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Any old worn silver? If so, I am prepared to re-plate it. Bring it in now while I have the time. All work guaranteed.

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Geo. Siirs.

Three Old Maids and a Widow

By C. B. LEWIS

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There are few towns of 1,500 population that can boast of three old maids and a widow living on the same street, but that was the case with Clifton, Miss Vinton was an old maid because she never had met with a man good enough for her. Miss Hopkins was an old maid because the young man she would have married at eighteen was sawed in two in a sawmill and she had vowed to be true to his memory. Miss Warner was an old maid because she was determined to marry none but a minister, and all the ministers who came were already provided for. The widow Carter was a widow because part of a house had fallen on her husband.

The old maids and the widow were on visiting terms—in fact, they rather liked each other. Where there are no male candidates for matrimony concerned old maids and widows can sit down together on the same veranda without quarrelling. After the widow had solemnly assured the old maids that nothing on the face of this earth could induce her to be false to the memory of her crushed, the quartet loved each other even more.

One day one of the merchants in the town sold out and a stranger came to take his place. If he had been a married man the dove of peace would have continued to hover over Rose street, but as he was single, only thirty and a "catch" the dove saw a hot time ahead.

The widow let no grass grow under her feet in calling at the store and incidentally mentioning her name and ordering four pounds of sugar all at once. She was one of the Four Hundred of the town, and on the part of the other 399 she made Mr. Strong welcome to their midst. When he had thanked her she ordered two nutmegs and a paper of starch, in addition to the sugar, to let him understand that she wasn't obliged to pinch pennies, and then departed.

An hour later her reprehensible conduct was known to the three old maids, and up went three pairs of hands; six eyes were turned upward in horror and three mouths opened to exclaim in chorus, "How shocking!"

Then, during the next two days, each of the old maids made an excuse to call at the store and follow the programme carried out by the widow. Each thought she was sly and slick, but they found each other out, and from that moment the bond of friendship snapped asunder like an old clothesline left out in the storms of a year.

When women make war on each other they don't use fence rails to pound each other on the head. In most cases they go right on treating each other as nicely as they can to their faces, but using daggers and the darkness to assassinate. The three old maids and the widow gathered together as of yore, but the dagger was used whenever there was the least show.

Mr. Strong proved a social success. The widow gave a little dinner and brought him out, but the old maids really monopolized him for the evening. Then Miss Warner gave an exhibition of her own paintings, which consisted of a cow apparently thirty-six feet long and of a river running up stream instead of down, and the widow held Mr. Strong's attention for an hour while she talked about her crushed and departed.

At the end of six weeks the man who ran the sawmill and had a mortgage on the mill dam figured it out to his wife:

"There are three old maids to one widow, but if the widow gets left she'll be the first one I ever heard of."

Even the small boys around town noted how girly the old maids were becoming. They giggled, they uttered little screams when they turned a corner and found themselves face to face with a cow, they tittered when they asked for gum drops at the grocery. As for the widow, she set her jaw and walked into the store two or three times a week to ask the merchant if he thought the Seventy-seventh National bank of Boston was perfectly sound and to sigh with relief when he assured her of his confidence in the institution. Six reports were soon afloat that Mr. Strong was paying his attentions to this or that one of the four. Then the other three would reply as one:

"Well, may be he is, but what on earth he can see in her is more than I can make out. She grows more homely and dowdier every day. Of course I'm telling you this in confidence, and, of course, it won't go further."

One fatal evening tragedy after tragedy happened, and the light went out of several happy households. Mr. Strong boarded with a family living half a mile from the store. He wanted the walk. He had to cross the bridge over the river and ascend a hill covered with woods, and there wasn't a house between his boarding place and the town.

The three old maids and the widow had had their eyes on this road from the first. They had soon begun walking for exercise. They didn't walk at the hours the merchant might be expected, and if they encountered each other they made all manner of excuses, but each one understood what the other was at and determined to baffle her in the end.

Mr. Strong had been given three months in which to declare his attentions, and he hadn't declared. Time was too valuable to be wasted. His habit was to return to his store after a

6 o'clock supper and remain there until 8. Just before 8 o'clock, then, on this awful night four human figures might have been seen stealing out of the town and over the bridge.

Each and every one of them would have paused on the bridge to listen to the musical plash of the river if they hadn't seen each other. The first, second and third were obliged to go on to avoid the last one. She was the widow. She knew the value of a bridge and a river and a musical plash, and she determined to stick.

One old tramp and a dog were responsible for most of what followed. The tramp came humping along through the town, bent on finding a country stragstack as soon as possible, and as the widow on the bridge heard his footsteps she began to look artless and coy.

It was labor thrown away. The tramp was nearsighted and bumped up against her, and in her fright she went over the low railing and down into the water. If she couldn't swim like a duck she could at least scramble like a cat, and she managed to get ashore. Her condition was dripping, also drooping, also indignant. She realized that no dripping, drooping woman stood the slightest show in that contest, and she dragged herself homeward and was not improved in looks or temper by having to wade through a couple of mud puddles.

Miss Vinton came next. She was sauntering up the hill wondering how "that widow" dared be so bold and brassy when the tramp, who was now on the run for his life, overtook her. In his nearsightedness he took her for a horse and wagon and tried to shy out. She shied to the right at the same time and was sent sprawling by the collision. She got out of the roadside ditch to run into a patch of briars and scream for help, but there was no help. She had to extricate herself and follow the bedraggled widow.

The dog alone was responsible for what happened to the other two old maids. Miss Warner had discovered one woman ahead and two behind her, and suspecting their fendish intentions, she had almost made up her mind to abandon her object when the dog, who had been calling on his brother out in the country, came along and set up a barking and growling. Tragedy was the result. The old maid never had encountered a big bottled dog at night on a hill, and she at once scrambled over the fence into the weeds and ran for her life. She fell down and rolled over, and she rose up again and struggled on, and when she reached home two hours later she immediately went into hysterics, and Dr. Seaton got his first night call for four years.

The dog had met with such success that he was encouraged to persevere. He came upon Miss Hopkins out of the shadows like a frisking haystack, and as she screamed out and spread her wings to fly she tripped and went down. The fall might have injured her but for the fact that she fell upon soft mud. She couldn't get back to town looking like the mortar mixer for a scraper, and she continued on to the merchant's boarding house to get the use of hoes and scrapers. They were furnished, but while she was using them she heard the ten-year-old daughter whispering to her mother that she'd bet a cent that Miss Hopkins had come out there to giggle for Mr. Strong.

That was an awful night in Clifton, though only four feminine hearts knew just how awful it was. Morning dawned with a murky sky overhead. It seemed to three old maids and a widow as if something more was still to happen. They were right. When the butcher boy called for his orders he repeated the same words at every house on his route:

"Say, you heard the news? Mr. Strong has gone to Phillipsville to get married, today, and he's going to bring the bride home tonight. Hain't it great?"

The Human Wall in the Bell.

Tradition has a weird tale to tell about the casting of the bell which stands in the center of Seoul, the capital of Korea. The mystery of its sonorous clang still inspires the inhabitants with awe and pity. When the bell was first cast it was found to be cracked. It was thrown into the smelting pot and cast a second time, with no better result. The artificers proceeded to recast it a third time, and while they were on the point of completing their task a woman walked up to the furnace with a child and cried, "Twice have ye failed, and thrice will ye fail if there be no blood in it!" With these words she snatched up her child and threw it into the molten mass. The bell, when cast, was found to be without a flaw, and to this day the people aver that the tone of the bell as it peals forth is the piteous wail of the child. "Mother, mother, oh, mother!" The legend, it would appear, finds a counterpart in the different countries of the far east, as do so many in the western world.

The Social Sea Gull.

Gulls love society. They always nest in colonies and live together the entire year. They are most useful birds about the water fronts of our cities. These gulls have developed certain traits that mark them as land birds rather than birds of the sea. In southern California and Oregon I have watched flocks of them leave the ocean and rivers at daybreak every morning and sail inland for miles, skimming about the country to pick up a living in the fields, following the plow all day long, as blackbirds do, and fighting at the farmer's heels for angleworms. I have seen others rummage daily about pigpens and gorge on the offal thrown out from the slaughter houses. If any bird is useful to man, the gull is certainly of great economic importance as a scavenger.—American Magazine.

BIRDS OF ILL NATURE.

The Cruelty of Swans as Displayed Toward Other Fowls.

The graceful swan is one of the most ungracious in its ways. Not only (in the breeding season) does a male bird resent the intrusion of a strange gentleman, but it will spend the day in driving off from its domain any unlucky geese which might be plainly assumed to have no designs upon its domestic arrangements and have, indeed, no desire beyond that for a comfortable wash and swim. It will also pursue even the most innocent of newborn ducklings while they unwittingly rejoice in an early taste of their common element.

When an only child has passed out of the cygnet stage of life and grown to full physical if not mental maturity father and mother swans have been known to fall upon and deliberately beat it to death with wing and beak. The gratified parents swim gracefully about the mere in which they lived while the great white corpse of their son lay battered and dead upon the shore. The following year, after another had been born to them and in infancy carried upon his mother's back, they began to treat him so roughly that, not being plucked like them, he wisely flew away, and we saw him no more. Curiously enough, geese which have experienced rudeness from swans in the lusty spring have been known to retaliate in the calmer autumn, when the fierceness of their enemy had become mitigated. I have seen a gander leap upon the back of a once arrogant swan and pound away at it in the full enjoyment of gratified revenge.

THE NATIONAL FLAG.

No Possession of a Country More Lojally Loved and Revered.

There is no possession of a country which is more deeply revered, more consistently loved or more lojally supported than its national flag. In our country this is especially true, for in that one emblem are embodied all the principles which our forefathers upheld, all the benefits of a century and a quarter of enlightened progress and all the hope and assurance of a promising future.

The stripes of alternate red and white proclaim the original union of thirteen states to maintain the Declaration of Independence. Its stars, white on a field of blue, proclaim that union of states constituting our national constellation which receives a new star with every state. Thus the stars and stripes signify union and "in union there is strength."

The very colors have a significance. White stands for purity, red for valor and blue for justice, together forming a combination which it is our inherited privilege to honor and uphold. It is not the flag of a king or an emperor or a president. It is the flag of the people, brought into being by their will, defended when necessary by their patriotism and to which they turn for protection in time of danger. No matter into what parties our people may be divided, due to political beliefs and leanings, they all stand united under one flag. It is the emblem of unity, safety and faith.—St. Nicholas.

Word Fashions.

The history of the word asparagus shows how, even in the days of dictionaries, word fashions change. In the eighteenth century, even in elegant usage, the delicacy was regularly called "sparrow grass." A dictionary of 1791 says that "asparagus" has an air of stiffness and pedantry. "Sperag" had been the usual English form in the sixteenth century, but in the seventeenth century heralds brought back the original Greek and Latin spelling "asparagus." Pepsys varies between "sparrow grass," "sparagus" and "sparague." No doubt the eighteenth century relapse was the last, and the "a" is back for good now.

Hogs and Storms.

Hogs are always more restless than usual on the approach of bad weather, and when these animals run to and fro with mouthfuls of straw, leaves or branches the indication is for very foul weather. In their native state pigs probably made their own beds, and when bad weather was coming perhaps gathered a larger supply of straw or leaves than usual to serve as a protection against the rain.

Fireworks.

Fireworks originated in the thirteenth century, along with the evolution of powder and cannon. They were first employed by the Florentines, and later the use of fireworks became popular in Rome at the creation of the popes. The first fireworks, which resemble those which we see nowadays, were manufactured by Torre, an Italian artist, and displayed in Paris in 1764.

Consolation.

"So you are still unmarried," said the girl friend.

"Yes," answered Miss Cayenne. "And when I see the disappointments of the girls who were married I begin to believe there is, after all, something in this doctrine of the survival of the fittest."

Experience.

Mother—Now, Tommy, you know what happens to little boys who are naughty. Tommy—Yes, I know. They papas give 'em a licking, and then their mamas pet 'em and kiss 'em and give 'em nice things to eat.

The Millionaire.

He—Do you think you could live on love alone? She—'d like to try it awhile. I've never had anything but money and flattery.—Detroit Free Press.

THE HUMAN BODY.

Composition of the House in Which Man's Spirit Abides.

The foundation of the human body is composed of 206 bones, covered by 522 voluntary muscles. The smaller blood vessels are so numerous as to be beyond the telling, but we have no fewer than about 1,000 arteries through which the blood is always flowing under the government of the heart.

The blood is composed of two constituents, termed by physiologists red and white corpuscles, numbering some thousands of millions.

Our house has something like 600 tiny telegraph wires, called nerves, connected with the brain and spinal cord, and these little wires are always throbbing with messages which they telegraph to the main office—the brain. Besides these there are the sympathetic wires, or nerves, numbered by thousands, which help the former.

The front of our house, the skin, has been measured up and found, if spread out, to cover fifteen square feet.

The ventilation scheme by which we get our fresh air is built of such fine porous stuff that, if spread out, it would be found to cover a stretch of land big enough to contain a fifteen roomed house. We refer to the lungs which have hundreds of millions of air cells.

To every square inch of the palm of the hand are 2,500 pores, while the number of sweat glands in the skin generally is 2,500,000. Their function is to deposit secretions upon the skin; hence the necessity of a daily tub to wash this stuff away, otherwise it clogs the sweat glands and prevents their proper working.

SUNSTROKE.

Properly Speaking, It Should Be Called Heat Apoplexy.

What is called "sunstroke," the effect of great heat, should be "heat apoplexy." The misnomer leads the multitude to suppose that death from it is caused through being struck down by exposure to a special malevolency of the sun's rays. This is not so, for patients are with equal frequency found in houses and barracks and tents and at night as well as day and, whether in sun or shade, are generally those whose health is debilitated by dissipation, disease and overfatigue, and the evidences from all parts of the world show that exposure to intense sun rays is less to be feared in dry countries than in countries where the temperature is much lower, but the atmosphere is moist, and perspiration is consequently retarded.

People suffer more from a temperature of 87 degrees F. at Brussels than at 122 degrees F. at Cairo, owing to the moist air of the first and the extreme dryness of the air in the latter city.

The inhabitants of the eastern coasts of the United States bear with amazement of temperatures from 118 to 128 degrees F. being tolerated in the dry regions of Arizona and South Colorado without harm and that the ordinary avocations of farm and factory are pursued without inconvenience. This is due to the cooling effect of rapid evaporation from the surface of the body, and hence the sun's malignancy is unknown.—London Mail.

Family Crests in England.

She had discovered the family crest and was having a die made for her letter paper.

"You'd have to pay \$5 a year to use this crest on your stationery if you were English," said the stationer.

"There is in England a tax of \$5 a year on all who sport a crest."

"So few people are entitled to a crest, though," she said, "I shouldn't think such a tax would bring in the English government much money."

"The tax brings in \$250,000 a year," replied the stationer. "There are 50,000 English with crests on their stationery."

The Marriage Knot.

A good deal is heard of the "marriage knot," but very few of us realize that the knot was ever anything more than a figure of speech. Among the Babylonians tying the knot was part of the marriage ceremony, says Home Chat. The priest took a thread from the garment of the bride and another from that of the bridegroom and tied them into a knot, which he gave to the bride, thus symbolizing the binding nature of the union which now existed between herself and her husband.

Highland Deaths.

Fennant in his "Tour of Scotland" tells that on the death of a Highlander, the corpse being stretched on a board and covered with a coarse linen wrapper, the friends placed a wooden platform on the breast of the deceased containing a small quantity of salt and earth, separate and unminged—the earth an emblem of the corruptible body, the salt an emblem of the immortal spirit.

The Speculator's Progress.

Graball—"So you sent your boy around the globe for a little trip, eh? I heard he was dabbling some in stocks? Ritchie—Dabbling? He probably was—at first, but when I discovered his predicament he was floundering in them!"

A Man of Ability.

Tomson—Johnson has no ability of any kind. Jackson—No ability? Nonsense. Why, he can ask you for a loan in such a way that you thank your lucky stars for the opportunity to accommodate him.—London Tit-Bits.

Used to It.

Mrs. Knicker—Weren't you frightened when the bull bellowed at you on account of your new dress? Mrs. Bocker—No. It was exactly the way Henry behaved when he got the bill.

GUIMARD, THE SPIDER.

The Great Dancer of the Great Days of the Ballet.

The elder Vestris, who flourished in the middle of the eighteenth century, called himself the "god of dancing" and declared in all sincerity and without rebuke that his century had produced but three supreme men—himself, Frederick the Great and Voltaire. On one occasion when reproving his son Augustus for refusing to dance before the king of Sweden at the request of the king of France he said that he would not tolerate any misunderstanding between the houses of Vestris and Bourbon, which had lived hitherto upon the most friendly terms.

Madeleine Guimard made her debut when she was thirteen years of age and for nearly thirty years kept all Paris worshipping at her feet. This was a success of art and not of beauty, for Guimard was so aggressively thin that she was known as "the spider."

She discovered the great painter David, who helped Fragonard to adorn her house with frescoes. Indeed, Fragonard, for whose paintings today fabulous sums have been paid, lost his commission because he dared to fall in love with his patron. Guimard had a theater in her own house, and her entertainments there were deemed extravagant in an age of luxury. Paris could not spare her to London until she was past her fortieth year. She was a sort of boudfir adviser to Marie Antoinette, and so great was the esteem in which she was held that one of the most distinguished sculptors of the day molded her foot, and when her arm was broken in a stage accident a mass for her speedy recovery was celebrated at Notre Dame.

THE BLACK BASS.

A Marine Butcher That Kills For the Pleasure of Slaughtering.

The bass is like a roaring lion going about seeking whom he may devour. I have seen a good sized specimen get into a school of minnows and eat and stuff until he could not get any more into his capacious insides, then go off by himself, throw up what he had eaten and begin over again, after which he would keep on killing the poor innocent minnows, apparently for the mere pleasure of killing. Very young bass will attack minute water life which flourishes on water plants and get away with every one in sight, adopting the same method as their elders. To illustrate the extent of the cannibalism of the black bass here is the experience of a superintendent of one of the fish hatcheries in Pennsylvania:

"The superintendent made an actual count of 20,000 young bass about an inch long and placed them in a fry pond by themselves. He gave them food six times a day, and, according to his statement, each fish ate on an average three times its own weight of the prepared food every twenty-four hours. They were placed in a pond on the 1st of July, and on Oct. 1, when they were taken out, there were only 11,000, and the record showed that less than 200 died from sickness. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that in addition to the food given them by the superintendent there were about 9,000 bass devoured by their stronger and more fortunate companions.—W. E. Meelan in Field and Stream.

Caring For the Teeth.

Without good teeth there cannot be thorough mastication. Without thorough mastication there cannot be perfect digestion, and consequently poor health results; hence the paramount importance of sound teeth. Clean teeth do not decay. The teeth should not be brushed from side to side. If this is done the points of the gums will be injured and the teeth loosened. The upper teeth should be brushed from the top downward (from the gums to the ends of the teeth), the lower teeth from the bottom upward, also from the gums to the extremity of the teeth. It is essential to wash the teeth at night and wise to wash them also in the morning. Rinse the mouth after each meal.

Swiss Enterprise.

There is a weekly journal published at Zurich, Switzerland, called the Engaged Couples' Advertiser, which has agents at work all over Switzerland ascertaining the name of every girl who is engaged to be married and that of her prospective husband. These names are printed in the paper, with the addresses of the sweethearts and a description of their social position. Soon after the announcement of her engagement a girl finds herself almost in a position to start a shop, so numerous are the samples she receives from firms anxious to sell their goods to her.

Gun Barrels.

To brown gun barrels wet a piece of rag with chloride of antimony, dip it into olive oil and rub the barrel over. In forty-eight hours it will be covered with a fine coat of rust. Then rub the barrel with a fine steel scratch brush and wipe with a rag dipped in boiled linseed oil. To rebrown remove the old coating with oil and emery paper, then remove the grease with caustic potash.

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