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A Leaf From Florence.

An Ancient Monastery A Curious Inscription—A Simple Device for Gambling—Florentine Street Music.

FLORENCE, March 20, 1878.—On the outskirts of Florence, close on the curving shore of the Arno stands a steep hill, densely wooded with olives, its summit crowned by a huge and ancient monastery, now converted into a military convalescent hospital, and commanding one of the finest views of the beautiful valley, its circlet of blue hills and snow clad mountains, and the peerless city with its swelling domes and piercing *campanile* shining in the centre. The hill and the monastery are appropriately called "*Monte Oliveto*," the Mount of Olives, and the latter must, in its day, have been an institution of importance and influence, as witness the following. The public highway winds along its base, a long, thickly built and thronged street and where the by way turns off to wind up the hill to the monastery, a brown slab of stone, somewhat moss grown is built into the wall, conspicuously, so as to catch the eye of the passer by, and and bears in old fashioned, but clear cut letters the following

INSCRIPTION :

"*Iss Otto di Balia di Citta della Firenze hanno proibeto Guicare, Sonare, Cantare apr. alt Monastero* 200 *braccio, sotto pena di Scudi* 125 *edvati di fune olaro arbrit*, 1634," which being interpreted, signifieth, "We, the Signiory of Florence, have prohibited gambling, playing, singing at the distance of 200 cubits from the monastery under a penalty of 125 crowns and imprisonment in default." In order, I suppose, that the good fathers might not be disturbed in their devotions and meditations. They were playing

"MORRA."

In several groupes as I passed. One hides his clenched fist behind his back ; the others each bet a cent apiece, or thereabouts, against this "banker ;" he suddenly brings it forward with one or more fingers elevated ; all shout out at the instant their guesses at the number ; the correct guesses win, the incorrect ones lose. A simple game; they have been playing it in Italy for centuries ; Italians play it all over the world ; I saw Gen. Poe's lighthouse builders hard at it, on the shores of the St. Marie's River.

THE FLORENTINE MUSIC.

And as for singing, Florence is one of the musical towns of Italy. Some are silent ones—their streets hushed in a perpetual Sunday's stillness, the footfall of the wayfarer rings hollow in their streets. Such are Verona, Pisa, Bologna, Rome, even Venice, where—

"Tasso's echoes are no more,
And silent rows the tuneless gondolier,"

and where the stillness is really oppressive. But Florence and Naples are pre-eminently noisy ones. All the street hawkers vend their wares with loud and long drawn cries, sometimes rolling off into a rather musical chant, and every one going to or returning from work or running (no, *sauntering*) an errand, sings away as he goes, from lightness of heart or want of thought or to drive dull care away. The streets are resonant with vocal sound from early dawn until far into the night. As for playing, there is not much out-door music in Florence. At Naples they wheel around the streets great organs as large as grand pianoes, with one man to grind the crank and watch the windows and another to go about and collect the coppers, neither making the slightest pretence of poverty or need, but appealing to your love of the beautiful. Here I have not met more than one or two hurdy gurdies. They tell me that the great majority of the organ-grinders and the plaster-cast men in America come from Lucca. But they were gambling, grinding and singing away at the foot of the hill as vigorously as if trying to make up for lost time. W. D. W.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

How to make a hot-bed—set the mattresses on fire.

SOME one says the best way to train up a child in the way he should go is for the person to travel that way occasionally himself.

KINDNESS TO ANIMALS.—A porter has been hired to carry the elephant's trunk, and a book-keeper's berth has been obtained for the adder.

THE same woman who can take a mental inventory of another feminine's street attire in half a minute will occupy an entire morning in telling her neighbor the details.

IF you are asked to make a pun extempore say, "Upon what subject?" If they answer the "Queen," then say the Queen is not a subject ; or if on Mr. ——, say he is a bad subject.

IT is as bad to be with a grumbler as to be out on a rainy day. The one damps our clothing, the other our spirits. But a bright, sunny-faced man or woman cheers us like a ray of sunlight coming into a dark room.

THE "agony columns" of the Turkish newspapers are filled with advertisements for lost relations, giving painful evidence of the dispersion of families of the Mussulman population which has taken place in the districts ravaged by war.

YOUNG lady critic, to parent accompanying her : "Mamma, don't you think that modern table is out of place in an ancient picture." Painter of the picture : "They had modern tables in them days as well as now, miss."

"So," said a lady recently to an Aberdeen merchant, "your pretty daughter has married a rich husband." "Well," slowly replied the father, "I believe she has married a rich man, but I understand he is a very poor husband."

IN Nelson county, Va., a hawk was seen at a considerable height with a large snake writhing in its claws, when suddenly the bird closed its wings and fell heavily to the earth. The snake—a moccasin—had bitten it in the neck, but the talons of the hawk were so buried in the vitals of the serpent that it also died.

FOR a specimen of logical consecution of ideas, we venture to commend this, from a schoolboy's composition : "Tobacco was invented by a man named Walter Raleigh. When the people first saw him smoking, they thought he was a steamboat ; and as they had never seen a steamboat, they were frightened."

SIR KENELM DIGBY, whom Pennant, the antiquary, calls "that prodigy of learning, credulity, valor, and romance," was so enamored of the beauty of his wife that, tradition alleges, he resorted to all sorts of extraordinary devices with the idea of adding to her charms. She was fed with capons, fattened with vipers, and divers other eccentric viands, and more than a century after his death a large and peculiar snail might be found in the neighboring woods, which he had imported as a nostrum for his wife. What with cosmetics and medicines the poor lady died at 33.

MENOTOMY LAKE.

BY J. T. TROWBRIDGE.

There's nothing so sweet as a morning in May,
And few things so fair as the gleam of glad water ;
Spring leaps from the brow of old Winter to day,
Full-formed, like the fabled Olympian's daughter.

A breath out of heaven came down in the night,
Dispelling the gloom of the sullen northeasters ;
The air is all balm and the lake is as bright
As some bird in brave plumage that ripples and glisters.

The enchantment is broken which bound her so long,
And Beauty, that slumbered, awakes and remembers ;
Love bursts into being, joy breaks into song,
In a glory of blossoms life flames from its embers.

I row by steep woodlands, I rest on my oars
Under banks deep-embroidered with grass and young clover ;
Far round, in and out, wind the beautiful shores,—
The lake in the midst, with the blue heavens over.

The world in its mirror hangs dreamily bright ;
The patriarch clouds in curled raiment, that lazily
Lift their bare foreheads in dazzling white light,
In that deep under-sky glimmer softly and hazily.

Far over the trees, or in glimpses between,
Peer the steeples and half hidden roofs of the village.
Here lie the broad slopes in their loveliest green ;
There, crested with orchards, or chequered with tillage.

There the pines, tall and black, in the blue morning air ;
The warehouse of ice, a vast windowless castle ;
The ash and the sycamore, shadeless and bare ;
The elm-boughs in blossom, the willows in tassel.

In golden effulgence of leafage and blooms,
Far along, overleaning the sunshiny willows
Advance like a surge from the grove's deeper glooms,—
The first breaking swell of the summer's green billows.

Scarce a tint upon hornbeam or sumach appears,
The arrowhead tarries, the lily still lingers ;
But the cat-tails are piercing the wave with their spears,
And the fern is unfolding its infantile fingers.

Down through the dark evergreens slants the mild light :
I know every cove, every moist indentation,
Where moss s and violets ever invite
To some still unexperienced, fresh exploration.

The mud-turtle sunning his shield on a log,
Slides off with a splash as my paddle approaches ;
Beside the green island I silence the frog,
In warm, sunny shallows I startle the roaches.

I glide under branches where rank above rank
From the lake grow the trees, bending over its bosom ;
Or lie in my boat on some flower-starred bank,
And drink in delight from each bird-song and blossom.

Above me the robins are building their nest ;
The finches are here,—singing throats by the dozen ;
The cat-bird, complaining, or mocking the rest ;
The wing spotted blackbird, sweet bobolink's cousin.

With rapture I watch, as I loiter beneath,
The small silken tufts on the boughs of the beeches,
Each leaf-cluster parting its delicate sheath,
As it gropingly, yearningly opens and reaches.

Like soft-winged things coming forth from their shrouds
The bees have forsaken the maple's red flowers
And gone to the willows, whose luminous clouds
Drop incense and gold in inpalpable showers.

The bee-peopled odorous boughs overhead,
With fragrance and murmur the senses delighting;
The lake-side, gold-laced with the pollen they shed
At the touch of a breeze or a small bird alighting ;

The myriad tremulous pendants that stream
From the hair of the birches,—O group of slim graces,
That see in the water your silver limbs gleam,
And lean undismayed over infinite spaces !—

The bold dandelions embossing the grass ;
On upland and terrace the fruit-gardens blooming ;
The wavering, winged, happy creatures that pass,—
White butterflies flitting, and bumble-bees booming ;

The crowing of cocks and the bellow of kine ;
Light, color, and all the delirious lyrical
Bursts of bird voice ; life filled with new wine,
Every motion and change in this beautiful miracle,

Springtime and Maytime,—revive in my heart
All the springs of my youth, with their sweetness and splendour :
O years, that so softly take wing and depart !
O perfume ! O memories pensive and tender !

As lightly I glide between island and shore,
I seem like an exile, a wandering spirit,
Returned to the land where 'tis May evermore,
A moment revisiting, hovering near it.

Stray scents from afar, breathing faintly around,
Are something I've known in another existence ;
As I pause, as I listen, each image, each sound,
Is softened by glamour, or mellowed by distance.

From the hill-side, no longer discordant or harsh,
Comes the cry of the peacock, the jubilant cackle ;
And sweetly, how sweetly, by meadow and marsh,
Sounds the musical jargon of blue-jay and grackle!

O Earth ! till I find more of heaven than this,
I will cling to your bosom with perfect contentment.
O water ! O light ! sky-enfolding abyss !
I yield to the spell of your wondrous enchantment.

I drift on the dream of a lake in my boat ;
With my oar-beat two pinion-like shadows keep measure ;
I poise and gaze down through the depths as I float,
Seraphic, sustained between azure and azure.

I pause in a rift, by the edge of the world,
That divides the blue gulfs of a double creation ;
Till, lo! the illusion is shattered and whirled
In a thousand bright rings by my skiff's oscillation.

BY PROXY.

BY JAMES PAYN.

CHAPTER XLI.

A SECOND SUITOR.

Nelly Conway's way was not to make much of any accident that befell her, but out of gratitude to Mr. Pearson she felt compelled to tell Mrs. Wardlaw how near she had been to death, as well as to whom she owed her escape from it. That good lady was so horrified by the mere fact that it was fortunate the narrator did not use any arts of embellishment. "I should never, never have forgiven myself, dear Nelly, if anything had happened to you."

"Why not, dear Mrs. Wardlaw? It would not have been your fault."

"Yes, it would, for ever letting you go out of my sight. Does not this show how totally unfit you are to take care of yourself? And yet you used to talk of going away from us, and living all alone in London."

That "used to talk" was quite a Machiavellian touch : it suggested that this wild resolution of Nelly's had been given up ever so long ago, instead of being a project that pressed itself upon her daily, as Mrs. Wardlaw was well aware, though her guest had ceased to talk of it of late, as is often the case when we were on the brink of action.

"I can't be caught by the tide in London," urged Nelly, "unless I choose my lodgings down at Bankside,"—the periodical inundations of the Thames, according to the last aquatic information, having just taken place in that locality.

This bantering rejoinder drew no answering smile from Mrs. Wardlaw. "There was nothing to laugh at," thought that kind old soul, in anything which had reference to Nelly's threatened departure.

"Well, at all events, it was not Mr. Pearson's fault that I was nearly drowned, but quite the reverse ; so I hope you will be very kind to him," said Nelly softly. "He is an artist, but not, I fancy, very prosperous."

"Not likely to be, my dear," answered her hostess drily. "Drawing and painting are all very well for those who can afford them, but as professions——"

"Hush!" The door opened. The servant announced "A gentleman to see you, ma'am ;" and in walked the very person in question. Mr. Pearson was dressed in the same time-worn summer suit which he had had on an hour or so ago. when Nelly had parted from him on the jetty ; but even the hotel waiter had not mistaken his social position. His hat was in his hand, and the intelligence and delicacy of his features were more clearly seen ; there was a hesitation in his manner, but it did not appear to arise from *mauvaise honte*, but seemed rather a personal characteristic.

Mrs. Wardlaw held out her hand to him at once, which seemed to reassure him.

"You have placed me, Mr. Pearson, under a very great obligation by preserving to me this dear girl."

"That you should have a high regard for the young lady does not astonish me," said he ; "though as I understand, madam, she is no blood relation."

"She is my adopted daughter," said Mrs. Wardlaw, with quite a fierce look at Nelly, as much as to say, "Contradict me if you dare." If she could but be reduced to silence, the elder lady might not unreasonably assume some authority when the matter of the girl's departure should come to be seriously discussed.

"Mrs. Wardlaw is as kind to me as any mother could be," said Nelly, whom experience had made alive to pitfalls of this kind, "but I am not a party to the arrangement of adoption."

"Why not?" inquired Mr. Pearson, not with conventional indifference, but as if he was really anxious to know.

"Well, I have the filial love, but not the sense of filial duty," said Nelly naively. "I don't mind her petting me, but then I want to have my own way."

"Very natural," said the visitor approvingly.

"What!" interrupted Mrs. Wardlaw with indignation.

"But, as I was about to add, madam, very wrong. When a young girl is left without father or mother, and (as she has informed me) scanty means, why should she refuse the help of loving hands? Ah, dear young lady, Poverty, like Death, has its charms when at a distance, but when it comes near us——look at me."

There was light enough yet to see his threadbare clothes, his parched and weary face, the hollow eyes that bespoke want as well as weakness ; but light enough also (for those who could see them) to mark the pride and independence of his look and mien.

"You are an honest man," said Mrs. Wardlaw warmly, "and you know what you are talking about. May this dear girl have the wisdom to lay your words to heart!"

"At the same time," continued he, "the bread of dependence can never be so sweet as that we earn. You tell me, Miss Conway, that you trust to your pencil to do something for you. I have some judgment in such matters—though, it is true, my own want of success may inspire little confidence. Might I see your drawings?"

Nelly ran upstairs at once to bring down her portfolio. Brief as was her absence, there was time enough for the visitor to say with hurried eagerness, "She will leave you, Mrs. Wardlaw, and take her own way ; she will fail in her object, but she will not confess it ; she will suffer—and make no sign ; you must never lose sight of her."

"Bless the man! as if I *should*! Hush, here she is!"

"So these are your art-treasures, are they, young lady?" said he cheerfully, as Nelly placed the portfolio before him, and then sat down, in modest confusion, a little ashamed of her prompt acceptance of his criticism. But then she was anxious to "improve" and be corrected in her faults. "Well, there is plenty of promise ; plenty—dear me, what's this in silver paper? a gem, no doubt?"

"Oh, please, I did not mean that for a specimen," said Nelly with a sudden flush.

"Why not? it's very creditable ; a quaint old garden, and a house of Queen Anne's time."

"It is our old house at Richmond ; I did it for my poor father as a present on his birthday—and—and—" here she burst into tears and ran out of the room.

The events of the afternoon had been a severer mental strain than at the time she had felt them to be. Her nerves were altogether unstrung.

"Her father met his death in China under the saddest circumstances," explained Mrs. Wardlaw in low tones. "It is too shocking to talk about. She is quite upset, you see ; but I know she had rather be left alone, and presently she will come back again all right."

"Poor girl, poor soul! and this was done for her father, was it, and he never lived to see it? It's a pretty picture, but the sentiment is above all art. She wouldn't part with it now, I dare say, for anything."

"I should think not. Why, John—that's my husband—offered her ever so much for it, but she wouldn't have sold it him for its weight in gold. She doesn't much like it even to be looked at, though she did show it the other day to Mr. Milburn."

"Milburn?" inquired Mr. Pearson. "What Milburn?"

"Oh, a gentleman who is staying at the hotel. A very nice young fellow—Herbert is his Christian name. Do you know him?'

Mr. Pearson shook his head. "I thought it might have been a man I knew in India, but on reflection it cannot be he. Is she fond of him?"

"What, Nelly of Mr. Milburn? Well, really, one doesn't talk of such things."

"'Not to strangers,' you would say : of course not. Only I feel such an interest in this young lady from having seen her in such a strait as I did this afternoon ; within a few minutes of being drowned, and yet so calm and quiet."

"Ah, because she's so 'fit to go,' that's it, Mr. Pearson. Well, since you saved her life, you have some right to hear about her. I am in hopes this Mr. Milburn may win her heart. It would be an excellent match for her : but there has been some hitch upon her side. Girls are so strange. I think, however, she seems to miss him since he went away-"

"He is not here, then, at present?"

"No, he comes back to-morrow ; you will then see them together, and be able to judge for yourself."

"I suppose such a pretty girl has been sought after, notwithstanding her want of fortune, by other suitors?"

"Well, between ourselves, by one person only. It's a sad business. His father has stepped in between the young couple. He is a hard man—but still it is not to be wondered at. Nelly has not a shilling, and the young man will be very rich when his father dies. It is the Mr. Ralph Pennicuick who is standing for Slowcombe. He was a great friend of Captain Conway's, nevertheless—that was Nelly's father.'

"Then he has not been a friend of his child?"

"Well, no ; I don't call him a friend. It is true he offered her an annuity after her mother's death, but she declined it."

"Why so?" he inquired again with that air of genuine interest which seemed to excuse what would have otherwise appeared to be mere vulgar curiosity.

"Well, you see how independent she is ; she would probably not have taken it in any case, but it was offered, I fancy, ungraciously. If I were to say to Nelly, 'Here is a five-pound note, but understand at the same time that you have no claim upon me,' that would be very brutal."

"But it would be the truth," said the other drily.

"Perhaps so ; but I would rather never speak truth again than say such a thing."

"Your husband should be a worthy man, madam!"

"John? I should think so! No better man breathes. But what makes you say that?"

"Because he has a noble wife."

"La! well, I'm sure!" said Mrs. Wardlaw ; and she looked very much relieved as Nelly re-entered the room. It began to strike her, as it had struck her young friend before, that their visitor was a little eccentric.

"I have looked through your drawings, my dear young lady, and I think you want nothing but good teaching——"

"Which she shall have wherever and whenever she likes," put in poor Mrs. Wardlaw, never forgetting the word in season.

"To turn out a good artist," continued Mr. Pearson.

"Since you are stopping here, why cannot *you* be her master?" inquired Mrs. Wardlaw boldly.

"Alas, I am not even my own master," returned the other gravely. "And I am called elsewhere even now." He rose from his chair as he spoke.

"I wish you could see John," said Mrs. Wardlaw, who had confidence in her husband's "business head." "If it's a question of terms, I am sure there will be no difficulty, and he'll be back by the express to-night."

Mr. Pearson shook his head.

"Well, perhaps you'll give us a line by post, just to say where you are likely to be ; even a word or two of advice to Nelly—*good* advice," she added significantly—"that will be very welcome, won't it, my dear?"

"I can't write," sighed Mr. Pearson. He had muttered the remark, as he thought, to himself, but they had both heard it.

"He must be certainly mad," thought Mrs. Wardlaw, "to say he can't write!"

"At least it is very painful to me," added the visitor, touching his right hand.

"Then how terrible it must have been to you to pull that boat out to my rescue!" said Nelly tenderly.

"Oh, it was nothing—and soon over," answered he, smiling ; "and then, you know, you pulled *me* back."

"What a mercy it is that you can draw with it!" observed Mrs. Wardlaw, looking at his hand, which, though thin and delicate, showed no sign of hurt.

"True, yes ; one feels what is amiss, but one overlooks one's advantages. I can just make shift to draw." Then after a pause he added, "Though I am obliged to go, ladies, I hope to see you again some day."

"I hope it will be soon," said Mrs. Wardlaw warmly.

"Whether I see you or not, Mr. Pearson, I shall not forget you, nor what I owe you," added Nelly earnestly.

She could hardly say less, yet her manner was so grateful that she could hardly have expressed more. He said good-bye to each of them, and was gone.

"What a strange man!" exclaimed Mrs. Wardlaw.

"A very good and kind one, I am sure," said Nelly.

"I have no doubt about it : but I wish he was a little more like other people."

"He has had troubles, I fear, which have broken him."

"But they can't have broken his wrist ; or if they have, how is it that he can paint and yet not write ; *that* is what seems to me so queer. By the by, did you see him paint?"

"Yes ; at least, I saw his colour-box, because I was so clumsy as to tread upon it."

"Well, it is very mysterious : and I wish John had been here."

Mr. Wardlaw arrived in due time, according to promise, and, as it happened, Mr. Milburn with him.

"I was able," the latter explained at dinner-time, "to escape from the lawyers a day earlier than I had hoped."

"How nice of you it was, dear Herbert," said his sister gushingly, "to come back again to me as soon as you could."

"Dear Herbert" did not reply to this, and Miss Milburn, who detected a sly smile upon Mrs. Werdlaw's face, looked anything but pleased.

If Mr. Milburn's personal presence had been dispensed with, his attention was still a good deal occupied by business affairs. Not a day passed without deeds and documents passing and repassing through the post, in all of which his sister took a family pride, and talked sympathizingly about the trouble there always was in settling matters connected with large landed estates. This continued for a week or two, during which the intimacy of the two families increased by time rather than circumstance, and Miss Milburn kept watch and ward over her brother as though he had been an enchanted princess for whom marriage had been foretold to be fatal, and she herself were an incorruptible dragon.

It was Nelly's custom to take a walk before breakfast, when the sands, except in the immediate neighbourhood of the bathing machines, were as deserted as those of Sahara, and the roar or whisper of the waves was the only noise to be heard. She was returning one morning from her favourite bay, when she saw Mr. Milburn coming towards her. He was a late riser, and had expressed in her presence his astonishment at her own heroic conduct in taking these matutinal walks : and at the sight of him she felt her face flush. She had as little vanity as it is possible for a pretty girl to have, but she knew why he was out to meet her, and what he was about to say. She saw as they drew nearer one another that his face wore a more earnest look than usual, and yet that it had an expression of unrest about it ; a combination she had noticed once before in the face of another man.

"You are very courageous, Mr. Milburn," said she, smiling—for a woman has always a smile and a tear handy—"thus to dare the morning air."

"Yes, I am courageous," he quietly said ; "perhaps even to audacity. Would you mind turning back with me, Miss Conway, just for a hundred yards or so?"

He little knew that he was leading her back to the very spot where Raymond Pennicuick had told to her—in vain—the same old story that he himself was about to tell again, or he would surely have avoided it as of evil omen.

They walked on for a few steps in silence, which becoming intolerable to Nelly, as well it might, she broke by a reference to his sister.

"Miss Milburn told us yesterday that all your business had at last been settled ; so I suppose you feel quite a gentleman at large?"

"It has not all been settled, dear Miss Conway ; but it will be so before I get home again ; and how it is to be done will depend on you."

"On *me*?" said she gaily, but with a weight about her heart that sank it very low. "I am afraid my advice on such matters will not be worth much."

"Your decision on the point will nevertheless be final. This estate, that Catherine talks so much about, but which is no such great matter after all, has a 'mansion' upon it (as the auctioneers call it), which is at present a millstone about my neck. I am to decide to-day whether I am to live in it or to let it. If the former, I shall sell out of the regiment and become, as you say, a gentleman at large ; if the latter, I shall return at once to China."

"Indeed!" said she, with genuine interest. She felt that she should be seriously sorry if this bright, kind young fellow should leave England, when in all probability they would never meet again.

"Yes. If I stay in this country and reside at my own place, it will certainly not be alone, nor with my sister : she is a good creature, but I feel that we could not live for ever under the same roof. But if, my dear Miss Conway, you would consent to be its mistress, then I should be the happiest man, I do believe, in England. Take time, take time, I do beseech you" (for he read rejection in her eyes). "for if you say 'No,' that will mean exile, probably for all my life. I was your father's friend——"

"Mr. Milburn, I entreat you to say no more," interrupted the girl earnestly. "I ask it for both our sakes ; I appeal to a nature that I know is as unselfish as it is kind to spare yourself and *me*. I am deeply sensible of the honour you would confer upon me, and of which I am wholly unworthy ; but I cannot accept it. I do not mean to marry. I have had troubles such as you cannot understand——"

"But I said 'Take time, take time,'" said the young man eagerly. "I know you have had cruel trials, from which, at present, you have not recovered. It was wrong of me to speak so soon, but my love must be my excuse."

"You need no excuse, Mr. Milburn ; though, indeed, that you have thought so seriously of one like me, suprises me. If I have given you cause to—to——" She blushed and hesitated, her mind reverting to his sister and her innuendoes.

"No, you have given me no cause," said he ; "it is Nature herself which has made you so adorable. I have said that I was audacious in my hopes, but tell me at least that I need not despair."

"Mr. Milburn, you have been very kind to me. I believe you are a good man, and I respect you with my whole heart ; but, once for all, I cannot marry you."

"It is enough. I have no right to ask you another question, yet I must put it for my own sake ; for if your answer is what I believe it will be, hope will still be left to me—as it is left, they say, even to the most wretched. I am, it seems, not personally distasteful to you. Is the cause of my rejection that you love another?"

Her lips moved, though without any articulate sound. Her face flushed from brow to chin. She cast down her eyes. Her answer was very plain to read. Milburn bit his lips—his face, unlike hers, was very pale—and bent his head. It was his submission to his fate. "Let us go back to the hotel," he said ; "you must not keep your friends waiting for breakfast. Do not cry, I beseech you. I am not worth a tear from your eyes."

CHAPTER XLII.

MISS MILBURN EXPRESSES APPROVAL.

It was with profound distress that Nelly Conway had received and rejected the offer of Milburn's hand, for she had no doubt that his heart would have gone with it. It would have pained her to have so behaved to any honest young fellow, but, in truth, she had a great liking for this one, though it had no touch of love in it. It was plain to her that her departure from Sandybeach, on which she had so long determined, could be no longer delayed if Mr. Milburn should stay on there ; and though, indeed, that was not probable, for he would be sure to feel the delicacy of her position, and hasten to relieve her of his presence, yet what right had she—who in any case had meant to go—to drive him to such a step? That very day, therefore, without stating her immediate reasons for her resolution, she informed her kind host and hostess of her intention to go to town at once, and begin the life of independence she had always determined upon. There was a terrible scene of tears and tender pleading, which would have carried conviction, had she needed it, of how dear she had become to both these excellent people.

"It'll go near to break my old woman's heart," said Mr. Wardlaw, in a tone that showed his own was not quite bomb-proof.

"Oh, never mind *me*," sobbed his wife ; "when I'm dead and gone she'll be sorry, and I dare say will come back to you, John, and make the tea, and put out the flowers, and play toons to you on the piano, just as she used to do." The recollection of these tender services, which were no longer, it seemed, to be performed by her darling, utterly overcame the good lady.

"I am sorry that any poor thing we were able to do for you," said Mr. Wardlaw simply, "should have the sense of obligation about it. We didn't—neither of us—mean it to be so, Miss Nelly, I do assure you."

"Oh, I am sure you didn't, and I never did feel it so," sobbed the poor girl. "It is your very goodness and kindness that make me want to go."

"Then we'll be very hard and grumpy, won't we, missus? We'll do our very best to be kind to you, indeed, though just at first, perhaps, my old woman here will find it a little difficult."

"Not more difficult than you would, Mr. Wardlaw. Of course I don't mean exactly what I said. I have been made so happy by your kindness, but it has placed me in a false position. I feel myself getting less and less fitted—because you spoil me so—to make my own way in the world ; and so I must needs set about it at once."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A Novel Sewing Machine.

A Vienna mechanician has recently succeeded, after many fruitless trials, in constructing a sewing-machine which does not require the person working at it to submit to the unpleasant and unhealthy necessity of constant bodily exertion, viz., setting the machine in motion by the foot. Since, for pecuniary reasons, the application of electricity, steam, or water power was impossible, the inventor of the new machine was restricted to gravitation or elasticity, and he, preferring the latter force, has contrived to make springs strong enough to keep an ordinary-sized machine in motion for hours. A system of cog-wheels is arranged underneath the surface of the table upon which the machine is fixed, and by a handle at the side the spring is wound up with the greatest facility. The velocity at which the machine works is entirely at the option of the person using it. and can be regulated *ad libitum*, and in the simplest manner.

POSTAL statistics show that of all European countries (Russia probably excepted) the fewest letters are written in Spain. Thus in 1875-6, only 87,000,000 letters passed through the post Office, being but 5.49 to each inhabitant—a delightful feature in Spanish life not a few would be disposed to think.

The Young Folks.

OLD SOUP.

The following curious anecdote is from a book about elephants, written by a French gentleman, named Jacolliot, and we will let the author tell his own story :

In the autumn of 1876 I was living in the interior of Bengal, and I went to spend Christmas with my friend, Major Daly. The major's bungalow was on the banks of the Ganges near Cawnpore, He had lived there a good many years, being chief of the quartermaster's department at that station, and had a great many natives, elephants, bullock carts, and soldiers under his command.

On the morning after my arrival, after a cup of early tea (often taken before daylight in India), I sat smoking with my friend in the veranda of his bungalow, looking out upon the windings of the sacred river. And, directly, I asked the major about his children (a boy and a girl), whom I had not yet seen, and begged to know when I should see them.

"Soupramany has taken them out fishing," said their father.

"Why, isn't Soupramany your great war elephant?" I cried.

"Exactly so. You cannot have forgotten Soupramany!"

"Of course not. I was here, you know, when he had that fight with the elephant who went mad while loading a transport with bags of rice down yonder. I saw the mad elephant when he suddenly began to fling the rice into the river. His 'mahout' tried to stop him, and he killed the mahout. The native sailors ran away to hide themselves, and the mad elephant, trumpeting, charged into this enclosure. Old Soupramany was here, and so were Jim and Bessy. When he saw the mad animal, he threw himself between him and the children. The little ones and their nurses had just time to get into the house when the fight commenced."

"Yes," said the major. "Old Soup was a hundred years old. He had been trained to war, and to fight with the rhinoceros, but he was too old to hunt then."

"And yet," said I, becoming animated by the recollections of that day, "what a gallant fight it was! Do you remember how we all stood on this porch and watched it, not daring to fire a shot lest we should hit Old Soupramany? Do you remember, too, his look when he drew off after fighting an hour and a half, leaving his adversary dying in the dust, and walked straight to the 'corral,' shaking his great ears which had been badly torn, with his head bruised, and a great piece broken from one of his tusks?"

"Yes, indeed," said the major. "Well, since then, he is more devoted to my dear little ones than ever. He takes them out whole days, and I am perfectly content to have them under his charge. I don't like trusting Christian children to the care of natives ; but with Old Soup I know they can come to no harm."

Beside the children, on the banks of the Ganges, stood Old Soup with a bamboo rod in his trunk, with line, hook, bait, and cork, like the children's. I had not watched him long before he had a bite ; for, as the religion of the Hindoos forbids them to take life, the river swarms with fishes.

The old fellow did not stir ; his little eyes watched his line eagerly ; he was no novice in "the gentle craft." He was waiting till it was time to draw in his prize.

At the end of his line, as he drew it up, was dangling one of those golden tench so abundant in the Ganges.

When Soupramany perceived what a fine fish he had caught, he uttered one of those long, low, gurgling notes of satisfaction by which an elephant expresses joy ; and he waited patiently, expecting Jim to take his prize off the hook, and put on some more bait for him. But Jim, the little rascal, sometimes like to plague Old Soup. He nodded at us, as much as to say, "Look out, and you'll see fun, now!" Then he took off the fish, which he threw into a water-jar placed there for the purpose, and went back to his place without putting any bait on Old Soup's hook. The intelligent animal did not attempt to throw his line into the water. He tried to move Jim by low, pleading cries. It was curious to note what tender tones he seemed to try to give to his voice.

Seeing that Jim paid no attention to his calls, but sat and laughed as he handled his own line, Old Soup went up to him, and with his trunk tried to turn his head in the direction of the bait-box. At last, when he found that all he could do would not induce his wilful friend to help him, he turned round as if struck by a sudden thought, and, snatching up in his trunk the box that held the bait, came and laid it down at the major's feet ; then picking up his rod, he held it out to his master.

"What do you want me to do with this, Old Soup?" said the major.

The creature lifted one great foot after the other, and again began to utter his plaintive cry. Out of mischief, I took Jimmy's part, and, picking up the bait-box, pretended to run away with it. The elephant was not going to be teased by *me*. He dipped his trunk into the Ganges, and in an instant squirted a stream of water over me with all the force and precision of a fire-engine, to the immense amusement of the children.

The major at once made Soup a sign to stop, and. to make my peace with the fine old fellow, I baited his hook myself. Quivering with joy, as a baby does when it gets hold at last of a plaything some one has taken from it, Old Soupramany hardly paused to thank me by a soft note of joy for baiting his line for him, before he went back to his place, and was again watching his cork as it trembled in the ripples of the river.—*St. Nicholas for May.*

Devoted Love the best Trousseau.

[From the New York Ledger.]

Lord Rosebery is married to one of the Rothschilds, and the enormous cost of the trousseau is the theme of much comment in English and American journals. From the prominence given to the expense of trousseaus in the accounts of weddings of late, it might be gathered that they constitute one of the prime inducements to getting married: in point of fact, in some instances, it is not certain that they do not.

But devoted love is the best trousseau—at once priceless and imperishable. Marriages will be fuller of the promise of happiness when they depend less upon gold and the things which can be purchased with gold.

THE British "commerce destroyer," Shah, which so sadly battered the Peruvian ironclad last year, has gone home to be recoppered. She is said to be more than a match in speed and armament for any two Russian cruisers in the Pacific. In case of war it is thought that she will make short work of the Russo-American "privateers," should any such be launched.

PRINCE JEROME NAPOLEON says, in the *Revue Des Deux Mondes*, that Italy and Austria would have lent their support to France in 1870 if the Emperor had not preferred to these alliances the temporal power of the Pope. The ex-Empress and Plon Plon have not been on very affectionate terms, and this is no doubt intended as a thrust at her ultra Papal proclivities.

Household Hints.

Some Useful Recipes.

ALWAYS take the airest, choicest, and sunniest room in the house for a living-room—the work shop where brain and body are built up and renewed. Dark rooms bring depression of spirits, imparting a sense of confinement, of isolation, of powerlessness, which is chilling to energy and vigor ; but in light is good cheer.

HOARSENESS, it is said, may be effectually cured by adopting the following simple plan: A piece of flannel dipped in brandy and applied to the chest, and covered with a dry flannel to be worn all night. Four or six small onions, boiled, and put on buttered toast, and eaten for supper, is likewise good for colds in the chest.

THE following is recommended as a good dish for an invalid :—Crumb crackers into a bowl—more or less, according to the size of the crackers. Pour boiling water, sufficient to soak them, over the crumbs. Break a fresh egg, and add quickly, stirring the whole rapidly. The boiling water cooks the egg. Season according to discretion, with salt, pepper, cream, or butter.

STEWING.—This is the most economical mode of cooking meat, but it should be remembered that length of time is much more important than extra heat, as long continued action softens the toughest joints, rendering them tender and palatable. If the fire is too hot it will rise to the boiling point, and then it will harden the meat.

To pickle beef for long keeping : First, thoroughly rub salt into it, and let it remain in bulk for twenty-four hours to draw off the blood. Second, take up, letting it drain, and pack as desired. Third, have ready a pickle as follows :—For 100 pounds of beef use seven pounds of salt. saltpetre and cayenne pepper, of each ; molasses, one quart ; and soft water, eight gallons ; boil and skim well, and when cold pour it over the beef.

A DISCREET, yet thorough ventilation of houses is most essential to health. The following is recommended as a very simple process :—A board is fitted between the jambs, eight or ten inches high at the bottom of the window. The window being lifted at the bottom allows the fresh air to come in, which strikes against the board and escapes over the top of the board into the room without any current or draught. The quantity of air desired can be regulated by the height of the board and the distance between it and the window, which may be close or otherwise.

POTATO SOUP—Pare four or five good sized potatoes and slice thin ; put in a dish ; cover with hot water and boil until done ; turn out the potatoes and mash fine, put back in the water, and add salt, pepper, butter, and a cup of rich, sweet cream and water enough for the required quantity of soup.

TOMATO SOUP—To one pint tomatoes canned or four large raw ones cut fine, add one quart boiling water and let them boil. Then add one teaspoon of soda, when it will foam; immediately add one pint of sweet milk, with salt, pepper, and plenty of butter. When this boils add eight small crackers rolled fine and serve. Equal to oyster soup.

MOCK DUCK—Take a round of beefsteak, salt and pepper either side ; prepare bread or crackers with oysters or without, as for stuffing a fowl ; lay your stuffing on the meat ; sew up and roast about an hour ; if you do not see the wings and legs you will think you have roast duck.

DUMPLINGS FOR IRISH STEW—One quart of flour, one even tablespoonful of lard, three teaspoonfuls of baking powdor, a little salt ; rub well with the hands, then mix with cold water ; make as stiff as you would biscuit dough ; cut and drop in with a tablespoon ; if you use the dumplings omit the thickening.

VENISON STEAKS—Cut them from the neck, season with pepper and salt ; heat the gridiron hot and grease the bars before frying the steaks on; blail them well; turn once, taking care to save as much gravy as possible. Serve hot, with currant jelly on each piece.

BUTTER POT PIE—Pour a quart of water into the kettle ; put in half a pound of butter, a little salt and pepper ; make a crust of buttermilk, a little sour cream and saleratus enough to sweeten it ; roll out and cut into biscuit ; drop one by one into the boiling gravy, cover and boil gently for half an hour without removing the cover, when it will be done.

BEEFSTEAK SMOOTHERED WITH ONIONS—Cut six onions very fine, place in a saucepan with two cups hot water; two ounces butter, a little pepper and salt ; dredge in a little flour. Stir them until soft ; then broil the steak, then put it into the pan with the onions ; let it simmer ten minutes and send to the table hot.

OMELETTE WITH CHEESE—Beat six eggs very light ; add two teaspoonsful cream, butter the size of a walnut, a little chopped parsley, pepper and salt, two ounces grated cheese. Beat all together. Have ready a pan in which is a small piece of butter, melted. Cook a light brown ; fold it up and serve. Shake the pan while the omelette is cooking.

RICE SOUP—To three pounds of beef add three quarts and a pint of water, one-half cup of rice, three onions and a little parsley, put on to boil ; try the meat with a fork.

BOILED FISH—Take a fresh water mackerel and tie in a clean cloth ; boil three-quarters of an hour. While boiling make a gravy of three tablespoonfuls of flour, one large tablespoonful of butter ; mix well together with a spoon ; then pour a little boiling water, enough to wet it ; stir, then set a pan on the stove ; pour on the boiling water and boil five minutes, until as thick as you desire ; put the fish on a platter and pour gravy over it. Chip dried beef, boiled fresh, with the same grovy, is very nice.

SWEETBREADS—Wash the blood and pieces of fat off, put in stew-pan with cold water to cover, cook until tender, strain water off and make a gravy of one cup of milk, tablespoon of flour, large piece of butter, tops of green onion, chopped fine, one tablespoonful, season to taste, let it come to a boil, take up and serve very hot.

IRISH STEW—To two pounds of mutton (cut ribs) add three quarts of water ; then slice up about four onions ; boil about half an hour ; then pare one dozen medium-sized potatoes and put in with the meat ; when very nearly done add thickening made of two tablespoonfuls of flour ; mix well with water, season with salt and pepper to suit taste.

CODFISH TOAST—Pick up one pint of fish, freshen it in water, put it back on the stove, add one quart of cold water, half a cup of butter, and pepper to the taste, one tablespoonful of flour, dissolved in a little water ; then stir into the fish. Toast half a dozen slices of bread and cover them with the fish.

TO FRY BEEFSTEAK—Butter, enough to cover the bottom of a spider, and melt, not hot ; hack the beef with a sharp knife, salt and roll in flour, put into the spider ; let it cook slow. If you do not cook too fast the juice, butter and flour will make a nice, thickened gravy. When done, pepper and pour the gravy over the beef.