision for table luxuries so long as there is at hand a supply of bread, pork, bacon, potatoes and salt fish. But there are many who do not seem to realize, but can, perhaps, be led to realize, how easy it would be to cultivate a sufficient supply of strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, plums, cherries and pears to vary and supplement the use of the commonly grown apple. A home supply of small fruits ought to be grown on every farm. A few grape vines and pear trees will not call for any very great additional effort. Gooseberries and currants will well repay the attention given them.

A greater variety of garden vegetables could well be grown, affording a welcome change during the winter season. Coming to the matter of meats, there is no reason why poultry should not be found on country tables every week in the year, and not, as now is often the case, on two or three occasions in the twelve months. In many cases only a couple dozen chicks are hatched, and of such of these as come to eating size the cockerels are sold to the poultry carts for a few cents a pound, and the pullets kept to replace the few old hens that are also sold for a trifling sum. Why not raise a lot of chickens and then eat them? It is a pleasanter and more sensible diet than pork.

If sheep are kept, plans ought to be made for a liberal supply of mutton. It is most excellent food, but a great rarity on the table of the average farmer.

Where a pond or never-failing stream, of considerable size, is convenient to a settlement of farmers, concerted action on the part of these could secure from their State or the National Fish Commissioner's young fry sufficient to stock these waters with such food fishes as would be suited to the surroundings. Trout, salmon, bass and shad can often be secured in this way, which will afford many agreeable changes from other kinds of food, besides affording excellent sport for such as take pleasure in fishing.

Cream, so often heard of in rhapsodies on country life, too frequently goes bodily to the churn, while its place on the table is taken by its paler relative of the pan. If cream cannot be afforded under existing conditions, it would be the part of wisdom to keep better cows, and so be able to have some enjoyment from the extra cream thus obtained.

Again, the dainty and wholesome dishes that can be formed from the innumerable preparations of oats, wheat, barley and kindred cereals are but little known in the farm-house kitchen, where they should be specially welcome since they can be so easily made ready for use, being in many instances already steam-cooked.

The diet of farmers' families is too largely made up of heavy foods—morning, noon and night it is deemed necessary to have "hearty" dishes on the table. These lighter cereal preparations contain abundant nourishment and have the added merit of being easily digested, which cannot be said of the greasy combinations of potatoes and meat that are to be found so often. If the older members of the family will have, for all their meals, the hearty food to which they have been accustomed, let the children, at least, have a plainer bill of fare, that will nourish them, but not prove disastrous to their digestive powers. For their sakes, if not for other reasons, fruit and a variety of cereal food should have a prominent and abiding place upon the table.—Webb Donnell, in *The Cultivator*.

British Iron and Steel Association.

OTTAWA, Oct. 10.—Dr. Selwyn has returned from his trip to New York, where he invited, on behalf of the Canadian Government, the members of the British Iron and Steel Association to visit the Dominion. He says that the programme of the association is as follows:—It has split into two parties. One goes to Pittsburg, where a three days' session will be begun to-morrow. The southern section goes to Alabama. After the close of the Pittsburg session the northern section will visit Chicago, Sault Ste. Marie, and Niagara, thence to Sudbury and North Bay, returning again to Niagara, where they will be entertained at luncheon by Mr. Wiman. The two sections will then reunite at Washington where the members will be presented to President Harrison. The whole party will then return to Niagara. They will then visit Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal, and possibly Quebec, sailing for home on November 8th.

GRAPE MARMALADE.—This is nice made of either ripe or green grapes. After picking them from stems and rinsing well, stew gently in a porcelain or granite kettle, always for ten minutes, in just enough water to keep them from sticking; then run them through a seive of fine colander to remove the skins and seeds. To each pint of sifted pulp and juice, add three-fourths of a pint of sugar, and boil it down until of the consistency desired. If sealed air-tight it need not be cooked long; if not, a large quantity will need to boil at least two hours.

GRAPE PUDDING.—Either fresh or canned grapes may be used for this. Press the grapes through a sieve to remove the skins and seeds, then place the sifted juice and pulp in a new tin dish, set it in a kettle of boiling water on the stove, and add a little sugar; then thicken with corn-starch rubbed smooth in a little cold water the same as for blanc mange. Let it boil, stirring constantly for three or four minutes; pour out into a dish or moulds, and set on ice or in a cool place. Serve cold with cream and sugar.

HOUSEHOLD.

Scatter Sunshine.

The sky was heavy with clouds, and it was raining a little, just enough to be disagreeable. The streets were so muddy as to make walking difficult, and nearly every face wore a frown, or look of discontent. The horse-cars were well-filled with people, all with sour, sad, or disconsolate faces, decidedly "under the weather." A few grumbling remarks were made about the disagreeable day, and then a heavy silence fell over all. Presently a certain car stopped, and a young woman entered it. Her face was bright with smiles. She looked as if she had heard very pleasant news, or as if she had got a pretty good joke on somebody. Instantly a most wonderful change came over the occupants of the car. The fastidious gentleman in the corner looked up from the rueful inspection of his muddy boots, and his face brightened. The lady opposite, who had seemed to think that the worst thing possible had happened when she got mud on the bottom of her dress, let the offending skirt drop from her hand, as if, after all, it was of very little consequence, and watched the smiling stranger as she shook the moisture from her limp plumes.

"That means the midnight oil and my land-lady's butter knife," said the stranger with a little laugh, as she pointed to the plumes, and the woman who had looked so forlorn over her muddy dress pushed it back out of sight. After all it was something which might just as well be laughed about, since crying and fretting would do no good.

The sour visaged lady actually smiled, and part of the smile fell upon the restless little child whom she had all along treated to the sourest of glances because she could not keep her garments away from his muddy little feet.

"It's nice and muddy," he ventured, thinking that at last she had come to see the beauty of the situation, "me waded frew the [illegible] just like it was water!" and he regarded his feet with great satisfaction. Everybody laughed. It wasn't hard to be amused now that the stranger's smiling face had come among them like a gleam of sunshine. There were none of them who did not feel lighter-hearted because of her presence, and yet she said but little. It was her cheerful smile which had acted so magically.

There is a beautiful work to be done in this world by those who can smile. If you long to do missionary-work, don't fret because your duties keep you at home. Try smiling. Pretend that you are happy until it is no longer a pretense but a reality. Look on the bright side of life, and help others do so too. Scatter sunshine every day. There is no heart so hardened that it may not be warmed and softened by it; no place so dreary and desolate that it may not be brightened; no life so wicked that it may not be made better by it. There is no grander work in the world than that of scattering sunshine, and if you do not believe that it is necessary work look into the faces of those around you, and see how few there are who do not look as if they were growing old and faded for want of sunshine.

"Lord, teach me how to smile" should be the daily prayer of many who go through life looking as if they expected the worst to happen [illegible] and will not see that [illegible] for being smiled [illegible].

Something About Grapes.

[illegible]

Household Hints.

One tablespoonful of liquid makes one-half ounce.

Jelly bags should be made of flannel and pudding bags of linen.

Do not put soap in the water with which you can clean a mirror; it is almost impossible to polish the glass if soap is used.

A paragraph in the New England Farmer points that a tablespoonful of kerosene added to the soap and water with which floors are washed will greatly help in making them clean and will leave the paint fresh and bright. There will also be considerable saving of soap.

TO WASH FANCY HOSIERY.—Dissolve some borax in the water, a teaspoonful to two quarts, soak the goods in this half an hour or more, then add soap to the water till good suds is made. Rub out the hose, rinse in two waters and dry. Fancy silk handkerchiefs and neckties may be washed in the same way.

FALL FOLLIES.

Did you ever notice that tall girls often marry beneath them.

A pretty girl doesn't need an elevator—it is easy enough for her to get up stares.

There is no use of arguing against obstinacy. If you squeeze a burr it will prick you.

There is one thing a woman can never do—she can't make a man tell her where he has been.

Something which ought to be stopped—Some women when amening a prayer in church don't say "amen," but "a man."

A Paris milliner has made a ten-strike by teaching her parrot to say every time a client enters, "Oh ain't you just lovely?"

The man who expects to go to heaven on his wife's church membership or on the chickens he fed to the preacher is taking awful chances.

Edwin—"And you'll always be true to me, Angelina?" Angelina—"Why do you doubt me, Edwin?" "Oh, you're too good to be true."

So Jack is married, eh? Do you think he'll get along well with his wife? "I'm quite sure he will. They sang in the same choir for two years without quarreling."

Emma—"We saw a sea serpent from the hotel I was at." Bertha—"Huh! That's nothing. There were two young men at the hotel where I spent my vacation."

[illegible]

Fruit Crops on the Same Soil.

[illegible]

Thirty years ago the celebrated [illegible] man, Mr. Wm. B. Smith, [illegible] me that I need never attempt to raise a second crop of apple trees on the same ground. I highly valued his opinion, [illegible] conceit at that time I thought that with plenty of manure and hardwood ashes I might succeed. I tried it thoroughly, and most thoroughly failed.

Ignoring that worthy gentlemen's advice in this one instance cost me many hundreds of dollars.

I have seen many decaying old orchards cleared off and replanted with young trees; but no matter how well the ground was tilled and manured, the second planting has almost invariably resulted in failure; this I attribute to the want of that mysteriously necessary element which has been extracted from the soil by the old orchard trees.

Whole districts in which strawberries were profitably grown a few years ago are now fruitless. Will the country cease to produce this delicious fruit? I hope not.