

Land Poor.

BY ROBERT COLLINS.

I've had another offer, wife, a twenty-acre more. Of it I had dry prairie land, as level as a floor. I thought I'd wait and see you first, as Lawyer Brady said. To tell how things will turn out best a woman is ahead.

And when the lot is paid for, and we have got the deed, I'll say that I am satisfied—it's all the land we need. And next we'll see about the yard, and fix the house up some, and manage in the course of time, to have a better home.

WIFE

There is no use of talking, Charles—you buy that twenty-acre, and we'll go scripping all our lives, and always be Land Poor. For thirty years we've tugged and saved, denying half our needs, while all we have to show for it is tax-receipts, and deeds!

I'd sell the land if it were mine and have a better home. With bread-light rooms to front the street, and take life as it comes. If we could live as others live, and have what others do. We'd live ten times as happy, and have a plenty too.

While others have amusements, and luxury, and books. Just think how stingy we have lived, and how this old place looks. That other farm you bought of Wells, that took so many years. Of clearing up, and fencing in, has cost me many tears.

Yes, Charles, I've thought of it a hundred times or more. And wondered if it really paid to always be Land Poor; that had we built a cozy house, took pleasure as it came, our children once so dear to us, had never left our home.

I grieve to think of wasted weeks, and years and months, and days. While for all we never yet had one word of praise.

Men call us rich, but we are poor—would we not freely give? The land with all its fixtures, for a better way to live?

Don't think I'm blaming you, Charles—you are not a whit to blame, I've pitied you these many years, to see you tired and lame. It's just the way we started out, our plans too far ahead; we've worn the cream of life away, to leave too much when dead.

'Tis putting off enjoyment long after we enjoy. And after all, too much of wealth seems use less as a toy. Although we've learned, alas too late! what all must learn at last, our brightest earthly happiness is buried in the past.

That life is short and full of care, the end is always nigh. We seldom half begin to live before we're doomed to die.

Were I to start my life again, I'd mark each separate day. And never let a single one pass unenjoyed away.

If there were things to envy, I'd have them now and then. And have a home that was a home, and not a cage or pen. I'd sell some land if it were mine, and fit up well the rest. I've always thought, and think so yet—small farms well worked are best.

A Popular Girl.

What is it that determines a girl's popularity in society? Is a question of an heard in these days of social strife and aggrandizement, and a question that one is quite able to answer in a word. It is rote because she is well dressed, or even pretty; it is not that her fairy godmother bestowed a witty tongue to amuse the dulleards; it is not because she is rarely intelligent or highly educated or "so amiable;" no, none of these desirable qualities would render the popular girl more popular than she is, though perhaps she is fortunate enough to possess one or more of them for her stock-in-trade. The girl everybody likes need have neither money nor beauty, which, in the world's estimation, constitutes social power; but she must have and does have a gracious manner, a certain graceful bearing, decided intelligence, instinctive generosity, and, above all, the greatest gift, ever awarded to women—personal magnetism. Beauty is called the fatal gift, but personal magnetism, which is independent of beauty, is the gift of power, and, though scarcely recognized at first, only relinquishes its hold with death itself. The popular girl always has this fascination in more or less degree, and, if with it go the other attractions of happy circumstances, she rules the indisputable queen of her small sphere. Her friends do not analyze the effect she has on them; they simply like her, and love her, and later on when the time comes, adore her.

Chinese Depravity.

A missionary writes of his inconveniences and sufferings in going from place to place during the recent Teentsin flood. The bad roads afflicted him much, but the bad traits of native character afflicted him more.

One of the saddest results of these floods is the bringing out so plainly as they do, the awful meanness and depravity of the people. It would be difficult to believe that any human being could become so callous to the suffering of others as is evident here. Let a man be in the veriest extremity of death, and not a hand will be reached out to help him until, after long haggling, a sum is fixed upon as the pay for the service. I made a portion of my journey by Chinese cart, and rode mile after mile through a sea of shallow water interspersed with ditches; and as though the dangers of the road were not sufficiently great, the wretches who live in the region dug great pit-holes along where the track was supposed to be, and then offered their services at high rates as guides. If we hired them they guided us around the holes they had dug; if we didn't they let us drive into them, and plundered the carts during the confusion which followed. [Missionary Herald.]

A man was arrested at Ballston on suspicion of stealing a mule. It is alleged that he has one wife in Albany, one at Saratoga and three at Ballston. It is not strange that any man who could put up with the rolling-pin exercise of five enraged women would appreciate the tender touch of a mule.

When Women are Most Attractive.

In an interesting paper, entitled "When Women Grow Old," Mrs. Blake has brought facts to show that the fascinating power of the sex is oftentimes retained much longer than is generally assumed. She tells us of Aspasia, who, between the ages of 30 and 50, was the strongest intellectual force in Athens; of Cleopatra, whose golden decade for power and beauty was between 30 and 40; of Livia, who was not far from 30 when she gained the heart of Octavius; of Anne, of Russia, who, at 38, was thought to be the most beautiful Queen in Europe; of Catharine II., of Russia, who, even at the silver decade, was both beautiful and imposing; of Mademoiselle Mars, the actress, and whose beauty increased with years, culminated between 30 and 45; of Madame Recamier, who between 25 and 40, and even later, was the reigning beauty in Europe; of Ninon d'Enclos, whose own son—brought up without knowledge of his parentage—fell passionately in love with her when she was at the age of 37, and who even at her 60th birthday received an adoring young enough to be her grandson.

These facts, the representatives of many others, establish that the golden decade of fascination is the same as the golden decade of thought; that woman is most attractive to and most influential over man at that period when both men and women are nearest the maximum of the cerebral force. The voice of our great prima donna is at its best between 27 and 35; but still more retain in a degree its strength and sweetness even in the silver decade. The voice is an index of the body in all its functions, but the decay of other functions is not so readily noted.

Characteristic Female Thefts.

A pale, refined-looking girl, out of a situation, was taken into a family the other day, out of pity, till she could "get a place," writes Jennie June. The third day she disappeared with the eldest daughter's cherished bangles and a pair of \$14 boots, made to order, and sent home for the mother. The theory was a too rapid development of taste. Had she been a practiced thief it was thought she would have carried off also some heavy and ugly gold hand bracelets, which were equally within her reach. But her tastes were aesthetic, and she took those things, that appealed to them. It is said that male thieves complain that the "liking" of women for special things that appeal to their sentiments, or their fancy, impairs their efficiency as coadjutors.

In other words few women are found who really steal for its own sake, or with a single eye to what can be made by melting down or "turning over" the property thus acquired. They are tempted by the "latest thing," which is often worth little intrinsically, or by something of fine and elaborate workmanship, well enough as a possession but worth little to sell, and dangerous to sell or to keep. Experienced thieves, it is said, avoid these highly individualized articles, which cost so much and sell for so little, and prefer solid gold or silver, in which the value is put into weight, not into workmanship.

Native Life in Abyssinia.

The majority of houses have a second story, at least a sort of attic, under the extinguisher roof of thatch, rimming a circular frame of dried mud or wood resting on the angles of four walls of mud or stone, either in square, or the ground plan taking the lines of a Greek cross, and the interior face is surrounded by a circular outer wall of the same material. Within live the occupants, with their cattle, fowls, dogs, cats, and a Noah's ark of insects, which the natives foster with the greatest care by not touching soap and by using very little water. The excessive disregard to cleanliness is quite a mania with Abyssinians. It is not from a want of water. There is plenty; and the famous soap-tree, called indeed, grows everywhere, the seeds of which, when carefully dried in the sun, may be worked into a good lather that is very cleansing. An Ethiopian will tell you without a blush that he is necessarily washed at birth, washes himself on his marriage morn, and hopes to be washed after death; that once every year he dips himself in the river on the festival of St. John, and every morning he wets the end of his toga with the moisture from his mouth and freshens up his eyes. Whenever he feels hard and uncomfortable, he will anoint himself with mutton fat till his head and body glistens in the sun.

Love and Money.

In New York I once had a conversation with a very clever and attractive young lady, who among other misfortunes, was afflicted with two millions of dollars. She said she would never marry, because she would not believe even the man who wanted her for her own sake, that he took her for any other reason than for her gold. "And what," I asked, "do you lose thereby? If a gentleman takes you because you are so pretty, the small-pox, a fall from a horse, any accident may destroy your beauty, and where will his love be if it is for that reason only he took you? If another one falls in love with you because you are so fresh, so young, so lively, time is safe to destroy all that, and your hold on him is lost. But if he takes you for your money, you need only beware of dangerous speculations, and you will always keep the charm that brought him to your feet, and have nothing to fear." "That is one way of looking at it," she said, and so completely did she embrace my opinion that, barely a year after, I received an invitation to her wedding with an English nobleman, when she seemed suddenly to have made up her mind that all mercenary motives had flown from this frivolous world, and nothing but constancy remained.

Waste Places of the World.

The Russian explorer Prejevalsky said after his recent journey in northern Tibet that an enormous amount of animal life—as supported by bleak half sterile plains that form the highest plateau in the world some 13,000 feet above the sea. He said the wild yaks there must number millions, and that a full grown yak weighs from 1,600 to 1,800 pounds. Nature's chemistry evolves these great masses of flesh from the poor herbage of a region so lofty that its lakes are frozen over until nearly June, though they are 600 miles nearer the equator than we are.

Explorers tell us that not only does animal life abound, but that man can live in some of the most desolate parts of the globe. It is a mistake to suppose that the Sahara desert is merely a useless sandy waste. Much of it lacks not so much cultivable land as industrious hands to make the vast expanse of withered oases blossom again. The Mussulman sect known as the Senousians has for years been digging wells, irrigating the land, and turning many hundreds of barren acres into gardens. Twenty-four years ago it planted its headquarters in the desert near the western border of Egypt, built reservoirs, began plantations, erected convents, and now a population of 8,000 people live at Jarabub, where the soil has been restored to fertility by their labors. There are large areas in the Sahara that need only rain or irrigation to cover them with verdure. Through these regions pass the caravan routes, along which the 50,000 camels engaged in the Saharan commerce bear their burdens.

Mr. Anderson, the civil engineer who last year completed years of explorations in South Africa between the Orange and Zambesi Rivers, says that the rain that falls for a few weeks every year in the great region known as the Kalahara desert covers the blackened verdureless plain with splendid vegetation. Game is abundant there, especially lions, leopards, and ostriches, and he has counted in this desert twenty-two lions in a troop, and has seen 200 ostriches in one flock. Beasts and birds find sustenance in this region where only a few Bushmen hunters live. Far northeast of them on the semi-arid step, as of Kordofan and Darfur millions of sheep and camels exist on the scanty pasturage of that desert region.

A Wonderful Piece of Mechanism.

E. M. Calkins, of Warnerville, N. Y., has just completed one of the most wonderful pieces of mechanism ever produced. He has worked on it twenty years, and like Darius Greene's flying machine, "at last it is done." On a large platform, 7x20 feet, constructed so as to represent mountain scenery, rocks, trees, lawns, rivers, cascades, caves, and lakes, there are several hundred moving figures of men, birds, and beasts. In the centre is a life like facsimile of Washington's residence at Mount Vernon. On the roof are two beautiful figures, carved and painted so as to represent sculptured marble, guarding with drawn swords the historic mansion, while a gilt eagle perches upon the porch. In a room Washington is lying on his death-bed, surrounded by weeping friends. In the kitchen are colored servants at work. In the yard are men sharpening their scythes and chopping and sawing wood. Several incidents connected with Indian life are vividly pictured. Railway cars are running, and a ship with sails unfurled and laden with passengers floats in a miniature river. Even Noah's ark is represented, with Noah at the head of the procession marching into it, while up on the hill tops surrounding are men and women awestruck at the rising waters. A perfect grist mill in operation is represented; also a country home, with the father and mother sitting by the fireside, reading by the light of pine knots. The figures are all kept in motion by a small overshot wheel, less than ten inches in diameter. All of the figures were carved with jack knives, Mr. Calkins having worn out several knives since he began the work.

Saw Halley's Comet.

It seems at first sight incredible that an occurrence of 215 years ago could be reported with but one link between the person who tells you and the actual witness. Such, however, is the fact. The narrator in question was the venerable rector of Bushey (the Rev. Mr. Falconer), just deceased at the age of 84. He had heard his grandfather (the celebrated Dr. Falconer of Bath) say that he had been told by his grandmother that she could remember being held up to the window to see Halley's comet, which appeared in 1669. She was then 6 years old. Dr. Falconer, the intervener, was born in 1744 and died 1824. Assuming him to have been at least 6 years of age when this story was told him, his grandmother must have been 90. But the wonder might be increased, for if Dr. Falconer told the story in the last year of his life (1824) to a child 6 years it might be passed on to the next century with only one link between the witness and the narrator. After all, we are not so dependent on writing as we sometimes assume ourselves to be.

A Girl's Fight with Mountain Lions.

One evening lately a herd of Angora goats herded by Miss Teresa Tallert on Little Lost River, Idaho, came home early, rushed for the corral, a heavy log concern eight feet high, and were shut in. In the night Miss Tallert was aroused by her dog whining at her ear, and getting up found four mountain lions in the corral. Without a moment's hesitation she attacked them with an ax. Two of the lions jumped the corral and fled. The other two rushed toward her, and she dealt one a blow with the ax, laying its rump open to the bone. Both of the beasts then fled. The next morning fifty of the valuable goats were found dead and thirty wounded. Fourteen of the latter have died.

A "She Major of Cavalry."

One of the personages about Washington during the war was Annie Jones, who originally professed to have run away from a bearded school in Boston to "follow the drum," and who attached herself to the headquarters of Gen. Stabel, the commander of a German brigade. A flippant talker, she ingratiated herself into the favor of the general, and received an honorary appointment as a member of his staff, and as "Maj. Jones" became an institution in the army. She ate with the general, drank with the general, rode with the general on all his hazardous forays, chatted with the general, nursed the general when he was sick, fought the general's battles when she heard him aspersed by jealous understrappers, and when night drew the stary flag over the heavens she slept with her beloved colored maid in the next little tent, which the general had assigned her. Her orders were wont to be obeyed, because she was recognized as a staff officer. She always had the countersign, and could pass the pickets at pleasure. She was said to be a girl of great dash and daring, and would frequently venture out beyond the outposts and for days watch the movements of the enemy, and bring in whole budgets of information from the rebel camps, as proofs of her stewardship and shrewdness. Every one knew Maj. Jones; officers would doff their hats, and privates would stand at a full "present" as she rode in military feminine dignity. The visiting officers from other commands were introduced to Annie, and admired her, and she reigned supreme as the "she major of cavalry."

When Gen. Hooker marched into Maryland and Stabel was relieved, Miss Maj. Annie joined her fortunes with the young and gallant Custer, with whom she remained, retaining her rank and title, until a general order from army headquarters made it necessary for him to dispense with her valuable services, and the major was compelled to search for a field of usefulness elsewhere. For a few days she wandered about the camp, having no particular abiding place or continuing city, until Col. Sharp, then acting provost marshal general, thought that the interests of the service required that she should be removed to Washington. Accordingly, a pass was granted her to travel as far as the military railroad would carry her, and a sergeant of the 93rd New York was detailed to accompany her, to guard against any accident on the way. Arriving at Washington, she stopped at the Kirkwood house, where she sometimes appeared in staff uniform, and then in fashionable female attire. It was believed that she was a confederate spy in the union secret service.

Forgot the Halfpenny.

A certain gentleman was wont regularly every morning on his way to his place of business to give a halfpenny to a blind beggar stationed at a corner of the Paris Bourse. One day, whether in a fit of abstraction or otherwise, he gave him a napoleon by mistake. Some hours later he discovered his error, and, not being a rich man, resolved to seek out the beggar, reexplain matters, and request that the twenty franc might be returned. The beggar was gone when he again passed by the Bourse; but a neighboring beggar was enabled to furnish his colleague's address. Arrived at the address indicated, the gentleman had some hesitation about speaking to the *concierge*, so respectable did the house look, but he was speedily reassured. The beggar did live there—not on the fifth floor—no, the third. A tidy-looking *bonne* opened the door of a comfortably-furnished suite of apartments. Monsieur was requested to take a seat; and in a minute or two the beggar made an appearance, neatly dressed, and with faultless shirtfront. The object of the stranger's visit was stated. "My clerk is just making up the day's accounts," observed the beggar; "if a napoleon has been found in the box, it shall be restored to you." The piece of gold was found, and the beggar handed it back to his visitor. As the latter was retiring, the beggar called out to him, "I beg your pardon, my dear sir; but you have forgotten to give me my halfpenny out of it."

How Some Letters are Lost.

When letters are lost it by no means follows that the postal authorities are invariably to blame. Sometimes it happens that, through culpable carelessness or sheer absence of mind on the part of people who post them, important missives go astray, to the great annoyance of everybody concerned. A postman in a northern town has just given the public the benefit of his own recent experience in this direction. In one case a gentleman hastily jerked a letter addressed to a business firm in France into the aperture of a letter-box, and left it sticking there. Fortunately, the postman was approaching at the moment to clear the box, or the letter might have been stolen by an unscrupulous passer-by, or lost in the street. On another occasion a gentleman, who was running to overtake a friend made a dash at the letter-box as he rushed past with two thin post-cards, which caught the edge of the opening and sprang back upon the pavement. The gentleman was quite oblivious of the accident, and, eager to overtake his friend, was quickly out of sight. In the third case a gentleman was walking down the street with a post-card in his hand, and as he drew near the letter-box a man at a shop-door gave him an advertisement card. Instead of putting the post-card into the letter-box, he carefully posted the advertisement card, and then deliberately folded the post-card two or three times and threw it into the gutter! The vigilant postman was passing along at the moment and saw the curious blunder, and the post-card was duly rescued from untimely oblivion.

An agricultural exchange contains an article headed, "A Good Word for the Mule." We always like to see a man uphold his relations.

Advice to Smokers.

The deadly illness of General Grant is ascribed to cancer, and it is said that the cancerous growth was caused by excessive smoking. The distinguished character of the patient has made the case conspicuous and many veteran smokers have already discarded the use of tobacco.

We believe that the poison of cancer is distinct from the poison of nicotine. There are, however, a few simple rules commending themselves to every physician which will tend to make the use of the weed less injurious, and which it is well to inculcate at this particular time.

In the first place, smoke light-colored cigars. They are less strong than the darker shades. Select the boxes marked Claro and Colorado Claro, and avoid those marked Maduro or even Colorado Maduro.

Secondly, never smoke on an empty stomach. Smoke after luncheon, or after dinner or supper, but do not smoke long after you have taken food, or early in the morning. A light cigar after a hearty meal frequently aids digestion, but if one smokes just before eating, the appetite will be lessened and food will lose its relish.

Thirdly, do not smoke the whole of the cigar. Sacrifice a fourth or fifth, because in the stump the poisonous oil or nicotine of tobacco becomes concentrated.

Fourthly, do not smoke more than three or four cigars a day. And in the last place, after smoking cleanse the teeth, and thus avoid their discoloration and impregnation with the fumes of tobacco. A moderate and careful use of tobacco does not harm the teeth, but when excessive it causes the gums to recede, and covers the teeth themselves with the blackening oil of the leaf.

These rules are few and simple, but if followed they cannot fail to be of lasting benefit to every smoker.

How to Mend a Broken Pipe.

The greatest calamity that can befall a confirmed smoker is to have his cherished meerschaum broken, as frequently happens, by a fall or other accident. When this happens the fractured pipe is generally taken to a jeweler's and the dismembered parts rejoined by means of silver bands. This, of course, is expensive; but when was the time that a Yankee could not overcome difficulties of this sort at trifling cost? The Biddford Journal relates that a smoker of that place happened to drop a handsome meerschaum pipe from his knees to the floor and the stem parted in the middle. His friends immediately expressed their sympathy with him, but the man was not in the least disturbed by the disaster. He simply drew his knife from his pocket, extracted blood from his arm with one of the keen blades, and rubbing the broken ends of the pipe in the fluid placed them together, and laid the article on the table to dry. It was a novel experiment, but it is said that it will work successfully every time, and that if a pipe is once broken and cemented with blood it will never again part in that place.

Quaint Ancient Customs in London.

Recently, after morning service in the Priory Church of St. Bartholomew the Great, West Smithfield, an ancient bequest was carried out under the supervision of the rector and the church wardens, by whom twenty-one new shpences were placed on a tombstone in the old churchyard, and were picked up by an equal number of poor widows belonging to the parish. This quaint custom has been maintained for a period long anterior to the Protestant Reformation. The money gift has been preserved, although the name of the benefactors has been lost.

Another ancient Good Friday custom was observed at Allhallows Church, Lombard street, where in accordance with the will of Peter Symonds, which dates so far back as the year 1586, sixty of the younger boys of Christ's Hospital attended divine service in the morning, and afterward received a new penny and a bag of raisins. It was stated that this was the 291st celebration of this quaint ceremony. As a supplement to this bequest, another citizen of London, William Petts, in the year 1692, directed that the minister who preached the sermon on Good Friday should have 20s., the clerk 4s., and the sexton 3s. 6d., besides providing for the distribution of smaller sums of money among the children of the ward and Sunday schools.

A Hawk Done to Death by a Hen.

Four miles from Aiken, S. C., at the home of Mr. T. C. Harker, recently, a matronly hen was cheerily clucking to her downy brood and industriously scratching for their maternal meal, when there appeared in the sky overhead a huge hawk whirling in concentric circles. A sharp note of warning from the patriarchal cock hurried the feeding fowls to places of concealment and followed by a sharp cluck of the old hen, sent the infant spring chickens scurrying beneath the protecting wings of their mother. And none too soon came the alarm. The next instant there was a whirring sound in the air, and, with wings close into his body, coming head foremost like a shot out of a cannon, the hawk landed among the panic-stricken brood. But he had reckoned without his host. The old hen had sand in her gizzard and was true blue. With her wings extended and the feathers of her neck standing apart, she met the onslaught of the bird of prey. No sooner had he touched the ground than she was upon him. The conflict, which was witnessed by several reliable parties, was as brief as it was brilliant, and before succor could reach the plucky little hen she had stretched the feathered pirate lifeless at her feet. The hawk measured just four feet from tip to tip, and was carried to Aiken and exhibited. A lucky blow from the beak of the hen entered his eye and penetrated his brain.