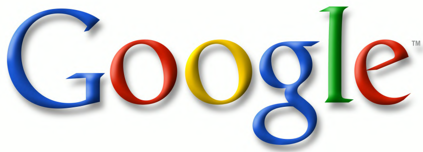

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THE TRANSIT OF VENUS

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

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1902.

THE TRANSIT OF VENUS

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"Gentlemen, my niece." (*Page 89*).

THE TRANSIT OF VENUS

BY

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA
Author of "The Fifth String," "Pipetown Sandy,"
"Through the Year with Sousa"

ILLUSTRATED BY
HELEN BELL

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THE TRANSIT OF VENUS

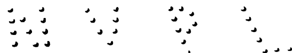
THE TRANSIT OF VENUS

CHAPTER I

"Now what I want is a dinner and dance that will make little old New York sit up and take notice," and young Stoneman, in the manner of cigarette-smokers, blew encircling wreaths around the last syllable.

"Everything will be in keeping with your desires," said the hotel manager. "Menu, flowers, decorations, music and service shall be of the best,—leave it to me."

"The dinner will be for twenty, and there will be twenty-five couples at the dance that follows," the young man explained, consulting a carefully prepared list, made in the bold chirography of the affected feminine of latter-day society. The manager noted the number of people for each function and the date, January fifteenth.



"Of course, there is to be a limit to the expense. Can you give me an idea as to the cost?"

Exhibiting one of his most engaging smiles, the manager, that compendium of discernment, diplomacy, commerce and sentiment, contemplated the young man approvingly, and said, with negative assurance and dexterous ambiguity, that he had every reason to believe, in fact he was confident, that the bill would be satisfactory to Mr. Stoneman, knowing as he did the gentleman's reputation as a host.

"Very well, I leave it to you. Don't forget the date, and by all means let the papers know all about it. It's to be a birthday dinner and dance in honor of Miss Nancy Burroughs; and, by the way, you had better get at least a dozen photographs of the young lady for the society reporters. You can get them at Brown's Studio; the one where she is singing '*Ah, fors e lui*' is a hummer!"

As soon as Stoneman departed, the hotel

manager went to his inner office, took from a shelf a confidential guide, turned to the letter "S" and read, "Stoneman, Edward (Memphis), son of John Stoneman, millionaire lumberman. E. S. is a member of the New York Stock Exchange, but is never seen on the floor or in Wall Street. Has an office but no business. No income except what his father allows. Father and son not friendly. Some times very slow pay, but has always met his bills."

In the various forms of theatrical entertainment, especially that listed under the head of vaudeville, there are combinations of performers known as "sister acts" or "brother acts," and sometimes we see displayed an announcement that the "World-famed Pyramid Family of Grand and Lofty Tumblers will appear for a limited number of nights." As a matter of fact, speaking confidentially and not for publication, the beautiful Fluffy Sisters are sisters only spiritually—not parentally; the famous Paragon Brothers are respectively

of the Hebraic and the Celtic type, and the Pyramids are gathered from the four quarters of the globe. It's a harmless deception and lends itself to perfection of entertainment, for talent is the desideratum, not consanguinity. It is probably done for advertising purposes, for there is sentiment, admiration and curiosity surrounding a "sister," "brother" or "family" combination.

There is one combination in the world of "words and music" that is always genuine—the mother-and-daughter team. Wherever art, society and wealth congregate, there you will find this duo. It is made up of a "heavenly endowed" daughter, studying vocal art, and a wonderfully practical mother, watchful and positive. This maternal chaperone can be humbugged only in two directions—daughter's abilities and teachers' mandates.

Mrs. James Le Grand Burroughs and her daughter Nancy were of this type. They had been in New York five years. The "heavenly endowed" was preparing herself for an

operatic career, to quote the mother, "and daughter needs the sea air in the summer, so it has been impossible for us to visit home for the past five years. You know a great singer's career is so trying and self-sacrificing!" Nancy was thirty, looked nearer twenty; mother was fifty, but would easily pass for forty. And father, who was fifty, appeared as sixty-five, and lived and slaved so that the votaries of art might applaud the "heavenly endowed" in the years after he had departed this life.

Just why husband and wife should be separated in this too lonely world, because daughter has a "heavenly endowed" voice that can be developed in New York and Milan, Paris or Berlin only, is one of the cruel enigmas of the age. It is difficult to realize why father and mother, who in the first years of their married life felt the keenness of a separation of twenty-four hours, should live apart in the middle age of their existence, so that their daughter may make a success as a singer. Is

it worth the sacrifice? If the shattered hopes and the dead ambitions of the unsuccessful are paralleled with those whom fame acclaims, it will be as a hundred to one. Father butchered to make a primadonnic star, hermitized in the complexities of *solitaire*—an offering on the Altar of Art!

If it should be so willed that all mothers must take their first-born and step out of the family circle, until the child had accomplished the maternal ambitions, there never would be a second-born. The Malthusian doctrine would become automatic, and the theory of mathematical and geometrical progression would not be necessary to apply to population and subsistence. The Biblical injunction "to multiply on the face of the earth" would be a dead letter. War with its manifold means of destruction has made futile attempts to annihilate the peoples of the earth from the days of the ancients onward; but Art, forming a triumvirate with an ambitious mother and a "heavenly endowed" daughter, could accom-

plish the extinction of the human family so successfully that in a century or two the long-armed gorilla would be rated the superman of this earth.

Nancy Burroughs' mission, according to Mother Burroughs, was to electrify the world with the radiance of her voice and her being. She was deep-chested and ample of hip, excellent qualifications for a singer or a swimmer. Originally a wholesome, good-natured, attractive girl, she had grown into a shrewd, carping and argumentative woman. All the womanly traits in her nature were gradually becoming brittle, and the curves of her thoughts were changing to the angularity of pessimism. She had come to New York with the belief that in two years at most she would be *a* prima donna at the Metropolitan and, in three, *the* prima donna.

Alas! Five years had passed and she still remained a student. Of course, the vocal student should see all the operas and attend all the song recitals, should go to as many plays

as possible to study examples of histrionic achievement, and should attend bridge parties, for they furnish an excellent medium for the study of human weaknesses, not forgetting lunches, teas, dinners and suppers, where gastronomical and conversational characteristics of Society are ever in evidence. These were the instructions of Nancy's singing master, and with a fidelity worthy of the cause, mother and daughter blindly followed them. How Nancy, with all these duties and recreations, had time to raise her voice even in a diatonic gamut was a mystery.

Edward Stoneman was "rushing" Nancy,—to copy the vernacular of his and her most intimate friends—and the dinner and dance on the fifteenth of January were to be given in her honor. Necessarily the gossips believed that no young man could give a party in honor of a young lady without being deeply in love with her.

Mother Burroughs was fond of young Stoneman. He always, she would say, invited

her to the opera, the theater, or to dinner whenever he asked Nancy. Then she would add, "So different from some men who think they own a girl if they buy her an ice-cream soda. Besides," the voluble lady would continue, "he hasn't any of those mean, contemptible, suspicious feelings that some men have because a girl is alone with her mother in New York, and he doesn't bother Nancy or interfere with her studies by making love. Therefore, he is very welcome."

Of course, down in her heart, Mother Burroughs would have liked nothing better than that Nancy should marry Stoneman, for, she argued, the heir to thirty millions is not to be sneezed at, especially when there are so many instances of singers becoming greater in their art as matrons than as maids.

The fifteenth of January came, and with it one of the most brilliant social affairs of the season. Edward and Nancy were declared the luckiest people in the world, and one bibulous guest hoped that the next party would be a

wedding. Edward had never thought of that, —in fact, he never thought of anything except having a good time—but it gave him an idea.

"Why not?" said he to himself. "She is a nice girl." So, when he left mother and daughter at their apartments, at three A. M., he asked, "May I come and see you Thursday evening?"

"You are always welcome," was the mother's reply, "but I must get Nancy to bed now. She has a lesson at ten. Good night."

CHAPTER II

At nine the next morning, Edward Stoneman was awakened by the ringing of the telephone.

"Telegram for Mr. Stoneman; shall I send it up?"

"Open it and tell me who sent it."

"It is signed John Stoneman."

"Send it up."

It read, "Will arrive about ten to-morrow morning." Its date was January fifteenth.

At ten the father came. The son was at breakfast in his apartments.

"Read the papers this morning while coming into town. That was some party you had last night!" volunteered the senior, after father and son had greeted each other.

"Yes; it was a very nice affair," yawned the other. "Sorry you weren't here, governor, to

have taken it in. You would have enjoyed the company, I'm sure."

"No doubt," the father rejoined laconically. "Who is Miss Burroughs?"

"Oh, a very sweet and talented girl from the West, studying voice culture. Going to be a great prima donna one of these days, wedded to her art—"

"But willing to commit bigamy, if a desirable happens along, eh?" added the father, sardonically.

"If you mean me as a desirable, you're clean off."

"She wouldn't turn down a handsome chap of twenty-six, with pleasant prospects, would she?"

"How do I know? You'd better ask her."

"Then you are not engaged to her?"

"Certainly not," snapped Edward.

"Are you in love?"

"Well, frankly, the dinner-party I gave last night might lead to an engagement. I rather fancy Miss Burroughs. I wouldn't say I love

her, but it would not take a great deal of urging to bring about that condition," the son answered, in the most commonplace manner.

"Oh, I see—by the way, what did this affair cost you?"

"Haven't got the bill yet, but the hotel manager felt sure it would be perfectly satisfactory —but it was no 'dollar a head' affair, you may rest assured. When I give a party, I give a party that does credit to my family, and you cannot take the whole floor of the best hotel in the world and have flowers and favors and suppers and orchestra for nothing."

"Very true. Who is to pay for it?"

"You, of course. I telegraphed you for ten thousand last Monday, as I have run beyond my allowance during the past month."

"You say, 'you of course.' Well, I, of course, will *not* pay for it; that's why I'm here," and the elder quickly vacated one chair only to throw himself vehemently into another.

"What's the use of your grumbling, governor? You can't take your money away with

you when you die," retorted the son. "There are no pockets in a shroud."

"No, there are no pockets in a shroud, but there are holes in pockets; one must be on the lookout all the time. Only last week it cost me three hundred dollars in repairs, and one hundred and fifty in lawyers' fees, owing to the stupidity of an insurance broker in making out an accident policy for my naphtha launch."

"How was that?" asked the son.

"He insured against any one running into me, but not against my running into the other fellow. We had a collision, and the court decided I was the runner-in."

"How deplorable—how awful!" Sarcasm clothed each word, as the son spoke. "Five hundred and fifty cold dollars, a sum truly colossal to a man quoted at thirty millions! You are to be pitied, to be condoled with, to be helped. I will start a subscription at once and have you reimbursed for your great loss. You see that dollar bill on the breakfast table? I intended it for the waiter, but I think I'll take

it back and start a fund for your financial relief."

"Persiflage and satire have no effect on me," said the father, dryly.

"No, but common sense should," retorted the son. "Do you remember when you lost five million in one day on a lumber slump?"

"Yes, I do recall that, but it was in the line of business,—business is one thing, but being buncoed by an insurance broker or milked dry by a thriftless son is another."

"Sidestepping the rudeness of your remark, let me inform you, my dear father, that, if I have done nothing else, I have made a study of you—"

"Indeed, I feel honored."

"And I find that you are so constituted that you are incapable of comprehending large figures. It is beyond you to realize the bigness of five million, but, when a hundred dollar bill is in jeopardy, you rise and emit a yell that is heard in the intervening space between the Atlantic and Pacific, and the St. Lawrence and

the Gulf Stream." The young man rather prided himself on this outburst of oratory.

"Go ahead; I am much interested," said the father, with an inflection which pretended that he knew his son was simply juggling words, and thereby saving gray matter to make thoughts.

"Yes, I will go ahead. I beg in the interest of peace and tranquillity that you change the amount of my allowance. You now allow me the enormous sum of two-fifty per week."

"Two hundred and fifty dollars per week," replied the father, dwelling on each syllable.

"That's what I said,—two-fifty per week. Instead of that, make it ten hundred thousand for fifty-two weeks or three hundred and sixty-five days. As you are unable to grasp big figures, it will never dawn on you that it means a million a year; pennies count with you, not dollars. I'm not ragging you, father, I am just giving you solid facts, which I think it my duty to tell you."

"Well, whether it is your duty to tell me or

not, I have come all the way from Memphis to tell you, if you want to play the grand gentleman and multi-millionaire, supply your own multi-millions. I am resolved not to be a party to your extravagance."

"See here, father, I am sick and tired of the restrictions you place upon me. In the five years since I left college, every time you send either my allowance or what I have needed above it, you enclose a ten-page letter and a thesis on my filial duty. I am sick of it all and I won't stand for it." The young man paced the floor with suppressed nervousness.

"You won't stand for it? You will have to stand for it!" The father arose, put on his hat, but the son intercepted him.

"Please sit down, governor," this, persuasively. "I want you to listen to me." The father resumed his chair. "I have thought all about the relation between a father and a son."

"And your conclusion is?"

"I am your son because you wanted me, but you are not my father because I wanted you."

"Proceed!"

"You are responsible for my being on earth —I didn't ask you to be my father. Had I been consulted, I would have remained unborn."

"It might have been to our several advantages had Nature provided a means to consult you," sarcastically added the father, although amused at his son's angle of reasoning.

"Let's look conditions in the face. A man and a woman marry; no more than married they begin talking of the happy moment when there will come into their lives a little stranger. The little stranger is to look like father, mother, grandfather or grandmother; the little stranger is to be a great man like George Washington. If it's a girl, it will bear in imagination a lifelike resemblance to a distant but opulent aunt."

"Practical, at least," offered the elder.

"The little stranger comes, indifferent to its surroundings; has ears that look best if

pinned back, eyes like gimlet-holes and yells like a Comanche."

"And father and mother are delighted with it."

"Yes, but baby doesn't give a continental about his progenitors; papa and mamma wanted baby; papa and mamma own baby; papa and mamma blow about baby; baby isn't blowing about papa and mamma."

"What is sweeter and purer and more unselfish than a mother's vigil over her offspring?" asked the father gravely.

"That's born of proprietorship," rejoined the son.

"Do you not believe in maternal instinct?"

"It's nothing but habit, which, when it reaches its highest development, we think of such great importance and mystery that we give it a new name—instinct."

"That may be, but the female has it in a larger degree than the male."

"Granted," continued the son. "That comes

from the circumscribed life of the woman; the fewer the digressions and employment of the brain, the stronger the habit or instinct."

"Women are wonderfully self-sacrificing, especially mothers," parried the father.

"They are all right till the question of ownership comes into play. Let a scrawny, yelling, sour-smelling bit of a brat be placed in jeopardy of its life in company with the sweetest and most beautiful infant in the world. The brat's mother will save her child, even though the other babe must perish thereby."

"That's Nature—it dates from the days of Adam, for did he not say, 'bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh'?" the father replied.

"No doubt he did. Suppose these babies had been changed in their cradles and the beautiful one was none other than the offspring of the supposed mother of the brat, would the maternal instinct know it?"

"How could she?" asked the parent.

"That's it, and that's where intuition and instinct take a tumble. Those supposedly myste-

rious waves that enter into the female brain, labeled instinct and intuition, if chased to cover, are simply the effect of habit and the outcome of guessing!" emphatically exclaimed the son.

"How do you arrive at that conclusion?"

"By observation. If feminine intuition were worth a feather in Hades, there never would be a betrayed woman, for woman is by nature moral and refined."

"I am glad to hear you say that!" exclaimed the older man. "That has always been my view of the sex."

"Now, let's examine the processes of intuition," said the son, in the manner of a legal exponent. "She meets a man, handsome, subtle, chivalric in his flatteries, winning in personality, splendid in companionship."

"Fine qualities indeed," observed the father.

"Her unerring intuition starts to work immediately. Can he be trusted? No! says Intuition. And out of her life he goes. Again she meets a man, with pretty much the same

qualities as the rejected one, but he is better groomed, wears his necktie more in the mode than the other fellow, his gloves proclaim the fashionable color. Unerring intuition again presents the question, Can he be trusted? Yes! And the man proves himself the biggest scamp in town. Everybody knows it but Miss Intuition. She finds it out later; sometimes, I fear, too late."

"In your opinion, instinct and intuition are unreliable, and selfishness and love of ownership are universal?"

"I would not say absolutely universal, but the belief in ownership blinds judgment," said the son.

"An example?"

"When a country is at war, a father magnanimously offers his son to his country. Son does something and gets his name in the dispatches. Who is the first to brag about it? Father! Who goes about with an account of the glorious deed in his hand, crying, 'Just read what my son did!' Father! And his cry is

always the cry of the owner. *My* son—*my* son—*my* son!"

"Isn't that paternal pride?"

"I think it's ownership. The father talks usually as if the son's only reason for having done anything out of the ordinary is that he is *his* son."

"Blood will tell," replied the elder.

"That's all rot—blood doesn't tell. When the son does something that brings disgrace on his family, father doesn't shout, 'He's my son.' No, he abjures the relationship."

"Then he only desires to be master when the prospect pleases him."

"That's it."

"We have only experience, intuition and reason to guide us. What would you suggest as the equitable attitude between father and son?"

"That both should carefully weigh the relationship and the causes."

"The fact of my being your father is the cause of your being my son."

"Yes, and the fact of my being your son

is the cause of your being my father; therefore, the relationship is of absolute equality. It comes under the head of the aforesaid 'bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh' idea."

"And how are the conditions to be equalized by this equality?"

"By each sharing what he possesses in a greater degree."

"To elucidate?"

"I have a well of affection. I give it to you freely—you have a mint of money, you give freely."

"A sort of fifty-fifty arrangement."

"A sort of host and guest arrangement—you as a host invite me on earth—I as your guest accept your invitation."

"In perpetuity?"

"Just so. You would not give less of the good things of life to your guest than you have yourself." And the son sat back contemplating the effect of his argument.

"With slight variations, your specious arguments are the usual ones offered by the sons of

rich men. Sons without one tittle of affection in their hearts squander thousands of their fathers' money, and, when they can't get the ready cash, give a promise-to-pay after their parents' demise. The fault lies not with the son but with the parent."

"Thank Heaven! That's an admission, at least."

"Listen!" And the elder Stoneman stood erect. "Your grandfather, my father, was opposed to my marriage with your mother. She came of a family that had been at loggerheads with his people for years. In a scene between my father and me he threatened to disown and disinherit me, if I married against his wishes. My reply was that he had married,—why shouldn't I? His father had given him money, why should not mine? He was responsible for my being here, and, if I had inherited a desire to marry and live in luxury, he was responsible for it."

"You had him there, governor," chuckled the younger.

"Yes, apparently I had him, and he weakly gave in. I married your now sainted mother, and you were the fruit of that union."

"Naturally you won out."

"I did, but both my father and myself made the mistake of not considering the future."

"In what way?"

"How my offspring would act, how he would insist he was brought into the world without his consent, would view life and its responsibilities."

"And now I am at variance with you," soberly and slowly spoke the son.

"But," continued the father, "there is a remedy for the future—a remedy to correct the errors of my father and your father."

"And that is?"

"Had my father said to me, when I insisted on marrying your mother, 'The responsibility for your act rests with you—we are forever apart, you go your way, I shall go mine.' "

"That would have been cruel."

"Cruel or not, it would have brought me to

a realization of my position. It might have drawn from within me traits of practical independence—not theoretical. It might have awakened dormant faculties for my betterment. It might have shown me how helpless I was to provide the comforts and luxuries to which my fiancée was accustomed. It might have come to me that she should not be sacrificed on the Altar of Love."

"And?"

"I never might have married. But my father melted under my diaphanous arguments, delivered with sledge-hammer force, through puerile reasoning."

"A proper father," said the son.

"A proper father, perhaps, but a blinded and weak grandfather. The consequence of his timidity was the coming of you."

"And you think I have inherited all of your bad traits?" asked the younger.

"All of which might have been obliterated, had I been thrown on my own resources."

"You believe you can change your disposition, just as you would your coat?"

"The world contains many men who have crushed the bad in them, and many others who have crushed the good."

"I do not believe any argument or experience would change my views of your responsibility for me."

"Then I must accept your theory of host and guest," quickly replied the father.

"And deduce?"

"The following, as the law and order of my house. Guests are unwelcome, when they do not follow the tenets of good breeding. Guests are banished, when they violate the hospitality of the host. You as my guest must avoid the sorrows and disappointments, the humiliations suffered by my father and myself. You must avoid the possibility of being held responsible for another's coming on earth. Do you understand?"

"I do."

"This is done to spare you the curses, the

contempt and the weak arguments of a possible future son."

"And if I refuse?"

"Then as an undesirable guest, I must show you the door."

"Come in"—this in answer to a sharp knock. The bellboy handed an envelope to the young man; he opened it. It contained the bill for the dinner and dancing party of the night before. "Seven thousand and eighty dollars," he read, then handed the bill to his father. "That's the cost of my party," he said.

"Some party, my son!" Turning to the bellboy, the older man said, "Wait a moment, young man." He took from his satchel a blank check, filled in the amount of the bill, and after signing it, put both in an envelope. Handing it to the waiting boy, he said, "Bring back the receipt."

In a few moments the manager made his appearance and with many assurances of his most distinguished consideration, said, "I simply

sent the bill to enlighten Mr. Stoneman as to the cost, and not for collection."

"That's all right," said the father with great affability. "In these days of poor service and indifferent regard for the comfort of a guest, the least irritating moment in a hotel is when one is paying his bill."

"We can not always govern our retinue of help," explained the manager, apologetically.

"Why, I've been told," maliciously continued the lumber magnate, "that a waiter in this establishment jeopardizes his social position, should he, even by accident, thank a guest for a tip."

"There is no authentic case where they ever did," said the son, laughing.

"That's all right," said the father. "'Pay as you go' is my motto."

When the manager had departed, the son, melting visibly, came to the side of his father and said, "I thank you, dad, for helping me out. I know these people have got my number. Every bill is sent me on the minute. They

know I'm depending on you for every dollar I spend and are taking no chances."

"Reverting to our argument. As you are my guest, of course I advance the cash for all packages that may be addressed you. You settle later," the father explained.

"Do you think I can fill the requirements of an honored guest?" falteringly spoke the son.

"You can try. You know the reward or the penalty. If you are not equal to the sacrifice, your argument will be your son's argument twenty-five years hence—and your humiliation, but—

> "So nigh is grandeur to our dust
> So near is God to man,
> When duty whispers, low, 'Thou must,'
> The youth replies, 'I can.'"

"That is a splendid sentiment—a sentiment of a brave heart—it points out duty."

"Every cause," said the father, "must have a martyr."

"I'm fearful," continued the son, "that I am not cast in the martyrdom mold."

"One never can tell."

The son went to the window, gazed absent-mindedly at the passing throng, then turned towards his father and spoke slowly. "I do not quite catch what I must do to conform to your wishes, father."

"Remedy the mistake of your grandfather and your father. Don't marry."

CHAPTER III

Man's predilection to make laws is only equaled by his capacity to break them. Forms, ceremonies, rules, regulations and statutes are jumbled together in a sort of legal grab-bag, and whatever the occasion you can extract a precedent that bears on it.

A man invents something of absolute value to the world—it may be a new kind of vehicle, it may be a new kind of gun or a new kind of steamboat; immediately there come into existence statutes bearing on the new invention—some of practical value, some merely of repression or oppression. Laws, good, bad or indifferent, grow out of man's all-absorbing passion for meddling.

The customs and laws concerning matrimony are enormous in number and take cognizance of every point from breach of promise

to annulment. All the various ramifications surrounding the joining of two in the holy bonds of wedlock are carefully provided for, save one. By some strange oversight man's officiousness has not found play in enacting a law for enforcing a form of action or procedure attending a proposal or promise of marriage. The breaking of a heart is taken care of by statute, but the questioning of that most important organ is left to the fancy, the ingenuity, the duplicity, or the simplicity, of man. Perhaps some day there will be an enactment of how a man should propose and a woman accept. Novelists and funny men, cartoonists and dramatists, have put on exhibition, or have read into the record, their own formulæ, but it is believed they are the offspring of imagination rather than of experience.

What sensation so perplexing and yet so thrilling as the form you'll adopt when on your way to propose! One rehearses just what one is to say to the charming recipient and what her answer will be when the momentous instant

arrives. Alas! It never works out that way, —that is, if veterans of the game are to be believed. The dramatist's down-on-your-marrow-and-a-wild-burst-of-oratory is said to be a figment of romance. The old-time novelist's "May I do myself the inestimable honor of begging your hand in marriage?" is a bold bid for future serfdom. Therefore, we must conclude that man does not consider proposing of sufficient importance to enact rules and regulations for its government. All of which is strange, for man has insisted on the manner in which he must indulge in soup, man has even said he must not convey peas on a knife, man is subject to censure, if he engages in conversation with his mouth crammed with food, but not one line, suggestion, or information for the illumination of the wayfarer entering the road that leads to matrimony!

Edward Stoneman's request that he might call on Nancy on a particular evening started a train of thought in the brain of Mrs. Burroughs. Stoneman had been in the habit of

dropping in at all sorts of hours, and now to pick out a day and time was unusual, and, therefore, a matter for cogitation. The young man had given Nancy a party that blasé New York had spoken of for a day. Men do not give expensive parties without reason; therefore, Mrs. Burroughs conjectured that Stoneman was in love and was coming to propose.

"It's worth the risk," said the practical mother.

"What's worth the risk, dearie?" came from a voice at the piano.

"The rejection of one rich man for the possible chance of marrying a richer one."

"It will break Curlip's heart, if I throw him down," said the daughter, striking the introduction to "Good-by, Sweetheart, Good-by."

"Don't bother about his heart. It's malleable. It may change its shape every day, but it won't break."

"Still, I prefer Curlip to Stoneman," said the daughter. "Curlip's forty-five, Stoneman's twenty-five, and I am thirty. I'd rather be an

old man's darling than a young man's left-at-home and sit-by-the-fire after a few years."

"But there is no necessity for that. Your Art in its infancy requires position; position requires money; money and marriage will put you on Easy Street, and it's a short cut to the Boulevard of Success, promenading as a matron with the Malibrans, Pattis, Grisi and others. You know they are the very words of your dear professor," which settled it, in mother's and daughter's minds.

" As you will," said the younger, resignedly. She accepted the mother's dictum, although she cared for Eben Curlip, man-about-town, fairly well-to-do, with a reputation of having been three times divorced, but known as a good fellow.

Nancy excused his triple entanglements as the outcome of romantic ebullitions rather than infractions of the moral code. A girl of thirty always listens to mother's advice—girls of twenty are the obstinate ones—so Nancy rejected the astonished and astounded Cur-

lip, when he brought the engagement ring. All the milk of human kindness in his soul turned to a vinegary liquid. All women were beneath contempt, in his opinion, and he went forth with a perpetual anti-female chip on his shoulder and a grouch in his soul.

When young Stoneman was announced, he was greeted with every sign of cordiality.

"Mother says your party was the finest she has ever attended, and just why a little mouse like me should be given such an honor, I have been trying all week to guess," said the happy Nancy.

"Daughter was so wrought up over the splendor of the evening that she could not sleep a wink. It was the happiest event in her entire young life, but I'm not going to allow her to attend another party for at least two weeks,—that is, to be out as late as three A. M., for you know one must carefully watch these song-birds. They are sent on earth to gladden our hearts," and the voluble lady paused.

"Had a most unexpected visitor," said the

young man, removing his overcoat and seating himself.

"Friend or nuisance," asked Mother Burroughs.

"None less than my governor."

"I beg pardon—I didn't mean to be rude—your father—"

"You must have been delighted at his coming," said Nancy.

"Not so much as I was at his going."

"Why didn't you bring him here? We should have been so pleased to meet him!" exclaimed Mrs. Burroughs.

"I don't think you would have—if he continued his conversational style of the past two days," gloomily replied young Stoneman.

"Why! Was he cross with you?" asked the singer.

"Cross? Why before he got through with me, my mentality was beaten into such a pulp, you could have squeezed it into a peanut shell."

"We have understood he has been very suc-

cessful in business," said the mother, with intention.

"I should say so! He can make a million and not turn a hair, but he is so used to being on the winning side that the loss of a couple of hundred dollars will worry him for a week."

"He must have an excellent brain," said Nancy.

"Oh, the governor's got a high-grade dome. His ideas do not always fit in with those fellows that write of the wrongs of man and suggest dividing all wealth equally, and then, when it's all spent, dividing up again."

"How interesting!" said the mother. "He must have made a deep study of social economics."

"I don't know about that, but I do know he is not biassed; most economists are. Father says many rich men become rich in spite of themselves, but no beggar became a beggar for the same reason. He says that if a man had the same repugnance to accepting help or charity as he has to being boiled in oil, charitable or-

ganizations, soup-houses and poorfarms would be as rare as the Dodo."

"How quaintly funny!" interjected Nancy.

"His view of capital and labor is that they take themselves too seriously, that money and muscle are only valuable to the world when the inventor gives them a boost. When invention tarries, the world tarries,—the inventor gives life to the rich man's money and the poor man's muscle. Five hundred years ago the possible occupations of man and the working power of money were very limited, but the brains of the inventor have opened thousand of avenues of human endeavor."

"Does any one agree with your father?" the mother asked.

"Of course, they must!" Nancy exclaimed. "Only the other night I read in a book that whoever could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass to grow where only one grew before would deserve better of mankind and do more essential service to the world than all the politicians put together. The man that

does that is a creator, I should think." Nancy was proud of her memory and her deduction.

"And father says, if nature had constituted man so he would have to supply his own sustenance, just as he must supply the force to keep his heart going, a lot of fool ideas would never be thought of, for if a man is cast away on a desert island, he doesn't hunt around to find pen and paper to write a thesis on the world's owing him a living, but hunts for something to eat."

"You said he was cross with you?" the mother spoke.

"Oh, about my mode of life. He convinced me I had no right to spend his money unless I also shared his views. He believes I have inherited certain tendencies common to him in his youth, and I should not perpetuate them in a future generation."

"You certainly would not allow him to interfere in your life's happiness?" asked the mother, hastily.

"I intend to do so. I am turning over a new leaf and adopting my father's creed of life."

"In what way," came from the anxious Mrs. Burroughs.

"By never marrying, falling in love, or becoming engaged."

"Just hear him!" and Nancy laughed boisterously.

"I shall travel my life's path, lonely and alone; I shall preach this gospel:—Let those marry who are free from the theory that all calamities are placed on man by his fellow man. Let those love who acknowledge themselves masters of their own fate."

"Did your father make it compulsory that you must follow his demands?" questioned the mother.

"No, not at all, but I rather suspect if I should depart from my decision, he would hold me in such utter contempt that every relation between us would be severed."

"Your father has another guess coming!

The whole idea is silly!" she cried—the vision of a lost son-in-law and thirty millions vanishing.

"Why silly?" said the son drawing himself up proudly. "I have never earned a dollar in my life. Silly? I have given up my life to pleasure, all of which has been financed by an indulgent parent—the silly one is I."

When young Stoneman had departed, the mother clenched her hands and cried, "I would not have believed a man could be so foolish! I am greatly disappointed in Edward Stoneman!"

"I am too, mother, for he's the cause of my losing the man I preferred."

CHAPTER IV

Baxter and Higgins, brokers, members of the New York Stock Exchange, had been among the most successful firms in Wall Street.

After the death of Baxter, the good will, firm name and the seat on the Exchange were sold to the elder Stoneman, who, immediately after Edward's graduation, established him in business, the firm name becoming Baxter, Higgins and Stoneman. It boasted the most expensive and best appointed offices in the financial district, a high-salaried manager, an attractive stenographer and a talkative office boy.

The principal signs of activity about the place were the coming and going of these indispensable adjuncts to a properly constituted brokerage establishment.

The office boy was brought into the arena of physical and mental exertion oftener than his two colleagues, for at times a customer of the

original firm called on matters of business, and this kind of dialogue would take place,

"Is Mr. Baxter in?"

"No, sir."

"When do you expect him?"

"Not expecting him, sir."

"Why not?"

"He's dead, sir."

"Oh!" Then, after a long pause, "Can I see Mr. Higgins?"

"Not very well, sir."

"Why not?"

" 'Cause he's been buried for six years."

"Oh!"—sympathetically, another pause—"I notice a new name, Mr. Stoneman."

"Yes, sir, he's the whole shooting-match—he's the box of tricks of this firm."

"Is he in?"

"No, sir, not just now."

"When do you expect him?"

"About next March. He has gone South for the winter; he left on his yacht last November."

Here the effervescent stenographer put in her oar by stating that last week's *Town Topics* had a splendid account of the grand ball Mr. Stoneman gave at St. Augustine.

"Thank you very much for the information."

"It was some ball, believe me."

"No doubt!" And the would-be customer, after another pause, would depart; the office would resume its semi-somnolent state,—that is, the manager would twirl his thumb eccentrically, centrifugally, cylindrically, outwardly, inwardly, upwardly, and downwardly, repeating with rhythmic regularity; the stenographer would continue her inspection of the spring fashion plates and the office boy would become once more engrossed in the thrilling adventures of "Thumbless Tom" or the "Cattle King's Daughter."

All things must have an end, however; one morning the telephone bell rang and the startling information came that Mr. Edward Stoneman would be down in an hour. The office boy polished up the gold lettering of the firm name

and carefully brushed his employer's unused desk and chair.

The coming was an event.

"Hello, everybody!" Stoneman was in the office.

"Good morning," said the trio, in voices that in a musical score would have been labeled soprano, tenor, and bass.

"I apologize," this with a gracious sweep of his left hand, "for giving you such short notice of my coming, but from this time on you will see lots of me."

The trio looked at Stoneman with open-mouthed incredulity and conflicting emotions.

"Mr. Brownley, kindly call up Green and Sanderson and say that I accept their offer for the stock farm at Oldenboro. Miss Smith, write a letter to Captain Bradley, Astronomical Club. Say I am ready to close the deal for my yacht, and you, son, run over to Breinberg, Maiden Lane, and inform him that, after he has ascertained the value of the diamonds I left with him, he is to send his appraisal here

and not to my hotel. I have an impatient buyer who wants them as soon as possible."

Activity reigned. Going to the newspaper rack, he selected the "Stock Quotation Sheet" scanned every issue of the past fortnight, then called to his manager.

"Brownley, look up the date of the incorporation and the amount of common stock of the San Martino Borax Company."

In a few minutes Brownley reported, "San Martino Borax Company, organized in State of Nevada; common stock, one million; preferred, five hundred thousand, par value one hundred."

"I see it is quoted at forty-eight with no buying during the past weeks. Do you know anything about the Company?"

"Nothing of value. It has a good property according to Moody's, but the stock has been in a moribund condition since the company's organization."

"Buy five hundred shares at once."

"Don't you think I'd better investigate first?"

"No, just buy! I shall do the rest."

"Very well."

"And, by the way, give me the volume containing the statistics of the White Star Enamel Company, of New Jersey. Thanks! 'White Star Enamel Company,'" said Stoneman, reading from the book, "'Common Stock, 30,000 shares—par value one hundred dollars; Preferred, 10,000 shares.' What's the quotation for White Star Enamel Company?"

"Fifty-three for common."

"Buy five hundred shares."

"I would prefer, Mr. Stoneman, to investigate the material possibilities of these companies before we plunge into speculative activities."

"Haven't time for investigation—just buy and we'll look into the companies later."

"As you desire," said the perplexed manager.

The stock reports the next day showed five hundred shares of San Martino and five hundred of White Star bought at forty-eight and fifty-three respectively. The week ended with

two thousand shares of each stock showing in the sales, and White Star was up six points and San Martino ten.

The following Monday morning Stoneman was at his office when it opened. He called Brownley for consultation and instructions. "Mr. Brownley," he began, "I spent yesterday looking into the merits of the San Martino and White Star concerns. I found out enough to justify our manipulation of the stock, above the speculative chances. These companies have a tangible and economic reason for existence and their stock must, by every business law, become valuable. The utility of their product cannot be gainsaid. I find a man has discovered a new process of enameling, known as the flexing of borax with a number of other ingredients. The White Star outfit has secured the rights in that patent, and control the output of the San Martino Company. You know what oil and steel has done; watch borax. These companies have tripled their surplus since their last statement. We'll change the motto of this

joint; instead of 'The weary are at rest,' it will be, 'Onward, onward, onward.' Go to it."

The results were most gratifying, for each stock soared above par and before very long the young broker was becoming famous and wealthy.

To some men sub-titles are as inevitable as "touches" are to an easy-mark. In a short time Stoneman had schooled himself to listen with equanimity and reserve to such enthusiastic appellations as, "The Wizard of Wall Street," "The Napoleon of Finance," or "The Man Who Made Borax Famous."

One day Mrs. Burroughs and Nancy breezed in. Edward greeted them quietly, much too quietly to please mother, for she still hoped. After discussing the proper investing of a few thousand left her by a decently distant and recently deceased second cousin, she asked, "Have you dropped those foolish ideas you expounded so eloquently the last time we saw you?"

"No, of course not. I am more than ever

convinced of the necessity of following my father's wishes."

"Your father's wishes are tommyrot," vigorously contended the mother.

"Perhaps so. I won't argue that point," Stoneman spoke wearily.

"Does your father know of your splendid success, and how you are admired?" asked Nancy.

"Oh, I imagine he knows I'm getting on. He has written once or twice asking why I haven't drawn my allowance and why he hadn't received the bills for this office's expenditures."

"Perhaps he thinks you've reneged on your promise," offered Mrs. Burroughs as a solution.

"No, I don't think so. All of us are the creatures of habit, and my not writing for money continually has left an aching void in the dear old fellow's life." The young man winked and laughed outright.

"Well," Mother Burroughs adapted the debating club style of her youth, "on the same

line of reasoning advanced by your father, that heredity absorbs the bad traits of a race, now that you have shown the world you have a genius for finance, do you not think it foolish to let that genius die with you?"

"Admitting your ingenious tribute to my alleged genius, I cannot agree with you."

"Pray, why?"

"Nature does not transmit genius from father to son. Dryden gives it in this manner: 'Genius is the gift of nature.' 'It depends on the influence of the stars,' says the astrologer. 'On the organs of the body,' says the naturalist. 'It is the particular gift of Heaven,' says the divine."

"Then, why does Nature transmit the meaner traits?" asked Nancy.

"Ask Nature. She is prone to standardize physical resemblances, but seldom mental. In a family of six children you not infrequently find extremes of intellect."

"And sometimes common family traits."

"But not genius. Of course, any one can be

a mechanic in literature, art, finance, but the creative faculty is what makes a Shakespeare, a Richard Wagner, a John Pierpont Morgan. They are the keystones of the arch between Nature and man."

"You mean they had something more than mere education?" asked the mother.

"Unquestionably, and none of them inherited their genius. Let us take your profession, Nancy. Let us observe what heredity does for the most universal language and its interpreters."

"I didn't know you knew anything about music and musicians." Stoneman assumed a new interest in the singer's eyes.

"I don't know much, but I do happen to remember from a course I took on the history of music in college that Beethoven's father was a drunken tenor singer, whose name appeared oftener on the police blotter than on musical programs. Berlioz's father was a physician; Chopin's, a captain of the National Guard; Gluck's, a gun-bearer to the Prince of Savoy;

Gounod's, a painter; Handel's, a barber; Haydn's, a wheelwright; Mendelssohn's, a banker, and also Meyerbeer's; Mozart's, a lawyer; Rossini's, an inspector of slaughter-houses; Schubert's, a schoolmaster; Schumann's, a bookseller; Verdi's, a grocer; Wagner's, a government clerk. The only exception in the array of musical geniuses are the Bachs and the Webers. Their families were musical, but lots of them lived in the reflected glory of the one great genius of the name. In the case of these great men, who in turn became fathers, their progeny showed no greater sign of musical greatness than their progenitors."

"I see, though faintly," laughingly exclaimed the vivacious Nancy, "some hope that I may become a great singer."

"By what process?" Edward asked, with mock-doubting deliberation.

"By the non-genius ancestral route. My father, when he vocalizes in the "Battle of Bunker Hill," emits a rhythmic procession of squawks that would make a peacock die of

envy, and, when mother dear raises her voice in melody, Patti's high E gets off its pedestal and hides its diminished head." And Nancy gave an imitation that amused the office force.

"That will do," said the mother, severely, as they departed.

Young Stoneman resumed the duties of his office. The passion of his life was absolutely in Wall Street. He talked stocks, walked stocks, dreamed stocks—stocks and their manipulations were the all in all of his existence. Most men banish "shop" when away from their offices. Young Stoneman made it the subject of every conversation. In four years he was listed at five millions, and heavy-eyed and feverish he was working for more, when a halt was called by that inexorable sentry—Nature!

"Who goes there?"

"A friend."

"Advance and give the countersign!"

"Money."

"You're under arrest! Corporal of the guard!" calls the sentry.

"I've forgotten the password," meekly explains the prisoner.

"It's 'Health,' you fool," thunders Martinet Nature. Whereupon Stoneman took his first vacation. He secured passage on his former yacht, the *Southern Cross,* now being fitted out for an astronomical expedition to observe the transit of Venus.

CHAPTER V

The wandering poet who penned "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home," doubtlessly allowed his imagination full play and pictured that abode as a nook in Paradise. With an attractive wife, loving and beloved; sunny-faced children, obedient and confiding; a housekeeper, resourceful without a suggestion of the martinet; a cook, versatile and inviting; a gardener, sweat-seeking and free from rheumatism; a groom, scorning John Barleycorn and loving the equines; a valet, who lets you wear low-cut russet shoes with a dinner coat, even if it isn't fashionable, then, "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

Poets, like doctors, sometimes disagree, for we find another poet who in a moment of enthusiasm scribbled on the window of an inn:

Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
His warmest welcome at an inn.

And has not the Boswell-trailed Johnson recorded in substance that nothing has been contrived by man by which so much happiness has been produced as by a good inn? Strong language, contemplative and assertive, worthy of thought and investigation but ordinary and prosaic, when compared with the coupiets of our own beloved Longfellow:

A region of repose it seems,
A place of slumber and of dreams.

Here you have your famous men advancing arguments in favor of the great blessings vouchsafed humanity by home and inn. It would be obviously unfair to the unsuspecting and the novitiate to dismiss the subject of man's habitation, shelter, food and company without considering their possible disadvantages.

First, let us make a manifest of home as it might be: The husband must assume the en-

tire cost of keeping it on the map, though it may be shared by an obnoxious mother-in-law, an asthmatic aunt, a garrulous sister-in-law, a trombone-blowing son, a piano-thumping daughter, to say nothing of an hysterical and nagging wife.

We will now picture the seamy side of the inn. One may be disturbed at the midnight hour by the convivial dissonances of an all-agreeing party vociferating that "we won't go home until morning," or, being fastidious, one may be made unhappy on noticing one's opposite at the breakfast table drawing breath and coffee from a saucer, or one may lose his love for pure melody by hearing from the next table its occupant vocalizing his consomme, or, horror of horrors, one may shake and shudder at the spectacle of the very stout man, who wears his napkin as a lung protector, picking his teeth with a fork, while waiting for the third helping of plum pudding.

With these disagreeable possibilities in evidence, where, oh where, can man turn?

To a club of course!

A home at the best is a penalty of marriage; an inn the penalty of not having a home, a club man's offering to man. From A, B, C to X, Y, Z the infinite combinations of the alphabet have been employed to supply titles for well-loved institutions. A community of interest brings men together to discuss, to console, to elevate, to consult, to agree. Hence the popularity of clubs. No member owns the club and no member financially profits through his membership.

Aldrich, the pundit and romancer, writes, "If it came to a matter of gossip, I would back our club against the Sorosis or any woman's club in existence. Whenever you see in our drawing-room four or five young fellows lounging in easy chairs, cigar in hand, and now and then bringing their heads together over the small round Japanese table which is always the pivot of these social circles, you may be sure they are discussing Tom's engagement, or Dick's extravagance, or Harry's hopeless pas-

sion for the young Miss Flendelys. Why not? If Tom is so blinded he cannot see the advantages of single blessedness, or Dick's sense of the value of money is deadened, or Harry so far forgets himself as to nurse a hopeless passion, why should not loving and discerning friends discuss the ways and means of rescue for these unfortunates?"

The banner of brotherhood waves over every clubhouse.

Similarity of appearance is the open sesame to the Bald-head Club. "The Double-Bass Violin Club" came into being to avoid the street-urchins' shouts of "stag de man wid de dog house," or "look at de guy wid de bull-fiddle,"—in the crowded thoroughfares of the metropolis. A thoughtful member of the guild that supplies the foundation to the architecture of music organized the club, and in every dance or concert hall reposes a double-bass violin subject to the key of a member of the club.

What could make a stronger appeal to a life-tired man than a membership in a club organ-

ized to determine the date of shuffling off of this mortal coil. All men know the method of their birth; to none is vouchsafed the manner of their demise. An organization was created for this purpose, amid great enthusiasm and with Teutonic efficiency—The Suicide Club. How simple its rules! "Lots shall be drawn for the privilege of committing suicide, one on every succeeding Easter. Candidates discovered using dishonorable methods to secure election to the office of suicide shall appear before the board of governors, and, if found guilty, shall lose their privilege, and be suspended for a period of one year. Playing politics not permitted. Every man a candidate, and may the best man win."

How simple the rules of The Fat-Men's Club! How scrupulously careful the requirements for membership were drawn! Their clubroom had two entrances—one a door of ample size, the other a pair of folding doors. The candidate blackballed himself if he could pass through the first door, but, if his dimen-

sions were greater than the aperture, he was led to the folding doors, and, if he was less than eight feet broad, he passed through and was saluted by the waiting members as a brother.

America is under obligations to the famous Anacreontic of London for the music of our national anthem. The original words and music were written and composed by members for a club song. The first words sung to what we now know as "The Star Spangled Banner" are:

To Anacreon, in heav'n
Where he sat in full glee
A few songs of harmony sent a petition,
That he, therefore, inspirer and patron would be;
When this answer arrived from the jolly old Grecian;

Voice, fiddle and flute
No longer be mute
I'll lend you my name and inspire ye to boot,
And besides, I'll instruct ye, like me, to entwine,
The Myrtle of Venus with Bacchus's vine.

Statistics, those squelchers of argument, those firebrands of assumption, tell us that divorces are increasing in our land, that from a

sporadic condition divorce is growing to the dignity of numbers. What then should be more natural than that Eben Curlip, three times divorced, should, in the need of the hour, send invitations to sundry gentlemen to foregather and organize a club? The response was most gratifying, and thus the Alimony Club was ushered into existence. Its constitution read as follows:

ARTICLE I

It is the duty of every member to familiarize himself with the rules and intents of the club.

ARTICLE II

The name of this association is The Alimony Club of the United States of America.

ARTICLE III

Its motto: "Woman, Nature's blunder,
She could be heaven, but elects to be hell."

ARTICLE IV

No applicant for membership is eligible who has not been divorced and pays alimony.

ARTICLE V

An applicant having more than one divorce or pay-

ing more than one alimony, is allowed ten per cent decrease in his initiation fee.

ARTICLE VI

Members are dropped when alimony ceases.

ARTICLE VII

Once in every four years members must take themselves, for a period of two months, beyond the sight of woman or her presence.

Among other rules and regulations were ones pledging the members to speak freely and unreservedly about the abuses of divorce and alimony, and to point out, as propaganda, the follies, foibles and sins of omission and commission of the weaker sex; and demanding women should be treated as members of the human race and not cajoled, petted, praised or lied to, because they were women. On the fourth anniversary of the club, its membership had grown to fifteen hundred, with a large waiting list in evidence. The time for its original and charter members to go beyond the sight of woman for the two months' duration was approaching, and, as

luck would have it, Eben Curlip, the president, discovered that an expedition to the Kerguelen Islands was fitting out, and that no women were to be permitted. Curlip immediately opened correspondence with the captain of the expedition and obtained passage for the five charter members, with a legally drawn contract stating that five thousand dollars were to be forfeited by the captain of the yacht, if, through any reason whatever, a woman should be with the expedition, and, in turn, the five were to pay one thousand dollars each per week for passage money. There were to be but six passengers, the one beside the club being Edward Stoneman.

On the morning of the departure of the charter members the entire Alimony Club, except those in New Jersey or the Ludlow Street Jail, headed by a big brass band, marched proudly down Fifth Avenue, wheeled into West Twenty-third Street, and halted at the dock of the *Southern Cross*. The voyagers, with heads erect, mounted the gangway. As the yacht

slowly glided from her moorings, such inspiring compositions as, "With a sense of deep emotion I approach this painful case," well known as the plaintiff's plea in the "Trial by Jury," or "The time I've lost in Wooing," or "This life is all chequered" filled the air. As the yacht was in midstream, her nose pointing towards the vasty deep, there came softly over the water, "The Girl I Left Behind Me."

CHAPTER VI

The *Southern Cross* was standing well out to sea. It was nearing dusk of the first day. The six passengers had spent their time profitably by putting their respective cabins in order, emptying trunks and placing all kinds of clothes for all kinds of conditions that might arise during the voyage.

Six bells sounded, immediately followed by the yacht's bugler blowing the mess call—a signal that projects itself farther and takes upon itself a linked sweetness more long drawn out than that of any other combination of intervals—alike affecting to the soldier, the sailor, the marine or the civilian. It is the only call that is accepted at its true worth by the conscientious objector and the unpatriotic slacker. There may be in the realm of music measures that to the esthetic listener take on more of the

quality of creative genius; there may be bugle blasts that inspire warriors to rush to battle, returning with victory emblazoned on their banners; there may be trumpet sounds whose soporific intoning lull the tired soldiers to slumber deep and pleasant dreams, but, be it symphonic poem, descriptive fantasy or orchestral ballad, where is there a prologue that conveys its meaning so clearly, so truthfully, so completely, as that tripping, ripping, gripping twelve bars of divine melody—the Mess Call?

Everybody was hungry after the strenuous work of the day. The passengers hurried to the wardroom where the captain was already in his seat at the round table. The Alimony Club's contingent took seats, three on the right and two on the left of the captain, and young Stoneman occupied a seat almost opposite the captain. The first man on the right was Anderson, a bibulous member of the Club; next him was Barstars, a cold-blooded wretch, who, if he had been wounded, would probably have trailed more sawdust than blood; to the left of

the captain was the scheming Scroggins, who had two divorces to his credit. Outside of a sepulchral voice, a morose disposition and a never-ending carping, he was a negligible quantity and harmless. Skaggs, the next alimonist, had had two trials in the divorce court; between Skaggs and Stoneman sat Curlip. All these men, save Stoneman, regarded themselves as traduced and unjustly treated creatures, and were savage in their attacks on the justice of the divorce trial judges. Some of them had undergone imprisonment rather than pay the alimony the courts had assessed them, and all bemoaned the fact that woman was a heartless, brutal, ever-deceptive member of the human family, too sharp, too scheming, too unscrupulous for poor man. Consequently, they themselves were victims of woman's duplicity. They pretended to hate all women, and at all times criticized woman to her disadvantage.

As the steward brought in the hors d'œuvres the captain spoke.

"Gentlemen," he said, "as we proceed with

our dinner, I have an explanation to make and I trust you will accept it in the proper spirit."

"Shoot!" said Stoneman.

"There is a woman aboard."

"What!" shouted the six.

"A woman, gentlemen, and it is on her account that I am making this explanation and apology."

"Oh, Lord!" groaned Curlip. "Are we never to get away from the sight of a female?"

Scroggins protested with upraised arms.

"Softly, gentlemen, allow me to proceed."

"And the worst is yet to come," mumbled Skaggs.

"Two days ago," continued the captain, "the scientist, a most eminent astronomer, who has accompanied me on various tours of exploration and research and whom I had selected as my assistant in the work of recording the results of this expedition, became suddenly stricken and passed away."

"How regretful!" said Anderson, sympathetically.

"I was," continued the captain, "absolutely at my wits' end to secure another man with sufficient knowledge to do the work. While pondering over my dilemma, my niece, the daughter of my late brother, who, as you know, was a famous scientist, came and offered her services."

"Your niece?" asked Barstars, incredulously.

"My niece. She had often helped her father in his astronomical work and is thoroughly equipped as a scientist."

"How lucky!" Skaggs interjected, sarcastically.

"She knew the importance of this expedition and offered her services." The captain spoke apologetically.

"Well!" questioned Skaggs.

"I told her of my agreement with you, that under no circumstances was a woman to be allowed aboard, that should a woman come aboard I would forfeit five thousand dollars. 'But,' she said, 'these gentlemen will realize the

exigencies of the case and, under the circumstances, cannot conscientiously object to my assuming the position.' "

"But we do!" exclaimed Curlip.

"We do," bellowed the others in rising anger.

"Hear me out, gentlemen. She said, 'Surely the young men who have come aboard as passengers will not have any cause for irritation, if I keep entirely away from them during the voyage.' "

Skaggs shook his head in disgust. "What's her age, Cap? That's the kind of guff the old-timers hand you."

"She is not so old as a grandmother, nor so young as an infant," said the captain, laughing.

"That means she won't crack under the wings, I suppose," said Skaggs.

"I assure you," said the captain seriously, "she is a quiet, well-behaved woman, caring nothing for men's society, engrossed in her studies and her work."

"Nothing coquettish or fluffy about her?

Some of the old ones, you know, are very kittenish," said Skaggs sardonically.

"She is not kittenish and she is not coquettish," said the captain.

"Well, if she is not going to show herself and intrude her presence, perhaps we can stand it," said Scroggins, in a slightly conciliatory mood.

"That's the rub, gentlemen, and that's what I want you to settle. It is painful to me to be compelled to banish her from this table. She is my brother's daughter, and, while she would never utter a word of complaint, I feel that she should be allowed to have the run of the ship and not be confined to the second cabin and that part of the yacht given over to the under officers and crew."

"Why didn't you tell us this before we sailed?" growled Curlip.

"Because I did not know it. She smuggled herself aboard and we didn't detect her presence until an hour ago."

"She must be an old hand in the gentle art

of butting in," offered the sepulchral Scroggins.

"I expostulated with her," explained the captain. "I had cabled the president of the Royal Astronomical Society at Greenwich and fully expect he will send me a capable man. She said she didn't intend I should be caught napping, and, if I secured an assistant, she would leave at the first port."

"And if you do not secure an assistant?" queried Curlip.

"But I will, gentlemen. I'll go, if necessary, to London and find some sort of man." The captain, completing his dinner, arose and said, "I do not wish to embarrass you, gentlemen, so I will leave and allow you to decide whether my niece is to be a guest at this table and permitted the freedom of the boat or remain in the forecastle among the crew."

"Now, gentlemen," said Curlip, when the captain had left them, "let us proceed to form ourselves into a committee of six and dispose of this most disagreeable subject. As tem-

porary chairman I now call the meeting to order."

"Excuse me, gentlemen," said young Stoneman, smiling, "if this is an Alimony Club affair, I am not eligible."

"Have you never been divorced?" asked Scroggins.

"Not even married," explained the broker.

"Well, as man to man, why did you concur in insisting on no females aboard?"

"It's a long story, gentlemen, but, suffice to say, I am not interested in women and never intend to marry."

"Lucky fellow!" chirped Skaggs. "We who have suffered and lost congratulate you."

"As you know," said Curlip, "we are all divorced men. To comply with a rule of our club, we took passage on this ship, on which we expected to be free from the pain of gazing on heartless woman. We paid big money for this inestimable blessing, and now all our plans will go to pot unless we act with decision and courage."

"I move, first of all," Barstars spoke, "that we inform the captain that he has forfeited the five thousand dollars."

"You've heard the motion, gentlemen. It is seconded and carried. The next motion, Is this woman to be allowed to sit at our table and have the run of the promenade deck?"

"Now, Mr. Chairman, before you put the question, allow me a word." Stoneman addressed his remarks with great earnestness. "We should arrive in Plymouth in twelve or fourteen days. To banish this woman to the forecastle would be an affront to Captain Bradley."

"She brought it on herself!" retorted Skaggs.

"Granted, Mr. Skaggs, but I intended to add, it's a duty we owe to future generations."

"How?"

"This expedition is for the express purpose of giving the world full information regarding the transit of Venus. If Venus made a daily, weekly, monthly or yearly transit, it would not

make much difference if an inadequate record of one of the events were made; a few years at most would rectify errors."

"Are you interested in science?" asked Barstars.

"Only as an amateur, but, gentlemen, it is wise to remember that the next transit after the one we hope to view will not take place until the year 2004."

"Then you think we should make a virtue of the sacrifice of our comfort, pleasure and money so that science can get the benefit of the experience of this miserable blue-stocking?" With a gesture of contempt, Curlip sank back in his chair.

"It is for future generations I speak. If the results of this expedition prove more accurate, painstaking and efficient than those of any other nation, America will hold a higher place in the scientific world—"

"And, I suppose, elect this dame president," growled Skaggs.

"Have you seen this woman?" asked Curlip, suspiciously, addressing Stoneman.

"No, I haven't."

"You seem almost too much interested for a man posing as a women-shunner."

"That's bosh!" warmly replied Stoneman. "If I were interested in women, I certainly would not go on this trip."

"There's something in that," came from Anderson conciliatingly.

"If this expedition fails of its purpose through Bradley not having a congenial assistant, the world loses," continued Stoneman.

"What's your motion?" Curlip's tone was irritable and rasping.

"It is, that this woman, in the interest of science, and, as the niece of the captain, be allowed all the privileges accorded us."

"I am not in favor of that, and it strikes me as foolish," Skaggs shouted.

"One moment," commanded Stoneman. "And when we reach Plymouth, if Bradley can-

not secure a satisfactory assistant, we, understand, *we,* leave the yacht and hold Bradley responsible for a breach of contract."

"Our outing will be spoiled through this woman," lamented Scroggins.

"It will be spoiled anyway, if she remain on board after the ship leaves Plymouth."

"Right you are!" exclaimed Anderson.

"Will you, Mr. Skaggs," asked the chairman, "withdraw your motion and allow me to submit Mr. Stoneman's?"

Skaggs nodded assent.

"Gentlemen, you have heard the motion; is it seconded?"

"I second it," came from Anderson.

"All in favor, say 'aye.' "

"Aye!" came unanimously.

"Now, I move," said Skaggs, "that the chairman inform the captain of the sense of this meeting; of our irrevocable resolve to leave at Plymouth if this female remain aboard."

"It will make him see stars without the use of a telescope," Scroggins spoke grimly.

"Gentlemen," said Curlip as they arose, "remember the words of the wise old poet, the closing line of our ritual,

"What mighty ills have not been done by woman!
Who was't betrayed the Capitol? — a woman!
Who lost Mark Antony the world?—A woman!
Who was the cause of a long ten years' war
And laid at last old Troy in ashes?—Woman!
Destructive, damnable, deceitful woman!"

CHAPTER VII

The second day at sea found the five disgruntled ones airing their grouches in the smoking-room. Curiosity had led Curlip to question the steward as to the female aboard. Had he seen her? The steward *had* seen a woman, whom the captain had yanked out of the hold; she was all bundled up in a red-riding cloak and hood, but she might have been the Queen of Sheba so far as he could tell. "Female stowaways are not unusual going across," he said, "but they are apt to disguise themselves as men. Many want to go home when they are very old so that they can die in the land of their birth."

"But this woman is a niece of the captain," said Curlip.

"New one on me! Didn't know he had a niece," and the steward winked knowingly.

"Do you think there's something rotten in Denmark?" Skaggs whispered.

"I ain't saying anything one way or the other, but sailor men, even when they are captains, are uncommonly fond of the petticoats."

"But this woman is old."

"Well, so is the captain!"

"Is the captain a moral mutineer?" asked Anderson, mysteriously.

"I don't know just the meaning of that, but if you mean is he married sub-rosa, I don't say he is. But I do know lots of captains are, sometimes in four or five different places at once. They have one wife that gets the insurance and the furniture but the rest join in the weeping when he goes to Davy Jones's locker. There's one real one; the others are sub-rosas, but they don't know it." And the garrulous steward continued in this strain while he tidied up the room.

"If he has run his wife in on us, Heaven help him!" said Curlip. "Here I have been dreaming that for three months I could feel this is a man's world, with no giggling school girls, no designing maids, no simpering spin-

sters, no caustic old women to remind me I'm paying two hundred and twenty-five cold plunks a week, because I fell for three of them, tó say nothing of that fourth one I intended making Mrs. Curlip, when she threw me down for gold —gold—gold!"

The bugle-call for dinner sounded, and the six passengers entered the wardroom. Captain Bradley had been officially informed that the woman scientist, due to the fact that she was his niece, would be allowed to have her meals at the guest table and have the run of the ship, but either she or the guests were to leave at Plymouth. The captain had accepted the inevitable. The sextette, unlike the one in "Lucia," was in unison and not given to conflicting emotions.

"She must go," was the verdict, unanimous and without appeal, "or we must go,"—that was as plain as a pikestaff.

They stood and talked idle chatter, waiting for the captain and the intruding female. They noted the extra chair at the ta-

ble, and Skaggs exclaimed, "Good-by, Boccaccio! Good-by, Rabelais! Good-by, Scarron! Good-by, spice and repartee! Good-by, linked profanity! Enter, 'Pass the butter!' 'May I have the salt?'—silence, gloom, and WOMAN."

"Sunday School stories will be in fashion at this table, and the chances are we shall be asked not to smoke! Damn women in general, and this one in particular," said Barstars.

The thought of it angered him so, he bit his cigarette in two and choked on the tobacco.

The captain appeared.

"Gentlemen, will you be seated? My niece will be with you in a moment. Before she comes I desire to say that I have informed her of the conditions, on which you have graciously extended an invitation to her to dine at your table."

"Not graciously," said the unforgiving Curlip. "We have made a virtue of what seems a necessity."

"My niece is aware of that, and, gentlemen,

should any disagreeable episode arise, such as a satirical difference of opinion, hasty or uncalled-for words, or any action savoring of pretense, domination, or contempt, a disregard or a hysterical outburst of temper on the part of *your* lady guest, I beg of you to overlook it and bear in mind that in a week or more we shall be at Plymouth."

"He is paving the way for a holy terror," whispered Skaggs to Curlip.

"Just as soon as we reach Plymouth, I shall run up to London, and, as I have friends in the Royal Astronomical Society, no doubt I shall be able to get a competent assistant and thereby not interfere with your plans, gentlemen. I want my expedition to be successful. The English, French and other nations are sending out parties, and naturally, there is a spirit of competition. I had hoped that ours would be thoroughly and completely American. Every human being now on this boat is an American. When we send this woman-scientist ashore and take on an Englishman in her place, we, of

course, shall lose the chance to say it is an absolutely American enterprise."

"That doesn't cut any ice with me," said Curlip impatiently. "I'd rather have thugs, pirates and buccaneers on board than an old parchment-dried woman."

A step was heard at the door.

"Gentlemen," Captain Bradley waved his hand in the direction of the door, "my niece, Miranda Bradley." The men arose and faced towards her. There stood a young girl, not over twenty-two, beautiful in the pose of her head, the set of her shoulders; beautiful in the chestnut glint of her hair and the quiet gray in her eyes; beautiful in the loveliness of her complexion, her nose, her mouth, her slender figure, her dainty hands and feet.

The sextette stood popeyed.

"Very much like a scrawny-necked spinster or a battle-ax matron, I'm a-thinking," whispered the case-hardened Curlip to Skaggs. All hands were still popeyed.

She bowed.

"She'll want to run the ship, see if she won't," continued Curlip, in an undertone to Skaggs. "I know the breed!" But still he was popeyed.

"Miranda, sit in that chair." The uncle pointed to the one between Curlip and Stoneman. Both men made an effort to do the usual cavalier courtesies in the manipulation of the chair, but the young woman placed herself in such a position that Stoneman could not reach the chair and the older man very gallantly seated the newcomer, forgetting his grouch for the moment.

The dinner proceeded in silence so intense that Curlip began to yearn for the sound of his own voice. Woman and her ways were always a subject of attack for him. He opened the conversation with a hope that his machine-gun-firing intellect and superior brains would settle any hope of friendship or adulation on the part of the young thing beside him. Clearing his throat he said, addressing Miss Bradley,

"If a fellow live long enough, he is bound to find out all about women, although she likes to parade as an enigma."

"Right you are!" clarionized Anderson, the always agreeable.

"A case in point," continued Curlip, "came very forcibly to me. Two years ago I became very much worried over the condition of my hearing; it suddenly became defective and I hastened to an aurist; he made a thorough examination and informed me he could find nothing amiss in either ear.

" 'Strange,' I said. 'I know there is something wrong.'

" 'There may be something wrong,' said the doctor, 'but the remedy, perhaps, lies with you. Are you married?'

"I replied that I had been a year previous, but that I was now divorced.

" 'When at home, did you ever find your ear growing weary while your wife was talking?'

" 'Yes, but not during the last year of our married life,' I answered.

"'Correct,' said the doctor, 'after the first year of your marriage, you suffered from auricular fatigue, a common ailment with married men after the first, fifth and tenth years of married life.'

"'I certainly suffered,' I added.

"'Then the symptom disappeared?' said the eminent practitioner.

"'It did, indeed!" I truthfully replied.

"'Then came a period when you found you had lost your ability to hear your wife. Is my diagnosis correct?'

"'Absolutely.'

"'You have a very common affliction.'

"'What's the cause of it, doctor?' I implored.

"'It is superinduced by the limited vocabulary of your wife.'

"'Why, doctor, she could out-talk a parrot!' I hastily replied.

"'I admit it. She was a woman of few words but kept repeating them incessantly. Am I right?'

" 'Your conclusions are justified by my experience,' I cried. The dawn was breaking; the light began to come to me.

" 'Can you remember bits of conversation before you went to your office, or on any evening previous to your retiring?' the doctor asked.

" 'Yes, I can recall, "Listen!"—"I won't stand for it!"—"Brute!"—"Why did I marry you?"—"God forgive me!" and a few others of that kind.'

" 'Yes, and after a while they grew fainter and you ceased hearing them?'

" 'That's it!' I exclaimed. 'I recall that "That coward!" and "Why don't you answer?" lost their insulting force very soon after my marriage.'

" 'You are suffering from lack of concentration,' the doctor continued. 'Knowing what the moment would bring forth, you didn't allow your mind to concentrate on your ears during the time your wife talked. I could give you the technical term for it, but it isn't necessary.' "

"Do *you* believe that the doctor's views were correct?" said Curlip, maliciously addressing Miss Bradley.

"Without a question," answered the young lady quietly, and much to Curlip's astonishment, as he wanted to get a rise out of her. "I have been told," she continued, "that a boiler-maker becomes oblivious to the sound of his riveter; a denizen of the elevated railroad district has the power to banish the noise. Lack of concentration is the analgesic which eliminates the noises of the world."

"And a nagging woman is the worst of all, isn't she?" asked Curlip, hoping she would contradict.

"Oh, say," said young Stoneman, angrily, to Curlip, "it isn't fair to the young lady to place her in an embarrassing position. You know as well as I do that men are bigger babblers than women."

"I prefer to accept Mr. Curlip's view."

"Simply because Curlip's doctor put forth such nonsense—that all the ills of mankind

should be attributed to the gentler sex," Stoneman spoke excitedly.

"I do not admit of such a thing as the 'gentler sex,' " very softly and sweetly. "And in this I must again agree with Mr. Curlip. Your Lucretia Borgia, your Lady Macbeth, your thousands of females with anything but gentleness, who have shot, stabbed, poisoned their husbands, rivals, lovers make the adjective 'gentle' sound ridiculous."

"She has a man's mind," said Curlip to Skaggs, sotto voce.

"I know—" expostulated Stoneman.

"But do you?" came back in icy tones from the young lady.

"Hear me!" said the exasperated Stoneman, now suddenly champion of womankind. "What do these men know about women? All of them have a number of divorces to their discredit."

"Well," said Curlip, "while 'familiarity breeds contempt,' 'experience brings knowledge.' We have loved, suffered and lost.

You, by your own admission, have never loved, have never suffered and have never lost."

"And," added Miss Bradley, "a man, by his very act of marrying once, twice or even three times, shows an appreciation, a regard, an affection, a great love for womankind. This is more evident to an observer than the sincerity of a man who confesses he never was in love and never was engaged, and yet pretends to be a champion of womankind."

Stoneman was speechless for the moment.

"Your views are rather sensible," said Curlip, patronizingly, "and show the influence of the company of your late father. Captain Bradley tells us you were the constant companion of your father during his lifetime."

"My father was a very just man and didn't defend or condemn anything simply because it was expedient or flattering to do so."

"You must excuse Mr. Stoneman," said Skaggs. "He takes the common view that

woman must have adulation or praise even when she is not worthy of the one or merits the other."

"That's one thing that men should learn," continued Miss Bradley. "Your silly, kittenish, doll-faced giggler is ready to swallow bait, line, hook and sinker whenever anything is said in praise, however untrue or absurd it may be, but sensible women—"

"Are there any?" shouted Skaggs.

"Of course, there are!" answered Stoneman, regaining his speech.

"That decision might be left to each individual," suggested Miss Bradley.

"Well, now," broke in Anderson, the bibulous, "when I married, my wife was the most sensible woman one could imagine."

"Of course she changed," said Stoneman, surveying Anderson contemptuously.

"That's what I was going to say. At first we called our home a 'bower of bliss'—"

"Yes, yes, we know the story," said the im-

patient Curlip, checking the efforts of Anderson to tell the oft-repeated and threadbare narrative of his marital troubles.

"Very well," mushily, but with dignity, said the bibulous one, gulping the last of his sixth highball.

"I trust I may have the pleasure, at some future date, to hear your narrative." Miranda smiled in the direction of Anderson.

"It's a sad, sad story, but worth hearing," he added with great effort, at the same time beckoning for another highball.

"I am sure I shall be much interested. Personal reminiscences are always of moment," she replied encouragingly.

"It always seemed to me," said the woman-hater Barstars, "that the female (pardon the freedom of the term) is more antagonistic to either her own sex or the male, than the latter exhibits to his or the other."

"Your view cannot be safely controverted," said the lady.

"Why, I know some married women who

delight in getting the husbands of their friends 'in Dutch,' " the gloomy Scroggins interposed.

"Have you ever been duck-hunting?" asked Barstars of Miss Bradley.

"Many, many times!"

"Well, then, you have observed the frantic joy, the fiendish delight of the female duck decoying to death and destruction her kith and kin."

"I have," answered Miranda. "The ear-piercing quack-quack-quack of the female decoy calling down from the air the food-hunting ducks is very pronounced—"

"And the very opposite to the almost inaudible quick-quick-quick of the drake," added Barstars.

"The great distance the call of the female is heard in contradiction to the soft-spoken drake is known to all duck-hunters," said this Diana of the marshes.

"Maybe," protested Stoneman, "the drake does not call loudly, because he wants no other drake to come down and visit his lady friends.

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You know males of all species are great monopolizers."

"Mr. Barstars talks from experience," said Miss Bradley. "He is not conjuring up ideas of his own, but gives us the benefit of his observations—patent to any one who has shot ducks over decoys."

"I'll bet drakes are polygamous," said Edward, defiantly.

"Not so much so as ducks are polyandric," retorted Barstars.

The steward offered cigars.

Miss Bradley arose. "I will leave you gentlemen to your cigars and discussions. I thank you for a very pleasant hour. Good night."

"Good night," they answered.

The captain left almost immediately and the six passengers had the dining-room to themselves.

"Pretty level-headed girl that," said Curlip. "She has not been smirched with the baleful influence of gossipy, brainless women."

"That's it! If a woman never met a woman, she'd be acceptable!" Skaggs interjected.

"It's women that spoil women," added Scroggins.

"You fellows make me tired," retorted Stoneman. "I have no doubt that a lot of you were married to earthly angels, but you didn't know how to treat them. Slavery was their lot!"

"Hear him," said Skaggs sarcastically. "This very girl who has just left us agreed with us in every particular; this wise man, this Solomon, comes and tells us that we, who have been married nine times collectively—that we do not know woman."

"Bah! I snap my fingers at your championship of the so-called 'gentler sex,'" spoke up Curlip.

"Miss Bradley didn't agree with you and that is good evidence that she, as a sensible girl, takes no stock in your opinions."

"Perhaps not," said Stoneman, shaking his

head dubiously as they arose and left the wardroom for a promenade on the deck.

"Boys, why did all of us jump to the conclusion that the niece was an old frump?" Curlip asked.

"Because the captain misled us when he said, 'Gentlemen, there is a woman aboard,' " said Stoneman.

"Was it design?" asked Skaggs.

"Undoubtedly," Stoneman replied. "It was like telling a child you were going to force him to take a dose of castor oil and give him a plate of ice cream instead."

The older men left for a game of poker. Stoneman paced up and down for an hour. Miss Bradley came up the companionway. His heart gave a thump—a brand-new, never-experienced-before thump. He raised his cap.

"May I walk with you?" he asked.

"I am just about to turn in. Good night!" And she was gone. The thumping continued.

CHAPTER VIII

The hyphen is the marriage license of punctuation. Without it, names, titles and conditions lose grandeur, awe or distinction. Mrs. John James Gregar-Gregory sounds; Captain-General William Charles Jones-Smith sounds; pleuro-pneumonia sounds.

Historically paved avenues of the Past show vistas of its illuminating use. For

> "When Britain first at Heaven's command
> Arose from out the azure main,"

the gentle inhabitant of that tight little island was a Briton, pure and simple. Immigration and the hyphen obtruded and we find Roman-Britons, Norman-Britons, Anglo-Britons, Jute-Britons, Saxon-Britons; but Time has swallowed adjective and hyphen, and to-day from John o' Groat's to Land's End, a subject

of the realm in England and Scotland is a Briton.

So with Spain, with its Iberians, its Saracens, its Andalusians, its Biscayans of yesterday; the native of that land of romance, when he speaks of himself and his nationality, says, "I am a Spaniard." The hyphen gradually outlived its use in the Old World, but has become much in evidence in our land of the free and home of the brave.

That compendium of useful knowledge, the telephone directory, tells us that in our midst we have German-Americans, Irish-Americans, Italian-Americans, and so on *ad infinitum.* Of course, we know the term is a figment of the imagination. It suggests, "One could be happy with either were t'other dear charmer away," an impracticable dual patriotism, a hidebound grouping—and a fable:

Once upon a time the Lions set up a republic and invited the oppressed of other lands to come and make it their home. And the Fox, and the Tiger, and the Lynx, and the Elephant,

and the Rabbit, and the Mouse and other animals came. Some came for one whim, some for another, but, all to improve their condition, and as they never returned to the land of their birth, it is reasonable to suppose that they accomplished their hearts' desire. When they arrived the Lions said, "Of course, you want to be absorbed and digested by us?" "I'd rather not," said the Fox. "I understand politics is your national game, and I'm a politician and there are many of my race coming here, therefore, I prefer to be known as a Fox-Lion." "And for the same reason, I as a Tiger-Lion." "And I as a Rabbit-Lion." "And I as a Mouse-Lion." "And I as an Elephant-Lion." And so it was. And they prospered in the land of liberty, married and begat.

And it came to pass that Fox-Lion became politically dead, and he said to his children, "Remember you are of the Fox-breed." And his children raised their voices as one and shouted, "Not on your life! We are Lions." And so spoke the sons and daughters of the

Tiger-Lions and Elephant-Lions and the rest. And the hyphen passed from the land never to return, and they lived happy ever afterwards.

The hyphen, apart from mixing up in national affairs, is also an internationalist, and assumes a fatherly interest in that universal object—Self. The hyphen has wedded to those four letters more vocables than Solomon had wives. It is gratifying to have one's judgment confirmed, and, therefore, a view and definition from another is acceptable. "In order to be able to enjoy all the happiness of which his present state is capable," expounds the philosopher, "the sensitive part of man needs to be combined with another, which, upon a comparison of the present with the future, shall impel him towards that mode either of gratification or of self-denial which shall most promote his happiness upon the whole. Such is self-love. We give this name to that part of our constitution by which we are incited to do or to forbear, to gratify or deny our desires, simply on the ground of ob-

taining the greatest amount of happiness for ourselves, taking into view a limited future or else our entire future existence. When we act from simple respect to present gratifications, we act from passion. When we act from a respect to our whole individual happiness, without regard to the present, only as a part of the whole, and without any regard to the happiness of others, only as it will contribute to our own, we are then said to act from self-love."

Curlip was saturated with self-love. Therefore, nothing could withstand his blandishments, and he believed any and every woman was only too anxious to confide heart and hand into his keeping. He believed that he was irresistible and all-conquering; all this was ever-patent to him.

Miranda had made a deep impression on this much-married would-be wooer. She had flattered his vanity by acquiescence in all his views. had fed his *ego* by snubbing the young man of the party, inflated his pomp by dis-

criminating interest in his utterances. "She was made to woo," he said, "therefore she must be won."

Curlip was impulsive in devising methods, cautious in consummation. Most men of fifty are. They are apt to live in anticipation and prolong the realization of their dreams. Much like a boy with his first cigar, he wants it, but hesitates to light it, not knowing whether it will give him joy or cause him nausea.

Like all adepts he formulated plans: first, to establish congeniality, then sympathy, then pity, then love, then victory.

At six he was up; at seven on deck; as he promenaded, his eyes ever and anon sought the companionway. At every turn he invoked the favor of the gods. At last he was rewarded.

"Good morning," said the suddenly gallant Curlip.

"Good morning," came the cheerful response.

"I came on deck earlier than was my intention," said the man, "because I desire to make

an explanation regarding our conversation last night."

"About what?"

"My attitude towards women."

"Oh, I think your attitude is justified by experience."

"Yes, no doubt it is, but the rules and regulations of the Alimony Club, of which you no doubt have heard, make it imperative that we should discuss women," this most apologetically.

"Oh, yes, uncle told me about it—that you were their honored president; that you, poor man, had been divorced four times."

"Three," he quickly corrected.

"I beg pardon, I thought uncle said four, but, whatever the number, I have no doubt you were justified in the course you pursued."

"Undoubtedly. What I wish to impress on your mind is that there is no rule in the Alimony Club preventing any member from marrying again."

"Does any member ever take advantage of that rule?" Miranda asked, innocently.

"Oh, yes, when they meet a woman like—"

"I am surprised," she interrupted, with a vigorous shake of her head. "I should as soon expect a condemned prisoner, after escaping one gallows, rushing to another and putting his head in the noose."

"Some women make you forget the shortcomings of others of their sex. I scarcely slept last night perturbed with the thought that maybe you had imbibed the idea that I am a woman-hater, and saw no virtue in the sex."

"On the contrary, the man who marries three times must have an unlimited reservoir of love in his make-up, and a faith in womankind, overwhelming in its simplicity.

"That's it. I've never heard it so well expressed, but that's the idea."

"Don't you think we had better go to breakfast? I have lots of work," said Miranda, walking towards the companionway.

"May I see you often?" he asked.

"On deck any morning at seven and any evening at six, if you like," and together they entered the breakfast-room.

As they concluded their meal, Stoneman entered. "What hour do you usually breakfast?" he asked Miss Bradley.

"Seven-thirty. That's my intention while on this voyage."

"That's a fine hour for breakfast! I believe I will adopt that time myself."

Curlip scowled.

"I am sure Mr. Curlip and myself will enjoy your company."

"Yes, Miss Bradley and myself have concluded seven-thirty is the proper hour for breakfast."

"Besides, Mr. Curlip and myself are fond of discussing matters of both public and private interest—"

"Which," said Curlip, with a sneer, "I opine will not be of interest to you."

"Oh; I don't know! An intellectual giant

like yourself would be highly entertaining and instructive to a young man yearning for the light."

"He's slightly sarcastic, don't you think, Mr. Curlip?"

"Forget it. These seekers for the light are naturally in the dark and grope for rejoinders," said Curlip, contemptuously.

"If he fails to keep his temper, we can banish him from the table," proposed Miranda, laughingly.

"I shall behave, don't fear," said Stoneman. "Breakfast is an important meal with me, and, coupled with Curlip's wisdom, will become absolutely fascinating."

Miss Bradley and Curlip arose. As they departed, Scroggins, Skaggs, Anderson and Barstars appeared, and ordered breakfast.

Evidently they had observed Curlip's attention to Miranda and showed signs of jealousy.

"For a president of the Alimony Club, Curlip's rather rushing things, don't you think?" Scroggins questioned.

"It's absolutely indecent. Scarcely beyond the portals of the clubhouse, he ignores the purpose of his presence on this expedition, throws to the winds his high resolves and sets a pernicious example to his fellow-clubmen," expounded the observant Barstars.

"And," continued the vacillating Anderson, "to keep us steadfast in our resolutions we need the guiding mind of one not harboring a weakness for the cajoleries of womankind."

"Cajoleries of women, be hanged," exclaimed Stoneman. "I'll wager my existence Curlip pesters Miss Bradley with his intentions."

"If that be true our president's conduct is alike reprehensible and disgusting," and the sepulchral Scroggins gravely shook his head.

"You fellows make me tired," said Stoneman. "You rant and roar about woman, but I'll bet every kiss you ever got you had to steal or buy."

"Sir, you're insulting!" exclaimed Scroggins.

"No, I'm not, I'm only truthful. My experi-

ence has been that the fellow who rails against woman, indulges in the cry of sour grapes."

"Hear him, oh, Lord, hear him!" groaned Skaggs, assuming an attitude of supplication.

"The actions of your president give you away. The condition of the head of a fish presages that of the body."

"That means we are malodorous?"

"It means, according to my view, that you and your president are a bunch of self-elected Irresistibles, and notwithstanding your supposed indifference to woman, you are so eager to be with them, that you can locate the sound of a rustling petticoat, at midnight, with no moon in the sky."

"Strong language, brother," said Barstars.

"Miss Bradley agreed with you last night at dinner because she believed you in earnest." Stoneman looked at them and snapped his fingers in derision.

"We are," shouted the four.

"Rot!" said Stoneman, as he left the table.

CHAPTER IX

Miss Bradley sat in her uncle's chair at the table. After the five ex-husbands sat down, she explained that her uncle was checking up names from the membership booking of the Royal Astronomical Society, getting a line on a scientist to take her place, and, therefore, would not be at dinner.

"Captain Bradley has asked me to act as hostess, gentlemen, and therefore I am usurping his chair. If I become naughty, send me to the nursery."

"Where's Stoneman?" asked Curlip.

"Oh, he's helping uncle, and they're going to have a 'snack' in the pilot-house when they get through their work."

"I think we shall not miss him so much; his absence will not cause any heartaches," volunteered Curlip.

"He is certainly not in accord with your

opinions of women. He seems to know little or nothing about the sex in comparison with the great experience you gentlemen have had," said Miranda, with a faint smile.

"Oh, the young fellow means well, but he doesn't know," and Scroggins dismissed the subject with a wave of his hand.

"Of course, gentlemen, we must either live and learn or read and ponder. You have lived, learned, and no doubt suffered. You can imagine how interesting it must be to one who has not tasted either the sweets or the bitters of matrimony to hear your vivifying stories of that most earnest event—"

"Events, begging your pardon," said Skaggs. "The five of us have a total of nine."

"Which is going it some!" said Curlip proudly. "As you know," he continued, "I have been married three times—"

"A glutton for punishment," interposed Scroggins.

"I have often thought how interesting must be the story of the divorced,—interesting to

know when came the first rift in the lute," said Miranda.

"It usually starts," said Scroggins, shaking his head sorrowfully, "with harping on a thousand strings."

"And here you are, gentlemen, five men with nine divorces to your credit. Suppose you be the story-telling Scheherazade."

"And I'll be the listening Schahriar, and we'll call it an Atlantic Day's Entertainment."

"Are you agreed, gentlemen?" asked Curlip, who would rather talk about himself than eat.

"We are!" loudly responded the others.

"Now, gentlemen, I am all ears and sympathy. Who opens the entertainment?"

"Curlip," said Skaggs and Scroggins.

"Oh, splendid, splendid!" Miranda clapped her hands in girlish glee.

"You start the ball, Curlip, but don't make it a thousand and one nights' tale, as the rest of us want to get a chance before the trip's over," and Scroggins settled himself to hear the president's oft-repeated matrimonial experiences.

"Understand, this story is for private circulation only," and this self-satisfied man of fifty, double-chinned, of florid complexion, straggling blonde hair, heavy-eyed, stood, looking about, much as a conductor of an orchestra just before launching it into sound. All were attention.

"Even as a little boy," he began, "I showed that love and sympathy for the female that has been so conspicuous in my character, although sadly shaken lately. When I was not above ten, I recall a visit to neighbors. The lady instructed her little daughter to get some apples. The child returned from the pantry, bearing on a plate a solitary one, and said to her mother, while eyeing the fruit with great interest, 'Mamma, there's but one apple,' which I immediately took, whereupon she cried as if her heart would break. All in sympathy, I went to her and said, 'There, little girl, don't cry! I'll try to get along with one until I get home.' The poor little dear's heart was breaking, doubtless because there was but one apple

to offer me. Her tears were most pitiful to behold.

"In my school days how well I remember my consideration for those who had no umbrellas! I always carried one to school. Whenever it rained, I did not show a parsimonious spirit by using it alone, or a spirit of favoritism by selecting some one school girl to share it with me, but, in the goodness of my heart, I would invite two girls to partake of its shelter, and I, walking between them, would carry the umbrella. It is true the girls would get soaked, but that was owing to the lack of circumference of the umbrella and not through any fault of the girls.

"Later on I became a great patron of the drama, and would often take a young lady with me to witness the play. As distance lends enchantment to the view, I always bought seats in the gallery, and, of course, brought my opera glasses. I knew how fatiguing it was to hold glasses to your eyes for any length of time, and so, to save my lovely companion, I

always retained them, looking through them and explaining just how every one and everything looked on the stage. I can even now remember how my fair escort would offer to share the burden of my efforts and how I would save her the trouble. I never sent a collar or shirt or pair of pajamas back to the laundress on account of not being properly washed but my heart bled for the poor working woman who would have to wash them without compensation, all on account of a miserable quality of soap, or water. It saddens me even now to contemplate it. Finally, I married. In the first days, even if I had suggested it, I doubt if my wife would have allowed me to bring up the coal from the cellar or the kindling wood, or lock out the cat, or ventilate the room, or turn off the light, or the thousand and one little things which she so gladly did. I am sorry now I didn't offer to do these things, just to see how she would act. I recall on an occasion after she had finished the autumn house-

cleaning, had put up enough preserves for the winter, had mended my linen, I, returning hungry and tired from a baseball game, found her on her knees praying and caught a fervent 'Oh, Lord, how long, how long?' I tiptoed out of the room unobserved. No doubt she was unhappy at my absence and was invoking Divine interposition. The thought was consoling to me, for, to paraphrase, 'This matron she lived with no other thought than to love and be loved by me.'

"But the serpent came. One night at a party she rushed to me, and with pride beaming from her beautiful eyes, and exultation in her voice, she said, 'Eben, I've got a trade-last for you.'

" 'Yes,' I said; 'dear, let me hear it.'

" 'Did you notice that magnificent blonde that sat next to me at the supper?' I assented. 'She says that to her you are the grandest man she has ever seen, and I'm so proud of you, Eben, more so because it comes from such a

beautiful girl as Molly Donnelly. It confirms my judgment of you, Eben, even if I am just a plain little woman.'

"Well, a fellow would be mighty small if he didn't hunt up the young lady and thank her for her compliments. She certainly was a good-looker and I was touched immediately. I found myself, as I believed, the first time really in love. The fairest and most proper thing for a man to do under those conditions is immediately to go to his wife and tell her of his passion. She, poor thing, at my suggestion returned to her father's home, and he being an unfeeling wretch engaged a lawyer, entered suit against me for cruel and unusual anguish of mind and I am now paying Number One fifty dollars per week. My only solace at the time was that I married Molly. The trouble with Molly was that she had the fifty-fifty bee in her bonnet. If I stayed out until five in the morning, Molly would stay out until five the next morning. If I carried on a harmless little flirtation, she immediately would start one

equally harmless, but exceedingly disquieting to me. In fact, in all her actions she tried to imitate me. She admired my methods, even though I didn't approve of hers, but one day I met my soul's idol. She was diminutive, sparkling and a brunette. She was wonderfully attractive, an entirely different style from Molly, who was built more on the Venus de Milo order, and I found myself, as I believed before, for the first time really in love. I immediately, as I am the fairest sort of a man, communicated that most portentous fact to my wife, who said, 'Funny, but I've got some one on the string too.'

" 'Horrors!' I exclaimed, burning with indignation.

" 'You weary me!' she replied. 'The best way to settle this,' said this cold-blooded blonde, 'is for you to pay my carfare to that oasis in the Western desert where the thirsty are refreshed into single blessedness.'

" 'What charge can you make against me?' I asked.

" 'Oh, I'll just take your usual family charge of cruel and unusual anguish of mind.'

"She got a divorce and seventy-five dollars per week. I wasn't much concerned at the moment over the size of the alimony because I expected she would marry immediately and thereby lose it—but I am constrained to believe that she hasn't found a man yet worth the sacrifice of seventy-five per week; therefore, she is still single. The one I felt was my soul's idol was a lallapaloosa, if there ever was one. She loved me with a devotion that was beautiful in its single-heartedness, but it would assert itself in the strangest ways. If I happened to say that money was filthy lucre, she would go out and spend it like a drunken sailor, and then, when I would expostulate, she would put her beautiful arms about my neck and say, 'Honey dear, we don't want anything filthy around us, not even lucre.' She was the most impracticable woman I ever met, and finally I could stand it no longer. One evening we went to a recital given by a new singer. When

she appeared and sang 'Ah fors e lui' I was enthralled; for days after I could not banish my thoughts of her. My wife noticed my absent-mindedness and asked the reason. I, truthful to a fault, told her.

" 'You mean that broad-beamed girl'—my wife came of a nautical family—'that acted like a turkey on a griddle when she sang?'

"While I wouldn't admit the description, I felt that she remembered the party.

" 'If you want her,' continued my wife, 'she'll just cost you a hundred and twenty-five plunks per week. Just as soon as you make up your mind, let me know,' and out of the room she flounced, sought a lawyer and in a more than reasonable time she got her hundred and twenty-five on the ground of cruel and unusual anguish of mind. I sought out the fair singer. Her interest in me grew with the day. I asked her hand. She referred me to her mother. Her mother said, 'Yes, Nancy will marry you, but reserves the right to change her mind.' Knowing how impossible it is for any woman to

alter her loving intention towards me, I acquiesced. Five nights later, I called with the engagement ring. I was met by the mother who said her daughter had a sick headache and could not be seen that night, but she left the matter in her hands, and she regretted exceedingly that Nancy would have to be released from her engagement. Of course, I could do naught but agree, and heaped execrations on the heartless mother, who no doubt bull-dozed the unhappy daughter into rejecting me."

"What did you do with the engagement ring?" asked the practical Skaggs.

"I carry it ever with me as a reminder of the deceit and duplicity of women—that is, one woman," hastily corrected Curlip.

"Wise old guy!" Skaggs murmured.

"Next!" And Miranda turned to Anderson.

"Now, comrade, tell your story, confine it to short chapters and shorter words," Skaggs admonished.

"Let me think," came from the bibulous one.

"That process, if successful, presages novelty," maliciously came from Curlip.

"May I ask, Mr. Anderson, how many times you have been married and divorced?"

"Only once married and once too often divorced," and Anderson spoke sorrowfully.

"Was she tall or petite, blonde or brunette?" asked Miranda with much interest.

"She was a beauty—a long-suffering beauty. She was made to love. Her only fault lay in her inability to distinguish."

"Was she color blind?" asked Miranda.

"No, she was, as her lawyer explained at the trial, inefficiently equipped to perceive the various odoriferous effluvia."

"Come again," shouted Barstars.

"To elucidate, her sense of smell was unreliable. I shall never forget the scene that sounded the death knell of our happiness," and Anderson brushed away a tear.

"Go on, I am deeply concerned," Miranda pleaded.

"I came home. It was about four A. M. I

had attended a party, a convivial party. I might say, in all truth, a very convivial party."

"There's nothing extraordinary in that, I'm told," said the young lady.

"No; but she was waiting for me."

"As good wives do," Miranda added approvingly.

"But she was angry. Looking at me with scorn in her eyes, she exclaimed, 'I am disgusted with you!'

"I said, 'Softly, my darling!'

"'I don't believe you have drawn a sober breath since you were born!' she cried.

"'Softly, my darling,' I said.

"'Ugh!' she said as I approached her. 'Go away, you smell like a brewery.'

"'Stop!' I commanded, drawing myself erect and grasping the bed post to make my words more impressive. 'Stop! I repeat. Woman, I will not be insulted. I do not smell like a brewery. Charge me with the odors of the distillery, if it pleases, or the bouquet of the wine press, but withdraw the brewery.'

" 'I'll withdraw nothing!' she cried.

" 'You will withdraw the brewery,' I said slowly, 'or withdraw yourself.' I was determined to be master in my own house. Being self-opinionated, she left me. The lawyer claimed she was driven from home and I have been miserable ever since the divorce."

"Your divorce shows the need of higher education of women," said Miranda, with a smile. "Had she known the difference between the aromas of the brewery, the pungency of the distillery, or the bouquet of the wine press, mayhap you never would have parted. Gentlemen, I leave you to your cordials and cigars."

As they arose and she was preparing to leave, she turned to Mr. Skaggs and said, "May I have the pleasure of a promenade with you and a recital of your marital experiences?"

"When would you like to hear me?" he asked.

"To-morrow morning at seven."

"He'll be there with bells on," assured Curlip.

CHAPTER X

The visionary gentlemen of the old school who contended "that the days were for rest and the nights for sleep" advanced a theorem, which is exceedingly difficult of attainment except by the idle rich and the equally idle poor, and presents a picture of calmness and inertia grateful to a tired world. Multi-millionaires and hoboes—mostly the latter—are the only ones who can indulge themselves in such a motto. The ability to rest is almost universal—the ability to sleep exceptional. One might wonder whether sleep is a natural condition of man; one might ask if in the first days man knew aught of "Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep." One might fittingly repeat Sancho Panza's prayer, "Now blessings light on him that first invented this same sleep." In the beginning eternal vigilance was the price of liberty and life, and relaxation must have been

indulged in a sort of Cyclopean attitude. A careless caveman, wandering about brandishing a stone shillalah, would not consider that day lost, if he tapped a cranium or two, and the constant proximity of the various members of the mastodonic family would keep the minds of the original dwellers of our globe in a state of apprehension, to say the least.

As time proceeded some one must have invented unconscious repose and from the invention of the one, it became the habit of the many, and from the habit of the many, it became the instinct of all. It is too much to say that sleep is an original demand of Nature; if Nature really did start it, she should have, with equal consideration for the animal species, given hours of rest also to the heart and other organs of the body, which, as we know, she keeps perpetually on the job from birth to death.

The historians of the Bible are very minute and painstaking in their enumerations of what God did at the beginning, but the first mention of sleep, is "And the Lord God caused a deep

sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept." Adam must have grown to manhood before the extraction of the rib and it may have been that the Lord gave him an anæsthetic which after all is but a forced sleep. If it had been left to Adam, he might have objected to losing a rib to make a woman.

Montaigne, in one of his essays, advances the thought, "Peradventure the faculty of sleeping would seem useless and contrary to nature being it deprived us of attraction and sense," but he thinks it was given us to acquaint us with death. I fail to see why a smiling beneficent God should put us on earth to remind us daily that we are to die. He does not insist on our daily remembering our coming; why then, should we remember our going?

It would seem that the instinct of sleep weakens with age—the sixteen hours of the infant becomes the six hours of the average adult. Environment again enters into the process. It has been said that the country lad requires more sleep than a boy of the city. Many

notable characters considered six hours of sleep unnecessary. The hero of Waterloo bore the reputation of never turning in bed except to arise, and our own Edison takes but four hours of repose, it is said. A famous Civil War general is credited with the statement that "in actions, demanding loss of sleep on the part of the soldier, city men are preferred to country men; for the city man, living in an environment of irregular life, is better able to cope with unusual conditions than the more set-by-rule man from the farm."

Still, conscience, pride, business, have much to do with the habit. How we remember, on returning from a late supper, finding ourselves tossing about sleepless and unhappy, all because we could not banish the remembrance of an asinine utterance, which we were sure would be circulated to our everlasting damnation.

Skaggs, who prided himself on his judicial acumen on any subject under the sun, made it a rule to prepare a "paper" in the manner of a law school student, so instead of invoking the

companionship of Morpheus, he had sat up the greater part of the night preparing the story of his matrimonial experiences. He was wide awake when he joined Miranda on the promenade deck. He bowed with the gravity of that kind of gentleman whose politeness begins when he takes off his hat and ends when he puts it on. He had rehearsed his opening sentence, and therefore, placing his hand and his hat over his heart, he began, "Madame, Alonzo Skaggs, age forty-nine, strong-jawed, hair iron-gray, rather high cheek bones, small nose, fairly tall, at your service."

Miranda, falling into the by-play, made a deep curtsey and intoned, "Sir, Miranda Bradley, age twenty-two, anticipating much pleasure and instruction from your narrative, am yours to command."

"Of my first marriage there is little to say. The woman eloped and I secured a divorce and she went rapidly out of my life. My second marriage was the one that made me eligible for the Alimony Club.

"I married one of twin sisters of a family in very ordinary circumstances, the father earning a most precarious living, the family plugging along in genteel poverty. One sister married a young laborer, who, after a year or so of married life, took very ardently to drink, which in turn made him quarrelsome and pugnacious and, on coming home at any hour of the night, he would proceed, after a few words, to blows, and in consequence his wife often sported a pair of blackened eyes. She refused to stand this abuse and finally applied for a divorce which was granted and she received as alimony eight dollars per week, a sum greater than that she received in food, clothing, and lodging while she was a single girl at her father's house. Under these conditions she was really better off than she had been as a single girl or a married woman. I married the sister. I was the important banker of the town where we married. Our union had not been blessed with children and my wife, having lots of time on her hands, cultivated ideas of extravagance,

which first brought mild protests from me, and finally grew to violent scenes between us. In one of these scenes, my wife taunted me to desperation, telling me that she hated and despised me and only married me for my money. In a paroxysm of anger I grabbed her arm, which caused her to scream and leave the house hurriedly. She sued me for inhuman and brutal treatment, was granted her freedom and alimony of one hundred dollars per week. While I did not object to the divorce, I did object to the size of the alimony, but the learned judge who sat on the case repeated an old saw,

> " 'No man e'er felt the halter draw
> With good opinion of the law.'

"To which in disgust I answered in the words of Macklin,

> " 'The law is a sort of hocus-pocus science that smiles in your face while it picks your pocket.'

"As I was my own counsel, I said to the court, 'I consider the findings absurd,' and the only satisfaction I got from the judge was that

I should be glad my ex-wife hadn't been given a larger amount of alimony. Now to me the absurdity is this. Here were two sisters, twins, both born in the same environment, both with the same education, both with the same disposition. One married and divorced, receiving eight dollars per week, the other married and divorced, receiving one hundred dollars per week. The court evidently made the ruling according to the value of the husband, instead of the value of the wife. Either both wives should have received eight dollars per week or one hundred dollars per week. Both these girls came from a family where it was only possible to spend on themselves eight dollars or less per week. I cannot see why one should receive ninety-two dollars more than the other, when both were in the same capacity—wives."

As Skaggs finished, Scroggins joined them and the three went in to breakfast. They had the table to themselves.

"I've just heard Mr. Skaggs' thesis on the

value of women as wives. It would appear that if the future woman wants to marry at all, she will have to unionize herself."

"And be insured according to her original standing in society," said Skaggs, growling to himself.

Scroggins rapped for attention and said, "This is where I tell my heart stories."

"No better time than the present," said the amiable young lady.

"Well, if you insist, I will give the narrative without any varnish." He struck an attitude. This man, fully six feet two, lean as a lath, with hair and mustache of an indefinable color, with stooping shoulders, blinking eyes, long arms and an Adam's apple that seemed to work on a ball-bearing action, bent forward and rested his elbows on the table. His voice came from his boots.

"As a business man," he began, "I will say in all modesty that I have been very successful. On a visit to Dallas, I met a woman who became my first and second wife, and the experi-

ences of my married life started there. My work was such that I was forced to be away from her much of the time after we were married."

"Most trying for both of you, I should imagine," Miranda suggested.

"I was interested in a number of oil fields in the Southwest, and my success financially was very great, and placed me, in a comparatively short time, on Easy Street. My wife religiously read the Sunday New York letter in the local paper and began to dream of that fairy land, bordering on the curbstones of Broadway, and finally persuaded me to move to the metropolis, where we secured a small but attractive house on Riverside Drive. What with theaters, operas, dinners and a hundred and one kinds of amusements one finds in New York, life took on a roseate hue.

"One day we received letters from our respective mothers intimating it would please them if we should extend an invitation to visit us. As they had never met, the prospect of

having both at the house at the same time seemed so pleasant that we telegraphed our pleasure if they would join us immediately."

"Fatal mistake," growled Curlip.

"Yes, fatal and foolish."

"When the ladies arrived, happiness flew out of the window," hazarded Curlip.

"My mother, a lady of determination and experience, assumed charge of the house."

"A kindly action, I should think, when it is considered how extremely difficult it is to secure efficient housekeepers in these days," sympathetically added Miss Bradley.

"My mother knew the dishes I was fond of and prepared her first dinner entirely in keeping with that knowledge."

"And then?" asked the lady.

"Our troubles began. The first dish served was a thick soup of which I am inordinately fond. My wife's mother said, 'Excuse me, dear, but you do not intend to devour that stuff? It is not within the province of a

gentleman to busy himself with a thick soup.'

"'Why not?' snapped back my parent.

"'Why, a gentleman's soup is always thin,' said my mother-in-law.

"My son is a gentleman,' retorted my mother, her anger rising.

"'I hope so,' cried my mother-in-law, 'but it would be difficult to prove it, if he were seen by a gentleman at the present moment.'

"'I had finished the plate by this time and offered it for a second helping.'

"My mother-in-law spoke again. 'The province of soup is to stimulate the gastric juices and prepare the stomach for the solid food that follows. It is the act of a gourmand, if you will excuse me, to ask for a second helping of soup; a gourmet would never dream of doing such a thing.'

"'I am not conversant with either gourmands or gourmets,' said my mother, in her firmest manner, 'but if my son wants ten helpings of soup, that's his affair and not yours.'

" 'Ah, very well,' said my mother-in-law. 'I am simply telling you the usages of good society.'

"The situation was growing tense. The next course was pig jowl, boiled with cabbage. Its flavor, as it was brought in, was delightful and filled the dining room to the exclusion of everything else.

" 'Beg pardon,' said my mother-in-law; then, to the maid, 'Maria, open all the windows before I suffocate.' The windows were opened only to be closed again immediately as my mother could not stand the icy blasts.

" 'How any one could eat pig jowl and cabbage is beyond me,' my wife's mother said, holding her handkerchief to her nose, and looking unutterables.

" 'Well, I can eat it and so can my son!' exclaimed my now irate mother. Until this time both my wife and I had maintained absolute silence.

"The culmination of this disastrous repast came when the salad was served. A French

dressing was brought on, which I refused and, instead, sprinkled sugar on the lettuce. My mother-in-law with tragic emphasis and melodramatic gesture, arose, and said, 'I have been compelled to witness the degradation of the dinner in this horrible mess you have placed on the table, and which you and your son apparently enjoy. My daughter was educated to follow the precept 'eat to live, not live to eat.' I have lectured before anti-fat societies and physical culture classes on the evils of food, and here I am in the house of my daughter's husband, forced to witness a man and a woman devour a thick soup, enjoy pigs' jowls and boiled cabbage, and gloat over lettuce covered with sugar. You'll excuse me, I must go to my room or I'll faint,' and she left the table. My wife remained motionless as marble.

" 'Do you agree with your mother?' asked my mother, slowly and pointedly.

" 'My mind is as my mother's,' said my wife, calmly.

" 'Then you are not fit to bear my son's name.'

" 'Fit! why, I degraded myself when I married into your family,' answered my wife.

" 'My family? Let me tell you, my great-grandfather fought in the battle of Brandywine.'

" 'And probably did because the name attracted him,' retorted my wife.

" 'Ah, this is too much!' shouted my mother, rising from the table and smashing her coffee cup on the floor.

" 'Tell that woman to leave our house,' shouted my wife.

" 'I will leave with her,' I said, my temper getting the best of me.

" 'Then you desert me?' cried my wife.

" 'I will never come in this house again until that hell-cat gets out of it,' said my abused parent."

"Strong language!" said Miss Bradley.

" 'My mother will remain to protect me from the insults of such as you,' and my wife left

the room. I hurriedly gathered a few things of my own and my mother's, and left."

"And then?" asked the young lady.

"My wife with her mother went west and got a divorce and alimony."

"I hope your next experience was better."

"No,—worse," and Scroggins slowly shook his head.

"In what manner?"

"After Mrs. Scroggins went west, secured a legal residence and eventually obtained a divorce, I went back to the oil fields. During one of my visits to San Antonio I was invited to a dinner and, whom should I meet, but my former wife."

"Accidental, of course," ventured Miranda.

"I think it was a put-up job. She carried her forty-five years with ease and was growing old gracefully."

"Your love was rekindled—"

"Yes, and in three days we were married again."

"How charming!"

"How horrible, I found."

"Why?"

"Letitia, from the time she had left me to the moment she went visiting in San Antonio, had been constantly with her mother, and had imbibed all that ancient dame's faculties for discussion, argument, positiveness and never being in the right."

"How unfortunate."

"Most unfortunate. We went back to New York to live. If Letitia read a headline in the paper, say, for instance: 'The President refuses to take sides in the controversy between England and Ireland regarding Home Rule,' she would immediately scornfully criticize the President, and, if I expostulated, she would turn on me and, before her tongue could be stopped, by devious ways of reasoning, it would be apparent that the President, England, and Ireland, were all brought to a dreadful stress owing to my persistency and pig-headedness."

"Wouldn't it have been better, if you had not offered your views?"

"Perhaps! Still, I remember reading a would-be funny cablegram that stated it was believed that the famous Ahkoond of Swat, lately deceased, had no doubt been put away through the connivance of King Jim-jam of the Jou-Jous, who feared the Ahkoond would become Christianized, and, therefore, an apostate from the Mohammedan religion. She ranted over an attack on our church, and, when I offered no word, she turned and said savagely, 'I believe at heart you are a Turk and I will not live a moment longer with such an accursed infidel,' and flounced out of the house."

"A case of nerves, I should say," said Miranda.

"Yes, and the nerves carried her to a lawyer's office and to a divorce court, where I was charged with having described myself as a Christian when my attitude was that of a Turk. I accepted the charge, did not defend the suit and I am now paying her for vilifying me, at the rate of a cool ten thousand dollars a year."

Barstars had joined the table and at the con-

clusion of Scroggins' story, he broke in, "Miss Bradley, I can give you my experience in a few words.

"My marriage was a regular knock-down and throw-out affair. But I will say one thing in favor of my former spouse: she never hit me with a rolling-pin when my back was turned."

CHAPTER XI

It would be supposed that five men, principals in nine divorce cases, would desire to avoid the female for all time to come; but not so with the delectable quintet on the *Southern Cross*. Each was pursuing the fair Miranda and each believed himself the final victor. The strange part was that the only "fly in the ointment" was Stoneman. It was true that the object of their conquest, we will not say affection, had treated the young man with the utmost indifference, squelching his opinions and showing a decided preference for their company and their views. But women were uncertain, each confessed to himself. On each occasion, when the opportunity presented itself, they would give the young man a knock.

"Don't you think," said Curlip, who wore a number twelve shoe, "that Stoneman's feet are

too small for a man five feet nine in height?"

The young lady had not observed.

"I don't see anything attractive in dark blue eyes and very black hair in men," Skaggs whispered, watching the effect.

"The first time I find the opportunity I am going to compare Mr. Stoneman's eyes and hair with yours, but up to date I haven't noted them carefully when you have been together," the young lady volunteered.

"I imagine Stoneman believes with his strong arms and powerful chest he is the only athletically built man on the boat," and Barstars crooked his arms, showed his muscular development and swelled out his chest, all of which Miranda admired in Barstars and had not noticed in the young man.

The trip to Plymouth was drawing to a close; the captain expected to reach the harbor in twenty-four hours. After luncheon the next afternoon they were met by the pilot-boat. A telegram was handed Captain Bradley. It read:

"London—September 12th.—Have engaged James Leland, the eminent scientist, to accompany you. He will be at the dock when you arrive.

"PRESTON, Astronomical Society."

"Gentlemen," said the captain, flashing the telegram, "I have excellent news for you. An assistant has been secured, so we can dispose of my niece's services and send her home from here."

"What!" came from five throats simultaneously.

"I am sure, gentlemen, my presence now is of no consequence. My uncle will have a better assistant than I could hope to be," said Miss Bradley, quietly.

"No, no,—it will never do. Here you have been working ever since we left New York on matters concerning the observation, and to rob you of your reward for your work now is most unfair." Curlip's tone was impressive.

"That's what we say,—most unfair," echoed the others.

"It is not unfair, gentlemen; in fact, it must

be done. Mr. Leland, no doubt, has either resigned or secured leave from the authorities at Greenwich to make this trip, and I cannot turn him down now without serious loss to him."

"We will take care of that—it isn't fair to Miss Bradley to turn *her* down after she had set her heart on going."

"But, gentlemen, I had not set my heart on going. I know my uncle forfeited five thousand dollars because I abused our relation and hid myself on board this boat and my only reason was to take care of a possible contingency. That contingency has disappeared in the engaging of Mr. Leland."

"One question," said young Stoneman. "Is Leland an Englishman?"

"He is," said Captain Bradley, "and as fine a fellow and thorough scientist as you will find anywhere."

"Then, I forbid his coming on board."

The Alimony Club clutched at the words of Stoneman as a drowning man would take to a straw.

"By what right do you forbid?" asked Miss Bradley.

"Yes,—by what right?" demanded the captain.

"By the right of an American, proud of his country, proud of its achievements. You, yourself, Captain Bradley, stated your desire was to have this expedition entirely American."

"Yes, yes, American," Curlip hastened to say.

"You used that argument, Captain Bradley, when you explained the presence of your niece with this expedition. It seemed to us that your great desire was to have this expedition absolutely an American one."

"That's very true," replied the captain.

"Ah! you remember that, captain," said Scroggins. "And you are not going back on it now," came from Anderson.

"I have no desire to go back on it, but I cannot see my way clear to let Leland out."

"I can, and Leland can. He is no doubt a patriotic Englishman, nearly all Englishmen

are. Explain to him the circumstances and I am sure he will withdraw. Englishmen believe in patriotic impulses and therefore will understand your desire to have this expedition purely American."

"That's true, but I cannot allow him to suffer personal loss."

"We will take care of that," simultaneously shouted the Alimony Club.

"Is it agreeable to you, Miranda?" asked the captain.

"Of course, from a patriotic standpoint it is my duty, but I fear I might interfere with the pleasure and freedom of these gentlemen, all of whom came on board to escape the eternal female."

"We are actuated entirely in the interests of patriotism. Future generations, reading the wonderful achievements of this expedition, will know it was American to the core," grandiloquently orated Stoneman.

Three days later the *Southern Cross* left Plymouth and all on board were Americans.

CHAPTER XII

Miss Bradley's diary from the time of leaving Plymouth to Teneriffe reads:—

"Friday, Sept. 15th.—Left Plymouth three P. M. Departure, from Eddystone Lighthouse five P. M. Mr. Curlip joined me on deck at six P. M. His conversation as usual drifted to the eternal female, but in praise, instead of censure. I remonstrated saying:—

" 'Do you know, Mr. Curlip, that you are sadly departing from your position regarding women?'

" 'My mind is clearing,' he said.

" 'When I first met you, you were so charmingly frank, so clear-brained in your estimate of our sex, that I was impressed, but now—'

" 'But my views have changed, you understand,' pressing my arm slightly, but with evident intention.

"Apparently paying no attention to the pressure, I said, 'No, I cannot understand such a change in a short two weeks; it doesn't add to your credit as a man of discernment and purpose to be so fickle.'

" 'Well, you have changed my views.'

" 'I!' I exclaimed. 'You cannot point to one instance in our talks where I have disagreed with you, when you have spoken of woman as foolish, frivolous and capable of every form of deception.'

" 'No, that's true, but don't you see'—this, with another pressure of my arm, just a little stronger.

" 'No, I don't see, and never will. If I had opposed your arguments I could well understand that you, in the goodness of your heart and a desire that my feelings should not be ruffled, would be content not to talk of women at all. I enjoyed your tirades and now you are departing from your brilliant conceptions, your overpowering onslaughts on the specious arguments of Mr. Stoneman. It is not becom-

ing the president of a famous club, pledged to speak the truth at all times about women.'

"'Oh, I have lost interest in that club,' wearily said Mr. Curlip.

"'Exactly,' I added; 'I shouldn't be surprised to see you the undisputed defender of my sex.'

"'Not me'!

"'And why not you? If, in two weeks you can discover in the sex virtues you never met before, by the time this voyage is over, you will champion us as paragons of perfection. I am sorry we must come to the parting of the ways.'

"'But can't you divine?' His mind was wool-gathering.

"'Again I say no. When you berate my sex, you are grandly eloquent. As one who praises, you are unconvincing and impotent.'

"I left him standing on the deck. He is a shrewd man, and like men of fifty, he combines the emotions of youth with the experience of age. Had he been a young man, he probably would have blurted out what was in his mind, but the foxy old fellow elected to live in

anticipation until he was absolutely sure of his quarry.

"Sept. 16th—Light air—fine weather. Yacht's run to 12 noon—miles 251. Joined by Mr. Barstars 7.30. This man has one redeeming quality. He loves birds and trees. When he talks of shotguns, rifles, powders, loads, velocity of vision, ducks, pheasants, deer, he is entertaining; otherwise, he is uninteresting. He is making a horrible effort to be sentimental, which is as out of place as Chopin's 'minute-waltz' would be at an elephant's ball. He told this experience:

" 'I was down in Virginia, hunting quail. I wish you had been with me. I was in a large field of stubble and was gradually working my way to the edge of the woods beyond. I'm sure you would have enjoyed it. Just as I climbed the fence, I came upon a covey of young quail feeding with their mother. She immediately seemed to realize, if she and her chicks attempted to fly, they would be destroyed. Eyeing me closely and defiantly she dropped one

of her wings, dragging it along the ground as if it were broken. The brood immediately sought the shelter and protection of it and the mother and chicks moved slowly towards a brook and with lightning rapidity disappeared beneath a ledge. It was a beautiful exhibition. The day would have been just great if you had been there, just you and me and of course the dogs, and that's why I'm telling you this story. Don't you wish you and I could be together always, hunting? I—I—I guess you know what I mean?'

"If I did, I went to breakfast without saying so.

"Sept. 17th. Off Cape Ortegai—fresh breezes—fine weather—miles 301. It was Mr. Anderson the weak sister's turn, last evening.

"As he joined me, his steps were slightly lurching, although the sea was calm. I have observed that on ship-board, physical evidence of 'looking upon the wine when it is red' is very difficult to determine, because the sober and the others are alike subject to the caprices of

angry, choppy, rolling or billowy seas. Therefore the bracing of oneself does not necessarily mean alcoholic uncertainty.

"Anderson said with greater bravery than discretion, 'Do you know, I have liked you from the start. You remind me so much of my lost Arabella.' At this point it became necessary to choke him off, which Mr. Curlip, who was with us, immediately proceeded to do.

" 'Why, Miss Bradley, these men of our club do not take any interest in poker, pinochle, auction pitch, seven-up or anything else,' said Mr. Anderson vehemently. 'They just sit around and wait for eleven bells and four bells all the time, and you know what happens at eleven and four bells. That's when you come out. They call themselves women-haters,—I don't think, —not that I'm blaming them, for if I could forget my lost Arabella—'

" 'Oh, drop Arabella,—we know,' broke in Mr. Curlip.

" 'Well, as I was saying, women are like

Kentucky whiskies,—some are better than others, but all are good.'

"Sept. 18th. Off Cape St. Vincent.—Fresh breezes—fine weather—miles 298. The delectable Mr. Skaggs and delightful Mr. Stoneman were my companions through the promenade. I like Mr. Stoneman—sometimes I think—Miranda, don't get foolish. Remember your mission on earth is to study the stars—and yet his eyes have a starlit expression—Miranda, stop it, Miranda, I say.

"The seven A. M. and six P. M. promenades have organized themselves into schools of Courtship, where the faculty is lecturing on Love, Ambition, Dreams and Marriage. As an omnivorous student I absorbed all, and not to create dissensions apparently accepted every statement made as gospel truth or wisdom.

"Mr. Stoneman is the one truant; he seldom attends. I am beginning to be a believer in the survival of the fittest. Some economist said that if five men were brought together,

each given an equal sum of money and an equal chance in business, within a comparative short time, one will have all the money, another all the experience, and the other three become dependents on the two. I am fully convinced that man, when forced to work out his own salvation, very quickly abandons the belief that all men are born free and equal. It matters not if disappointment, chagrin, indignation or *ego* takes possession of a man's brains, he consciously shoves himself into the place in the ranks of mankind where *he* knows he belongs. He may use to the world sophistry, self-deception or fallacious reasoning, and try to make the world believe he is superior, but he doesn't fool himself for any length of time, and gradually accepts his real worth and position.

"The world is continually on the lookout for cleverness, and it has often stupidity thrust upon it, and in either case the location is pointed out by the clever or the stupid.

"These five would-be wooers for my heart and hand, Heaven help me, started two days

after we sailed. The race has settled down to anything but a gruelling contest. The various characteristics of the would-be wooers are in evidence, and one can note that Mr. Curlip never lets go an aggressive spirit and is untiring to remain as a supposed favorite. Mr. Skaggs, ambitious and vindictive, is running second in a cold-blooded fashion. Mr. Scroggins is near the leaders, and hopes that he will come under the wire first, through accident to the leaders. The zigzagging Mr. Anderson is left at the barrier, and Mr. Barstars doesn't know how to get started.

"Sept. 18th—Fresh breeze—fine weather—miles 294. Mr. Scroggins' heart is troubling him—not an affection caused by affection, for he really is an ill man. He is in the sick-bay, so nothing doing in the talk line to-day, thank the Lord.

"Arrived Sept. 18th in the harbor of Santa Cruz, Teneriffe, went ashore at the Mole, then to the Hotel Quisisana to remain a few days. To port 277 miles.

"A cable was received by Mr. Curlip from the Acting-President of the Alimony Club announcing the triple wedding of Curlip's three ex-wives and informing this gentleman that automatically the alimonies and his membership in the club had ceased. The club regretted the loss of such a distinguished member and trusted he would be eligible, soon again.

"Mr. Curlip was overjoyed, much to the disgust of Mr. Skaggs, who groaned at the unseemly mirth of the ex-president, complaining that his action was not in keeping with the dignity of a high official. Ignoring the censure, Mr. Curlip, with a burst of generosity and geniality, insisted that the next dinner was to be on him, and that, to express his own words, 'joy should be unconfined.' When the wine was served he arose and offered a toast—'To the lady.' Of course, I bowed.

"Mr. Skaggs, holding his glass on high, said, 'I subscribe to the toast with sorrow—not because the lady does not deserve it, but because he, who was our leader, our mentor, our ex-

ample, has outlived his usefulness; I have not heard him say a truthful thing about woman for the past two weeks. I drink—'

" 'You mean, sir,' and Mr. Stoneman arose, 'you haven't heard him utter a derogatory—'

" 'Well, that's the same thing,' said the implacable Mr. Skaggs. 'He has been straddling. One minute, as president of our club, he leans to the right, and the next, as a hanger-around a bit of femininity, he leans to the wrong; by his actions he nullifies himself completely —'

" 'Therefore, I draw the deduction,' I explained, 'that his attitude is that of a Democratic President elected by the Republicans, or a Republican President elected by the Democrats—he is no good for either party.'

" 'Come, now,' protested Mr. Curlip, 'I've lost my taste for knocking the gentler sex.'

" 'That's where you lose out,' I interjected. 'When you were condemning our follies, frivolities and frailties, I knew just where I stood. Now I don't know myself as others know me.'

" 'But every man has a right to change his

mind about politics, religion or women,' pleaded the unhappy Mr. Curlip.

" 'Poor fish,' sneered Mr. Skaggs.

"After dinner we wandered into the garden. Various colored lanterns were hung about and the decorations suggested a picture of fairy-land. Skaggs immediately appropriated me and we finally sat down in what might be called a lovers' retreat.

" 'Have you enjoyed the voyage?' he asked.

" 'I never can be sufficiently thankful, especially to you, Mr. Skaggs for allowing me to remain aboard,' I exclaimed, with enthusiasm.

" 'If I had insisted on your leaving the ship, it would have been a great disappointment to you, would it not?' This was said with the directness of a prosecuting attorney.

" 'Oh, I'm sure, it would have broken my heart. I should have carried my disappointment to my grave,' I replied.

" 'Do you believe in reciprocity?'

" 'Undoubtedly,' I responded.

" 'Then marry me,' he commanded.

" 'But you don't love me,' I said, as if a proposal was the most natural thing to expect from him at that moment.

" 'No, I don't love you, but I want you,' he replied slowly. 'I am incapable of loving, but sometimes, during the past two weeks, I have thought that if any woman could awaken a feeling of love in me, you could.'

" 'Oh, I hope, dear Mr. Skaggs, I haven't been indiscreet,' I said in a mock-modest manner.

" 'Not in the least, but all of us have our ambitions. Mine is to lead, to be spoken of, to be pointed out as a somebody. When I was a lad, I dreamt that one day a steamboat, a race-horse, or a tally-ho coach would be named for me, or that I would be president of a baseball club or a volunteer fire-company or of the county fair association. Now I want to run for president of the Alimony Club. The presidency of that club is a stepping-stone to greater honors.'

" 'But where do I come in?' I queried.

" 'In return for my not objecting to your remaining on board the yacht, you must now consent to marry me. After a matrimonial experience of a few weeks, I will desert you, or swear at you, or perform one of the many matrimonial infelicities not allowed under the statutes of our territorial laws, and you sue for divorce and alimony. We'll agree on the sum beforehand. Then I'll become the logical candidate for president of the club,—three marriages and two alimonies. That will make me talked of all over the country, and one must be talked about to become famous. From there my career starts upward.'

" 'But,' I said, in mock expostulation, 'you would be running an awful risk in marrying me.'

" 'I scarcely believe I should,' said he, with a leer in his ugly face.

" 'Suppose,' I continued, 'after we are married, I should become madly infatuated with you?'

" 'Oh, that's impossible,' he said; 'I don't inspire feminine affection.'

" 'No, no,' passionately, I cried, 'not impossible,—very probable. I am not as other girls. I am one of the clinging type. You don't know me, Mr. Skaggs, you do not realize beneath this serene exterior beats a heart that could love or hate with an impetuosity—an implacability—'

" 'Why, I thought you were a nice, quiet, easy-going girl.'

" 'Me? Easy-going? Why, if you were my husband and I felt you wished to rid yourself of me, even for a great ambition, I would' —Here I clutched my hands and pantomimed a dagger thrust.

" 'Bless my soul, you surprise me,'—edging away with some alarm.

" 'Do not delude yourself into the belief that you could get rid of me. Husbands rich and healthy are scarce; poor working-girls must be taken care of—'

" 'That's true,' he mused, as if in great thought.

" 'I have a plan,' I suddenly exclaimed, jumping up from my seat and standing before him.

" 'Name it.'

" 'Mr. Curlip was elected on the platform of three alimonies—'

" 'Yes.'

" 'Why not present yourself on a more novel platform?'

" 'I'm listening.'

" 'As a candidate who pays the largest alimony.'

" 'But I don't. I only pay $5,200 a year.'

" 'I have been told that defendants petition courts to re-open their cases for the purpose of reducing alimonies. Why not petition the court to re-open your case to increase your wife's alimony?'

" 'On what grounds?' he said dubiously.

" 'On the discovery of new evidence,' I answered.

" 'But I have no new evidence.'

" 'Nonsense; you have,' I protested. 'You have told me that at times it dawns upon you that the former Mrs. Skaggs had some virtues that escaped you during your married life. Why not be a man, petition the court to re-open the case and grant the plaintiff a sum commensurate with these manifold but overlooked accomplishments; I feel confident you will find no objection from the lady.'

" 'But that will cost money.'

" 'Not so much, Mr. Skaggs, as getting into an entangling alliance with me.' I spoke coldly and with great deliberation.

" 'I will think it over,' he said, as we rejoined the party.

"The next few days we spent in touring the Island. We visited the famous Pico-de-Teyde, that beacon of the sea, volcanic and lofty, so well-known to the followers of the deep. The Cueva del Yelo was an object of interest, a natural ice-house, of which the inhabitants of the island take advantage. We inspected Cueval de las Reyes, the ancient sepulchral grotto

of the Gaunches, the aborigines of the Canaries. Here we learned that Columbus, on his several voyages to our continent, stopped at these islands, and took to the western land what we now know as bronchos, mustangs and cayuses, also cattle, goats, sheep, hogs, and domestic fowls, together with the seeds of the orange, lemon, melons and other fruits. It is believed by some geologists that Teneriffe is a part of the lost Atlantis.

"At our farewell dinner, Mr. Skaggs, with that perpetual persistency of his, brought up for the twentieth time the subject of his immediate return to America, to put himself in line as a candidate for the presidency of his club.

"The unchanging avidity and unanimity in which the four comrades endorsed the project would have made a less vain man than Mr. Skaggs suspicious.

"Mr. Curlip was particularly enthusiastic. 'It's a great idea, old man,' said he, slapping the doubtful one on the back. 'Napoleon's di-

vorce case made him just as famous as his many battles. Lots and lots of kings added to their reputation by having the wedding-knot cut early and often. There was one of the Henrys that even beat my record.'

"'Then,' said Mr. Scroggins, 'think of the advertising you'll get. Papers will say, "Club man petitions court to increase his ex-wife's alimony." What an endorsement for office! Every woman in the land will campaign for you, the name of Skaggs will be on every tongue, babies will be named for you, to say nothing of steamboats and Pullman cars. The stepping-stone to the presidency of the United States has followed the tow-path of the raging canal; the wagon-road of the lumber camp; why not the aisle of the divorce court or the gavel of the Alimony Club?'

"Two days later, a homeward-bound steamer coming into port, Mr. Skaggs transferred his baggage and himself to it, and sailed for New York.

" 'Oh, vaulting ambitions, what fools you make of us!' My earnest prayer is that he may be elected, and remain at the head of his club unto his dying day. Ugh—the brute."

CHAPTER XIII

Summer, but a month past, was returning to greet the voyagers. Sunlit days and breeze-kissed nights prevailed. Final hours of springtime were passing in the tropics. It was the middle of October and "by night those soft lascivious stars leered from those velvet skies." From these tropical heavens looked down that glorious, revered and beautiful constellation, the Southern Cross, dearest of all clusters to the Christian, dear to the one who heard from mother's lips the story of the Christ, the story of the Cross,—the story of the lost, lone star that led the wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews, for we have seen his star in the East and are coming to worship him."

If Dante named the Crux 'the Southern Cross' he builded better than he knew; for it

has linked minds without number in communion with the Omnipotent. From the days when the stars of the morning sang, the brilliants of the heavens have ever been mysterious and wonderful, and nowhere are the heavens so velvety nor the stars so bright as in the southern skies.

The older passengers, each under the soporific spell of the returning warmth, retired.

Miranda, clad in white, a lace shawl thrown over her shoulders, sat on the upper deck. She was approached by Stoneman, who had come from his cabin to smoke a last cigarette and gaze on the beauties of the soft night.

"Good evening," he said. "I hardly expected to find you here! I imagined I'd be alone at this hour," apologizing for his intrusion.

"Won't you sit down?" she replied, coaxingly.

"With pleasure." It was the first time in the weeks he had been aboard that she had said anything that implied the slightest interest in him.

"I am here on deck, star-gazing," she said,

"renewing my acquaintance with that beautiful constellation." She pointed in the direction of the Southern Cross.

"You have seen it before?" he asked.

"This is the third trip I have made to this part of the world. When I was fourteen I went to Australia with my father, and four years ago, when I was eighteen, we spent several months in Tasmania, and now I'm with this expedition."

"You're certainly a great traveler, aren't you?"

"I was my father's constant companion and no doubt you have heard of his many discoveries and researches, and his many-sided scientific pursuits."

Stoneman had not, but he said, "Of course." Then he went on, "What do you see so beautiful in the Southern Cross as opposed to, say, the Pleiades, the Dipper and other constellations?"

"The romantic attractiveness of it. The Lord of the Heavens has dotted it with a clus-

ter of ruby-reds, emerald-greens, sapphire-blues, and, besides," she said, with great earnestness, "it is the heavenly banner of Christianity—Christianity, a religion that has the most fascinating figure of history."

"You must be a great church-goer," admiringly spoke the young man. For know ye, men of all creeds and sects, nothing is met with greater approval from you than that your women follow the tenets of your religion!

"It doesn't necessarily follow," soberly came from Miranda, "that I'm a church-goer. I draw my deductions from historical events and observations rather than faith and sectarian partisanship."

"Well, haven't other religions, such as the Buddhist, the Brahmin, the Mosaic, the Mohammedan, great central figures also—"

"Undoubtedly, or they would not obtain on this earth, but there is something so gloriously beautiful, so satisfying, so simple, in the teaching of the Christ that to me it makes the strongest appeal. Who can deny the universal ac-

ceptance of the Golden Rule: 'There are things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them, for this is the law of the prophets'?"

"That's playing the game fair."

"Then there's another side that appeals to me. In Christ's teachings we know God as a loving father, a loyal friend, a smiling teacher, a reassuring leader. What can be more reassuring than this: 'Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid'?"

"That sounds good."

"What friend could offer more than 'Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you'?"

"A fellow could not offer more to his best pal, I am thinking," said Stoneman.

"And see the reward for the toil of years: 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry.' "

"That does give a fellow something to look forward to."

"And how fine is 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and good will towards men.' "

"There's no knock-down and drag out in those teachings, and I think when I get back to New York I'm going to join a church."

"It will probably be of great benefit to you," said Miranda, slyly.

"What church do you attend?" asked the young man, with sudden inspiration.

"Oh, all of them. I go where there's a preacher who doesn't talk to you as if you were a driveling idiot and doesn't work for his salary as if he were the barker for the only show on earth.

"Knocking the other fellow's show isn't considered good business in the theatrical world; boosting your own is the proper caper, these days."

"Exactly. Churches are like trolley lines—if fifty ran from New York to Boston, the destination of all would be Boston; so it is with the churches. Their terminal is Heaven."

"But don't you think some churches offer an extra coupon to join?"

"Maybe. Our faith, if we possess any, usually starts from the time we are at our mothers' knees. I've often heard even cold-blooded atheists defend a certain sect because that was their mother's church. 'For,' said a philosopher, 'as the health and strength or weakness of our bodies is very much owing to the methods of treating us when we were young, so the soundness or folly of our minds is not less owing to our first tempers and ways of thinking which we eagerly received from the love, tenderness and authority, and constant conversation of our mothers.' "

"Yes, even song-writers know the value of mother. Father, although he pays the bills and bears the brunt, doesn't get much show from the sentimentalist," Stoneman continued. "The poets and musicians, of course, play on the heart-strings of the world; love and mother are perennial subjects; the publishers with an

eye on the commercial side, do all they can to boost love and boost mother."

"Father is ever with us, also," said Miranda. "But father is as hard to fashion into a romantic character as a poem of the vanquished has to become popular," said Stoneman.

"How about 'The Charge of the Light Brigade?' " asked Miranda.

" 'Tis true. It is a poem of the vanquished, but English historians say 'never victory was more glorious to the devoted men than this useless charge.' "

"And somebody said it was magnificent, but it wasn't war," continued Miranda.

"Of course, that's balderdash."

"What is war? Goldsmith states it fairly: 'On whatever side we regard the history of Europe, we shall perceive it to be a tissue of crimes, follies and misfortunes, of politics without design, and wars without consequence.' "

"Then you think war is a tissue of crimes, follies and misfortunes?" Stoneman asked.

"Yes. Still, it proves one thing. Down in the heart of real man there is a patriotic fervor that war brings violently to the surface and shows the best attributes man can possess—love of country, which has its inception in love of mother and love of God."

"Then you do not think that patriotism and atheism blend?" Stoneman said.

"Certainly not. Men, loving their country, glory in its achievements; its institutions to live must be based on justice, truth and morality. Disregard of law and order cannot be accepted as a truth or as a moral force." Miranda spoke with conviction.

"Of course not. It isn't a difficult matter to believe in God."

"I am interested to have you tell me why it is not."

"Purely from a standpoint of reasoning. I know you are sitting there, you know I'm sitting here, both know that this about us is the ocean, that we are being conveyed in a ship, that above us is the sky."

"Yes; these things imply an intelligence," she added.

"Exactly. Now we are the products of nature. We are intelligent. It is most reasonable to infer, we who are intelligent could not be created by a chaotic body."

"And, as we are intelligent, the God that created us must be intelligent, too. I suppose that's your contention," continued Miranda.

"It is. Therefore, we know law and order as best for the world and for its progress. And to quote Froude,—'The moral law is written on the tablet of eternity. For every false word or unrighteous deed, for cruelty and oppression, for lust or vanity, the price has to be paid at last.' "

"Then you take no stock in the theories of the atheist?"

"None whatever," answered Stoneman. "Whatever atheism is, its basic principle is wrong; the atheist robs you of your faith and offers nothing in return."

"Much as a starving man invites you to leave

your dinner untouched and come out and starve with him," was Miranda's deduction.

"I do not believe you can find atheists in the ranks of real composers or loving mothers."

"Why?"

"The real composer knows the mysterious process of inspiration. He feels there's something beyond and above himself that has given him the themes that are to make a world happier, and the loving mother must believe that she is selected by a higher power to bring into the world one made in the image of his God."

"But there are a lot of miserable creatures in the world."

"And a lot of rotten music. In either case neither inspiration nor love was the basilar source."

"Well, we have touched on a lot of subjects so I shall say good night to the stars and to the ramble." She extended her hand, and he walked with her to the companionway. He lit a cigarette and looked far out into the track-

less waste of waters, and then to his cabin to sleep. His dreams were a procession of "Southern Crosses," Charges of the Light Brigades, and smiling mothers, and over them all floated an angel of beauty whose general makeup suggested Miranda Bradley.

CHAPTER XIV

The expedition was nearing the Equator, that imaginary line which is the delight of the old sailor, the fear of the young salt, for here from time immemorial the ceremony of "crossing the line" has lifted the seaman from the novice class to that of the real Jack Tar.

Captain Bradley called the crew on deck the day before the ship was to cross the line.

"Men," he said, "to-morrow we reach the Equator; to those who have never sailed so far south before, I will read you the form of ceremony known and practiced in the olden days of the sailing vessel. I am reading from Captain Marryat's famous book, 'Frank Mildmay.' As you know, there is no novelist who has written more knowingly of the sea than Marryat, and many of the customs of the sailors of England and America have been handed

down through this observing and faithful author. He represents the ship as being hailed from the supposed depths of the sea the evening before the line is to be reached, and the captain is given the compliments of Neptune and asked to muster his novices for the sea-lord's inspection. The next day the ship is 'hove to' at the proper moment, and Neptune, with his dear Amphitrite and suite, comes on board. Neptune appears, preceded by a young man plainly dressed in tights and riding on a car made of a gun-carriage drawn by six nearly naked blacks spotted with yellow paint. He has a long beard of oakum, an iron crown on his head, and of course carries a trident with a small dolphin between the prongs. His attendants consist of a secretary with quills from a sea-fowl; a surgeon with lancet and pill-box; a barber with a huge wooden razor, its blade made of an iron hoop; and a barber's mate, with a tub for a shaving-box. Amphitrite, wearing a woman's night-cap with harpoon, carries a ship's boy in her lap as a baby, with

a marlin-spike to cut his teeth on. She is attended by three men dressed as nymphs, with curry-combs, mirror and pots of paint. The sheep-pen, lined with canvas and filled with water, has already been prepared. The victim, seated on a platform laid over it, is blindfolded, then shaved by the barber and finally plunged backward into the water. That is the traditional manner of the ceremony. We will change it to-morrow. You select your Neptune, who will make a proclamation welcoming the new-comers into the Southern sea, select your Amphitrite, who is to distribute largess to the men who have crossed, and after that we will have a concert and a supper. The exigencies of travel by steam makes it necessary to switch from the olden ceremony to those more modern and better fitted to the present expedition."

The occasion was one of hilarity. Neptune was a great success, and Miranda as Amphitrite won all hearts. The officers and passengers followed the traditions of gift-giving, and

the crew were richer and happier over the event. Cape Town was reached and the *Southern Cross* lay at anchor under famous Table Mountain, and passengers and crew saw the fleecy waitresses of the clouds set the cloth on the mountain for a banquet of the gods of the air.

Scroggins was a very ill man, so it was thought best to send him ashore to a hospital as a further stay on board might prove serious.

On the morning after the yacht arrived at Cape Town, Anderson received a cable, which read: "Dearest Algy, come back. I'm lonely without you, as you are so far away. All is forgiven. I was mistaken. I now know it was the bouquet of the wine-press. Your contrite Arabella."

"My poor Arabella," said Anderson; "I must hasten back."

He and Scroggins sailed two days later.

CHAPTER XV

The expedition anchored in Christmas Harbor and began preparation for their stay. Kerguelen Islands were discovered by Kerguelen Tremaric, a native of Brittany, in 1772. Discoverers have made mistakes and it is not to be wondered at. Columbus thought America was the Indies, and Kerguelen believed that the land he had found was the long thought-of Southern Continent, rich in natural resources and possibilities. Columbus went to his grave with his belief unchanged, but, in the case of Kerguelen, the disillusionment came very quickly, for the discoverer, on revisiting the group in 1774, found that the islands were barren and unproductive. In his chagrin he renamed them Desolation Land.

The crew of the *Southern Cross* almost immediately set to work building huts and an ob-

servatory, and arranging all astronomical appliances to be ready for the coming transit.

Miranda, to use Stoneman's admiring comment, was "as busy as a one-armed paper hanger." Curlip, Barstars and Stoneman were helping. Stoneman was adjusting the plates for the cameras, large and small, and the other men doing anything to be useful.

Stoneman had rowed out to the yacht to get some needed things, leaving Curlip and Miranda alone. Barstars was off looking for game.

"Do you believe in love at first sight, Miss Bradley?" asked Curlip.

"Well," she spoke slowly, "I suppose if some thoroughly reliable person told me such a thing existed I would not affirm to the contrary."

"Then you have never experienced it?"

"Of course not, but I reiterate in the manner of the Quaker who in argument with an unbeliever was told that there is no God.

"'And why thinkest thou so?' said the Quaker.

" 'Because I do not believe in anything no one has ever seen.'

" 'Then, friend,' concluded the Quaker, 'dost thou believe thou hast brains?' "

"That's all right, but there are well-authenticated cases of people becoming infatuated at sight," argued Curlip.

"Well, what do you want to prove?"

"That the very first time I saw you, I—"

"Yes, I know. Let me tell you a story—"

"To prove my point?"

"To prove that first-sight love has a romantic rather than a lasting interest."

"Just as one remembers one's first kiss. It might be the poorest kiss one ever received but you remember it, because it was the first." And the veteran smacked his lips.

"Your experience no doubt makes you a capable judge on that point," Miranda said, laughingly.

"Let's have the story."

"It's a Hindoo tale with variations. Once

there was a beautiful princess—" Miranda began.

"How novel!"

"Whose eyes met the eyes of a very, very handsome youth."

"The novelty continues," said Curlip.

"These two had concealed in their souls an imponderable something, akin to electricity; these two concealments responded to the same spark."

"And of course formed the positive and negative," added Curlip.

"When they met, the switch was turned on, the effect an illumination of their respective souls, the cause, love at first sight, the consequence, they both fell in a swoon."

"Short-circuited, evidently," offered Curlip.

"No, really, please, this story is too sad to be treated with levity." And Miranda assumed a sorrowful countenance. "In due time they recovered their respective senses."

"And the lady said 'Where am I?' " offered the man.

"No, she knew where she was," corrected Miranda, "having a largely developed bump of location. She asked no unnecessary questions, but suggested to the object of her love that they consult their favorite doctors, which they immediately did, each submitting to a diagnosis."

"And the diagnosis discovered—?"

"Their complaint was of the soul, not of the body."

"And then?" said the man quickly.

"The young man being of a very superstitious nature and believing in the potency of the palmist, the clairvoyant, the fortune-teller, and the wizard, immediately consulted one of the latter and explained his symptoms."

"And the wizard said?"

"That his case demanded serious contemplation and study, and after pocketing his fee, told the unhappy youth to call again to-morrow."

"Which he did."

"He did. The wizard taking from his inside pocket a pill said, 'Place this in your mouth. You will be changed to a young girl.

When you want to get back to your present sex and shape take it out of your mouth.' "

"Suppose he swallowed it?"

"Wait, please. Don't interrupt. 'And,' said the wizard, 'call upon the father of the princess, tell him you would like to remain at his house until your fiancé returns from the war. The old man is a great patriot and something of a profiteer, and will no doubt, for the advertising it would give him, consent. If he does not, come back and I will give you further instructions.' The young man, metamorphosed into a beautiful young maiden, called on the father who was delighted at the prospect of having a cheerful companion for his drooping, love-sick daughter. Turning to the princess he said, 'My child, I put under your guardianship this beautiful little stranger; guard her well,' and left them together. The guest, noticing a shadow of sorrow on the face of the princess, said, 'Why so pensive?' And they, like all girls, sat down and the princess confided, how much she loved a handsome

stranger; if she did not see him shortly, she certainly would go broken-hearted to her grave and die there. 'What will you give me,' said the pseudo-girl, 'if I show you your beloved this moment?' "

"I suppose gold and precious jewels, and a little mountain home," interrupted Curlip.

"No, no, you're wrong!" exclaimed Miranda. "The princess threw her arms about the other and said, 'I will be your abject slave.'

"Presto-change! The maid removed the pill from her mouth, taking care to conceal it carefully and was immediately transformed back to a young man.

"How about her wearing apparel?" queried Curlip.

"Oh, that was all right. She was dressed as a farmerette."

"Excuse my interruption," apologized the listener.

"Then they sat down and considered which form of marriage they would have solemnized. They selected the Gardhava-lagan, which be-

ing translated means a marriage by mutual consent, but at the same time they concluded it best to keep the nuptials a secret.

"Of course they lived happy ever after," again interrupted the listener.

"I regret to say, no. For a few months things went along splendidly, and then the princess wanted to go out. She doted on cabarets, five-o'clock teas, dances, vaudeville and musical comedies. But he said, 'No, you know very well it would be fatal to me if I went out as a man. What your father wouldn't do to me, wouldn't be worth printing. And if I went as a girl somebody would get stuck on me and that's where you would get in the game.' But the princess was persistent and kept hammering away, and from tender lovers, they did nothing but quarrel. As he was under the guardianship of the princess, her father would not allow them to be separated even for an hour.

"One day in desperation, after the princess was bemoaning her fate, he said, 'Very well.

I will go out with you, but as a girl and the consequence be yours.' 'Oh! 'fraid cat!' she snapped. 'You're not so pretty that you need have any fear that any one will run away with you.' So out they went, taking in everything, but returning before the hour grew too late.

"One evening, they attended a magnificent ball given in honor of a visiting prince. The very moment he cast his eyes on the wizard made beauty, his soul kindled with love—love at first sight. You will note this is the third case of that sensation in this story. He managed to slip a billet-doux into the pseudo-maiden's hand; it was a request for a meeting, and an invitation to a little supper afterwards. In the spirit of adventure and a desire to get away from the princess, if only for a few minutes, because they were at daggers' points continually, the invitation was accepted. She met the prince, and they repaired to a quiet little restaurant, and, as both were very hungry, the prince ordered immediately. While waiting for the food, he gazed with love and infatua-

tion at the beautiful creature at his side. The prince was an exceedingly impulsive young man. Suddenly and unexpectedly, he threw out his arms, drew her to him, and pressed her to his heart. The wild impetuosity of his action caused the pseudo-maid to gasp for breath, and she accidentally swallowed the pill,—"

"And then?" said Curlip.

"And immediately became a man. Forgetting all about his love at first sight and surprised and angered at the deception, the prince drew his sword to slay the defenseless one, but, being a first-class sprinter, the latter out-distanced the prince, to say nothing of the princess and the father who entered in pursuit."

"Then you don't think that love at first sight is lasting?"

"I know nothing about it except this little story. It might have lasted if the 'maid' had not swallowed the pill."

"Well, that doesn't prove anything," said Curlip, trying to bring the conversation back to the sentimental.

"The maid became a man—"

"And there was the devil to pay," added Curlip.

"The moral is don't fall in love at first sight unless you know what you are loving."

"But this is only a fairy story," persisted Curlip.

"Not more so, than false hair, enameled complexions, strapped-in waist-lines, store-teeth, unbridled temper, and mercenary dispositions are fairy tales. The pill in the deceiver's mouth makes these invisible to him who loves at first sight; later the pill is swallowed and first love disappears," laughingly said Miranda.

"Your sermonizing does not fit all cases," Curlip looked intently and critically at the perfection of the object of his attention.

"Certainly not! But it is better that ninety-nine should not fall in love at first sight, than that one should be deceived."

"I don't agree with you. Now if you had all these imperfections, I would—"

"Pity me, scorn me, despise me, for our two

souls would have but a single thought, and our two hearts would beat as one,"—

"And love at first sight would be vindicated," continued Curlip.

"Nothing of the kind; both of us know that false hair, made-up complexion and so forth, do not inspire love at first, second or third sight, when both are conscious of the fact, and two souls would have but a single thought—"

"And that would be?"

"When both are aware of the deception."

"Don't you believe in love, at all?"

"Certainly I do, not first impression. I am told when two hearts are possessed with it, though they may be separated by the acquired knowledge of false hair, made-up complexion, temper, or any other cause, they are like quicksilver in a saucer,—sooner or later they mingle and remain as one until eternity."

"Although you say that, I believe you are devoid of sentiment." Curlip seated himself close to Miranda, who with apparent unconsciousness moved across to another bench.

"What do you call sentiment? Do you mean gratitude?" questioned the girl.

"No, no, no," he expostulated. "Gratitude is said to be a lively sense of future favors."

"Then what?" she said, focussing her camera on the floundering man.

"Why, sentiment is when a girl fellow lets a man fellow tell her what is in his mind, and doesn't squirm out of it like a wrestler out of a half-Nelson."

"Oh, I see—ah, here comes Mr. Stoneman; I'll ask his definition of sentiment."

"Please don't," whispered the disappointed Curlip, "I beg of you." And of course she didn't.

"I've brought your rifle and hunting jacket from the yacht," said Stoneman as he approached. He offered them to Miranda. "As you see I'm all togged up to go down to the crags and get a glimpse of the sea-elephants."

"That's it. I'll get ready at once and perhaps we shall be lucky enough to get some

photographs of those huge beasts. I don't suppose, Mr. Curlip, you want to go, so you'll excuse us, won't you?"

"Certainly," said the frowning Curlip, and then, in an incredulous manner, added, "Where are the sea-elephants, Stoneman?"

"The sailors aboard saw a small herd of them 'hauled up' on the beach just south of here an hour ago."

"Well, bring me home one for a parlor pet," sneered the elder man as he disappeared in the hut.

In a few minutes Miranda and Edward were off, he with a camera to get pictures of these monsters of the deep, she with a protecting Winchester on her shoulder.

Authorities agree that the sea-elephant is considerably larger than the land variety, some of them being more than twenty feet in length with a circumference of twelve feet or more at the chest. The bulls at times are very vicious; they have a proboscis about a foot in length. While apparently unwieldy, they are capable

of going over the beaches with surprising speed, advancing both flippers at a time and using them like crutches.

In a half hour the two young people were in the vicinity of the coast. They approached cautiously, crawling on all fours and hiding behind crags and boulders, and saw in front of them a herd of perhaps six or seven "hauled up" for rest on the beach. Stoneman slowly climbed over some rather high rocks, moist and slippery, and finally got into position to take the photographs. He adjusted the camera carefully, poised himself, when suddenly the rock under him gave way and with a cry he crashed by the crags, falling heavily in a "wallow" at the bottom. There was a terrible growl as if from the throats of a pack of giant dogs, the herd raised their heads to locate the noise and the one nearest continued his barking. Motionless and senseless Stoneman lay outstretched within ten feet of this monster.

Barstars suddenly appeared on the cliff some fifty yards away. He realized the danger to

Stoneman and fired at this animal, but the shot was not a fatal one, and the monster, filled with rage, made direct for the helpless figure before him. Miranda stood almost paralyzed with fear at the suddenness of the accident.

Stoneman's chances were one in a million As the monster drew near he struck with his flipper and broke the arm of the prostrate man, then closed his teeth on the hood of the overcoat Stoneman was wearing. Nerved to desperation Miranda raised her rifle, pressed it to her shoulder, aimed as if the target were but an inch in diameter, and fired. The monster gave one convulsive shudder and fell dead. The rest of the herd, frightened by the noise of the rifle, stampeded and glided into the sea. Miranda moved forward noiselessly and found, when she reached Stoneman and the dead elephant, that the man was mauled and bleeding. She raised him in her arms, felt his heart —it was still beating—and called to Barstars. Together they carried the wounded victim some yards nearer the camp. Slowly the

young man opened his eyes. His effort to collect his thoughts were futile; he was delirious.

"Are you hurt?" she cried.

"Funny," he muttered.

"Tell me, tell me, are you hurt?"

"This is going to be a great pic." He attempted to raise his left arm, but it fell helpless at his side.

"Can you stand, dear?" she whispered.

"Funny," he laughed. "I bet it's a good picture."

Barstars placed a little brandy and water to the wounded man's lips and helped him into a sitting position, and as he did so Stoneman looked around quizzically, with a smile on his face.

"I'll bet this is a fine picture," he said. "Golly, I'm glad I got it."

She sat by his side and gently drew his head to her breast, much as a mother with her injured child.

"What are you glad you have?" She spoke soothingly and her eyes filled with tears.

"The picture. I'd do anything for you, you know I would. You wanted a picture and I got it for you, because there is nobody in the world I would rather get a picture for than you, you know that, don't you?" He spoke slowly and with painful effort.

"Yes, I know it and appreciate it." The gray eyes were almost blinded with tears.

They carried him back to the hut, his mind still wandering and again and again he murmured:

"You—know,—don't—you,—I'd—do—anything—in—the—world—for—you."

And then she knew!

CHAPTER XVI

The yacht's surgeon and the hospital steward came, dressed the sufferer's wounds and set his broken arm. The doctor considered the fall and the mauling from the infuriated animal most serious. The bruises and lacerations the young man had received as his body hurtled along the rocky cliff were painful in the extreme. To ease his suffering the physician administered an opiate, and in a short while young Stoneman fell into a restless sleep. He woke in the morning, the soreness of his body almost unbearable. It required the greatest effort on his part to move at all. After the surgeon and his aides had dressed his wounds and made him as comfortable as conditions permitted, he was given a cup of tea and a slice of toast.

While he was at breakfast Barstars came, apologizing for causing the mishap and

blaming himself for not taking a better aim at the sea-elephant. "The monster was so near, I feared he would attack you and believed if I shot him, even if wounded, he would seek the ocean, but instead I simply set him crazy and he made that awful onslaught. Miss Bradley is to be congratulated on the magnificent shot she made. It is true that it was not a long distance shot," he said, "but it was wonderfully effective, for it curled up the beast almost instantly."

As Barstars departed from the sufferer's room Miranda entered. She sat beside Stoneman, sympathetically stroked his forehead and asked how he felt.

"Oh, I am all right," he said, pretending cheerfulness, "only I want you to know that the heaviest thing I have tried to move is this head of mine. Sap-head, pin-head, featherbrain, bone-head, wooden-head, are not the names for my dome."

"You have never given me the impression of being light-headed," she said, smilingly.

"I don't believe a ton of pig iron weighs more than my head. It took me an hour to pry myself from my right side to my left."

"I can realize that. You must try to lie in one position as long as possible."

"I will try, but you know uneasy lies the head that goes bumpety-bump down a young mountain-side."

"It was an awful experience. If I was one of the hysterical kind I know I would have fainted or done something equally idiotic," said Miranda.

"Barstars says you were wonderfully cool. Are you glad you saved me?"

"You poor mauled-up sick man,—if you were well I'd scold you. Glad to save you? I am glad to save any one of the human family."

"I do not want to be saved just because I am one of the human family," said Stoneman, pettishly.

"Well, what would you like?" she questioned.

"I would like to think you saved my life because it was my life."

"You would not want me to be so heartless, would you, as to save a life only because it was yours?"

"I don't mean you would not under the conditions save any or all kinds of lives, but I would like to feel that you really went out of your way to save mine."

"But I didn't. The only thing out of the ordinary in the entire proceeding was that we started out together without a chaperon, and only one time before have we been alone."

"And that was—"

He knew, but he wanted to hear her say it—

"When we sat under the stars."

He mused, "When we sat under the stars. Do you know from that night stars have become a part of my life? I am a zealot, a heathen in my worship of the stars, because the first time we were alone, we sat under the stars."

"That would delight the soothsayers and astronomers."

"Don't you believe in the stars," he asked, "as a medium of telling the future?"

"I never decry what I cannot prove to be false, so I am in the position of the 'gentleman from Missouri.'"

"Well, lots of people claim to have been shown."

"And therefore derive a pleasure in cultivating an acquaintance with the heavenly bodies. Unfortunately, that pleasure is denied me. My study has been in following the course, the formation, the distance, the composition of the planets, the comets and the other phenomena of the heavens. I have neither the time nor the inclination to bother about their influence on individual men, whatever they may have on our planet."

"But Napoleon and other great men believed in the science of the stars as applied to the individual."

"True, if it pleased them. Their reward for

their belief was sufficient. We have reason to assert if Mars and Venus, Mercury and the others have the power to tell us our individual story, our individual destiny, our individual voyage through life, it is just as reasonable to suppose that our planet must tell their dwellers their destiny, their course, their life, their fortune."

"A sort of favor for favors received," he said.

"Yes; suppose a Martian about to read the riddle of his life takes his astrolabe, and begins his divination from our planet."

"I am following you."

"He gets in touch, we will say, with that part of our globe we call the New York Stock Exchange."

"What then?"

"I leave you to ponder in your mind what the answer would be. Then suppose he fixes his telescope on Maine, prohibition Maine, the answer would probably be 'Look not on the wine when it is red, nor on the whiskey when

it is Rye, Irish or Scotch, if you would sit in the councils of the great.' "

"Then you think astrology is a very uncertain process?"

"This, I do believe: at the beginning, the religion of man was guided by fear, a fear born of ignorance; as his senses multiplied there came a divine revelation which showed a benevolent God, not a tyrannical destroying one, and the change was from fear to courage, and from terror to love, and from despair to hope."

"Then superstition finds no lodgment in your mind?"

"Well, I think it is bad luck to kill a cat."

"You do?"

"Yes, for the cat. Still," Miranda added, "there are a lot of superstitions that are really beneficial to the human race."

"Such as—"

"When I was a tiny tot if I went outdoors to play and immediately came running back, having forgotten something, my mother made me sit down and repeat a prayer. It didn't make

any difference what the prayer was about, I had to repeat it slowly and reverentially."

"What was the intention?"

"To make me thoughtful so I would not lose the precious moments of play with my companions, which if it grew into a habit would make me lose many precious moments during life."

"I think it was Lord Bacon who said: 'Man observes when things hit and not when they miss.' They remember the first and forget the other."

"Now be a good patient and obedient young man and go to sleep."

"If I do will you come back again?"

"Yes, this afternoon."

"And please don't let any one else come with you."

"Oh, you are like the Irishman who said he loved to be alone."

"I do not love to be alone, but I love to be alone—"

"—— As I was saying, like the Irishman

who loved to be alone—with his sweetheart." And she raised a finger in a questioning way.

"That's it, his sweetheart," he said. But she was gone.

As the days prolonged into weeks she read poetry, romance, history, mathematics, astronomy and much else to him. If perchance there occurred a sentence containing the word "sweetheart," he would interrupt and say, "You remember, you said that word to me the first day I was sick."

And she remembered and knew it was about an Irishman, and she would again tell the story, and would laughingly rejoin "Irishmen do say awfully witty things, don't you think?"

"Don't you know some other stories 'with sweetheart' in them to-day?"

"My mental catalogue of love stories is very limited," she answered, "and I have read you all the novels we have."

"Can't you make up a story about a young girl like you, and a down and out fellow like me, and an old blatherskite like Curlip?"

"Why, Mr. Curlip was very much interested in your condition, and when we were down among the crags looking for skau's eggs he said he was sorry you were so reckless and in consequence got knocked out."

"Did you take him with you?" asked the invalid, impetuously.

"I invited him."

"I do not think it is right for you to go hunting skau's eggs without a chaperon."

"But by the same token I went sea-elephant hunting with you without a chaperon."

"But I am different, you see;"—then, suddenly, "Did he get the eggs?"

"No, indeed; I'll tell you something about them." She held his hand and stroked it. "A skau looks very much like a buzzard-hawk, only when you get near him, he is web-footed and yet, strange to say, avoids water and preys upon other birds like the eagle and the hawk. He will fight a man if an attempt is made to rob his nest, and is very dangerous. His beak is his weapon and can be very formidable."

"Did Curlip get the eggs?" asked the invalid, peevishly.

"No, indeed; we were very much like the preacher who sent his hat around the congregation for contributions, and when it was returned he found it just as empty as when it started on its travels, and immediately offered a prayer of thanksgiving for the return of his head-gear. We were delighted to escape with our eyes; the vicious birds swooped down and tried to strike and blind us."

"You mustn't take such chances. How did you get away?"

"Just as Mr. Curlip found a nest in the grass the skaus came. I had a cane and defended myself from them, while both of us ran for our lives, he shouting at the birds and waving his arms over me all the time."

"Was it necessary for him to wave his arms over you?" said Stoneman, very seriously.

"He thought so."

"Well, I don't. He should have let you run

ahead and he should have fought the skaus alone."

"I think both of us thought discretion was the better part of valor."

"Wait until I get well. I will get the eggs for you."

"Now, my dear man," said Miranda, "you will do nothing of the sort. They are not worth the risk. These birds put up a fight for their nests as vicious as a she-bear will for her cubs."

"I suppose Curlip is blowing about how he saved your life."

"I haven't heard him say anything, but if you wish I will ask him to come and give you an unabridged version of his adventure," said Miranda, mischievously.

"I don't want to hear it," said the young man.

"Well, then, be a good little boy and go to sleep." And after smoothing out his pillow and tucking the blankets snugly about him she tip-toed from the room.

The day of days for the expedition arrived. The observation of the transit was a superb success. The sky was clear, the sun shone brightly, and the little black disc we call Venus, situated between our planet and the sun, behaved like a real lady, and photographs and data of value were obtained.

A week after the transit, everything was in readiness to depart. The photographic plates were carefully sealed and placed in a large portfolio. As Miranda had done this most valuable work, she was given charge of the plates and placed them in the steamer trunk in her cabin. Anchor was weighed and the *Southern Cross* started homeward, up through that sunless, rainy, hailing, snowy part of the world, known to the sailorman as "No Man's Land." They came into the sunshine of the Indian Ocean, then sailed along the east coast of Africa and cast anchor at Zanzibar, the capital of the island of that name.

CHAPTER XVII

During the three days required to take on coal and provisions, the party went sightseeing. Young Stoneman had completely recovered from his wounds and was gradually regaining his strength. There was an English hunting expedition fitting out for a trip into the interior of Africa, and Barstars became greatly interested. On the morning of the day the yacht was to sail north he came aboard and announced his intention of going with the expedition. He had received an invitation from an old acquaintance with whom he had hunted in the Rocky Mountains year before. Barstars' baggage was taken ashore, and of the original five only Curlip now remained. At four the *Southern Cross* steamed for Alexandria. The trip was uneventful, save for a persistent attempt at the wooing of Miranda by Curlip.

"You know," he said, one evening while they were promenading the deck, "your views regarding a man who has had three wives struck me as very sensible."

"And what were they? I've forgotten."

"That a man must be a regular reservoir of love when he can woo three women successfully and bring them to the altar."

"Well, that goes on the theory that such a man is always in love. The object may change but he remains faithful to the emotion."

"Well, then, I have been in love ever since I came aboard this yacht."

"How astonishing!"

"And you are the object of that affection."

"No, not I. You surely don't mean it," Miranda exclaimed.

"I do, and pour out to you the full measure of my heart's adoration, and I crave just a little of your love in return."

"One moment. Let me ask you a question. Was your first wife your first love?"

"Undoubtedly."

"And your second wife your second love?"

"Unquestionably."

"And your third wife your third love?"

"I admit it."

"Who's your fourth wife?"

"I never had a fourth."

"Who was your fourth love?"

"She deceived me."

"How?"

"She refused to marry me after I secured my third divorce."

"Why did she refuse?"

"I am led to believe a richer man than myself came in sight."

"Did she marry him?"

"No, he got some funny wheels in his head about not perpetuating his faults and possibly carrying them into later generations, and therefore dropped out of the picture."

"Now, my dear Mr. Curlip, I can clearly see your duty and you must see it. You must not marry any other woman until you have disposed of this fourth love."

"But she refused me."

"True, but she may not the next time. It's her turn, and no other woman's. Let me quote you a few axioms to hearten you. 'Perseverance is irresistible," says Sertorius. Montgomery wouldn't have given in as you want to, for his words are 'Hope against hope, and ask till you receive.' Richard Monckton Milnes puts it this way, 'The virtue lies in the struggle, not the prize,' So, you see, she should be the object of your striving."

"But I want you as the prize. I don't want to struggle for a girl I haven't seen for three years."

"Nay, nay, Mr. Curlip, I could not, even if I loved you with all the heart I have, be happy in the thought that maybe your mind would stray at times to her. Besides that, no man or woman with any sense of honor would usurp a place belonging to another."

"But I told you she dropped me for another fellow."

"It is not for you to use that against her.

Remember, if you do not succeed, try, try again."

"Please think over my proposal, M—M—Miss Bradley."

"I will, rest assured, but I'm not of any value as a second violin, and that lady it seems to me should be the first violin in your orchestra of life."

After arriving at Alexandria, the captain, Curlip, Stoneman and Miranda made a trip to Cairo. Of course they visited all the places of interest. They saw the Pyramids, they had a boat ride on the Nile, a trip to the mosques and the tombs, a lunch at the observatory, a view of the island where Moses was supposed to have been found by Pharoah's daughter; they took donkey rides, they made a pilgrimage to the Coptic monks at Malarit to gaze upon the "Virgin Tree" where the Holy Family is supposed to have rested in the flight to Egypt, they visited the ostrich farms and they went to the opera.

The advertisement of the opera read—"First appearance in Cairo of Signorina Annetta Borroi in Verdi's masterpiece *Aïda.*" Stoneman engaged a box. *Aïda* was one of his favorite operas. As they took their seats, the house already presented a brilliant scene, with the official life of the city, European women vying with their Egyptian sisters in richness of apparel and the worth of their jewels.

The members of the orchestra filed in to their places and the prelude of the opera softly fell on listening ears. The scene opened in the Hall of the King's Palace at Memphis. Radames and Ramfis conversed regarding the rumored invasion of the King of Ethiop. Then followed, Radames' Romance, "Celeste Aïda," then the duet of Amneris and Radames, and then Aïda appeared upon the scene. Stoneman and Curlip showed unusual interest and gazed with great intensity at the entrance of the singer, and both exclaimed:

"Why, it's Nancy Burroughs!"

Curlip added, "It's Nancy, sure as taxes."

"You gentlemen evidently know the lady," whispered Miranda.

"Know her!" said Curlip. "She's the 'fourth one' I told you about."

"I have known Miss Burroughs quite well," Stoneman spoke quietly.

At the end of the act he sent in his card together with Curlip's to the lady. The answer came back that she would be delighted to see them at the close of the performance. As the curtain descended on the last scene of the play, a scene ranking among the most effective in the entire range of tragic opera, beautiful in the simplicity of its melody, its dramatic construction and marvelous appeal, the applause was long and persistent; the principals came forth to bow their acknowledgment, Radames, Amneris and Aïda, then Radames and Aïda, and then Aïda, alone. Nancy Burroughs had made a triumph.

Curlip and his party found their way to

Nancy's dressing-room. She was waiting for them, and after introductions she said:

"Well, the world is pretty small. Who would have thought that here in distant Egypt I should meet my two beaux of my student days,"— She extended a hand to each of the two men.

Curlip looked at Stoneman with some surprise and muttered, "So you were the fellow that tried to cut me out."

"You are certainly good for sore eyes," said Nancy. "I am dying to know what you have been doing since I saw you last,"—

"And I am dying to know what you have been doing, Nancy. You surely have made good and I am proud of you." This enthusiasm of Curlip was genuine.

"Do you sing to-morrow?" asked Miranda.

"No; that is my day off. I have days off just like any other hired girl," she said.

"Well then, what do you say to a dinner party to-morrow evening," suggested Miranda.

"That suits me."

Time and place settled, they started out and Stoneman said, "Please remember, we dine at six."

We speak of institutions, events and functions, but how completely a dinner can be listed under these three heads. A diplomatic dinner may change the destiny of a nation,—that is an event; as an institution it is as necessary for the cannibal who asks for a second helping of missionary as the Emperor who asks for a second helping of mutton; as a function, it brings congenial souls together and is the distributing center of one-half of all the stories of the world, besides exercising the inventive skill of the chef. Well does Byron say:—

"All human history attests,
That happiness for man—the hunger served,
Since Eve ate apples, much depends on dinner."

When the dinner-hour came there gathered together in the private dining-room at Shepherd's, Nancy and Miranda, Curlip and Stoneman. Captain Bradley was forced to go back to Alexandria on business.

"Well, Nancy, tell us about yourself," said Curlip.

"Well, to begin at the beginning," said Nancy, "just after I last saw you,—that is now more nearly four years, I lost my father."

"How sad!" said Miranda, sympathetically.

"Three years ago I lost my mother."

"Your mother dead!" exclaimed Curlip.

"No, not dead—but married again."

"Oh!" came from the listeners.

"Mother felt I was old enough to take care of myself."

"In my opinion, no girl is too young to take care of herself—if she cares for herself," said the experienced Curlip.

"Very true, but mother guided my baby footsteps until I was past thirty and you know I am now thirty-four."

"Nonsense,—you don't look twenty-four," said the gallant Stoneman.

"Eddie, don't wrench your conscience by saying that. I am five years your senior. I was afraid on one occasion you were going to

propose to me, and while I would have married you for mother's sake, I did not relish having a husband younger than myself."

"I can appreciate that. A woman of seventy—sixty—fifty or even forty, to marry a man just out of his teens, can glory in it, even if fun is poked at her afterwards. I suppose the mothering instinct grows with age. A woman of thirty wants her own babies, not adopted ones in the shape of a husband," said Miranda.

"To continue," said the vivacious Nancy, "funds were getting low, so I got a position in the choir of one of the most fashionable churches in New York, and one day after the services at which I sang, an old lady stopped me on leaving the church and invited me to dinner. She evinced great interest in my voice and asked what was my ambition. I said to go to Italy and study for the operatic stage. The chances for appearance in opera in America, without European reputation are slight. 'Why don't you go?' she asked. 'Be-

cause I haven't the means,' I replied. 'I will arrange for that,' she said, and three years ago I arrived in Italy, six months ago I made my debut in Milan and here I am in Cairo."

"That sounds like a fairy tale," said young Stoneman.

"Now, Eddie, tell me all about yourself. Have you still got those wheels in your head about your race dying with you?"

"Oh, tell me all about it," eagerly exclaimed Miranda. Stoneman for the first time in his life blushed, which is never becoming in a man even if it be considered attractive in the gentler sex.

"Well," said the voluble Nancy, "Eddie here gave me a party—oh, such a party! the whole town talked about it."

"And my father came on to see what it was all about," Stoneman added.

"And before his paternal ancestor completed the investigation he had persuaded this dear little boy here that he was a potential pirate, murderer, thief, second-story man and mid-

night assassin," said Nancy with a melodramatic air.

"And, therefore," interjected Miranda, "all these defects in his make-up should die with him and—"

"Forbade him to marry and perpetuate the criminal within him."

"You don't look it, old chap" said Curlip, but added mysteriously, "one never can tell."

"And that's why he never has married," the young singer announced, with mischief lurking in her eyes.

"Far be it from me to contradict a lady," said Stoneman with much gravity. "My grandmother always impressed on my youthful mind that the proper conduct of life was never to contradict a lady, but if I never had had that advice I certainly would say that Miss Burroughs is slightly mistaken."

"Oh, Eddie, you know you told me you never would marry."

"Yes, but"—

"But what"—

"Oh, I do not think it is necessary to make a distinction between reasons," said Miranda. "It is enough that you never will marry,—a particular reason is of no avail."

"It is of avail, Miss Bradley," said Stoneman warmly, and then without the minutest sense of humor he continued, "if I was forbidden to marry because I was a potential pirate and murderer, there would be no hope for me. Ever-present would be the desire to become these objects of hate, fear and contempt, but the argument between my father and myself was one of responsibility."

"You remember, Eddie, you threw the responsibility for your coming on earth on your poor old dad, and he admitted it with the deduction that the family name should die with you. Now admit it," and Nancy raised her forefinger coquettishly.

"That practically covers it, but I'm getting a change of heart."

"By what influence?"

"No influence—experience. I cannot get

away from the fact that I am very fond of life. As one fellow puts it, you're dead a long time. I want to live a long time. When we were at Kerguelen, I met with an accident and had it not been for Miss Bradley no doubt it would have ended fatally for me."

"Well, what has that to do with your case," said Curlip.

"I thought, what a wonderful thing it was that Miss Bradley's parents met each other, fell in love and brought into the world a brave girl who, in the moment of danger, saved my life and—"

"And, by that system of reasoning," interrupted Miranda, "if my parents never had married a tragedy would have been enacted at Kerguelen Island."

"That's it," answered Stoneman.

"Thank you for the information, now I know my mission in life. I was predestined to go to the farthest ends of the earth to save a young man from being mauled to death by ferocious sea-elephants."

"Oh, tell me all about it," begged Nancy.

"Mr. Curlip can tell you the story better than Mr. Stoneman or I and when you lunch with him to-morrow"—

"But, I haven't heard anything about lunch."

"But you will; I can see the unmistakable invitation protruding from his countenance. Can't I, Mr. Curlip?" And Miranda looked at the older man with twinkling eyes.

"Yes, yes. How did you guess it?"

"How did I guess it? Why, a wooden Indian would jump to the conclusion that here were two, a man and a woman, beau and beauty. Strangers nearly always become friends in foreign climes, friends become lovers and lovers become"—

"What time is the luncheon?" Nancy asked Curlip.

"Make it one," he promptly replied, "but of course Miss Bradley and Mr. Stoneman will join us."

"Of course we won't," Miranda said, posi-

tively. "I am going to invite Mr. Stoneman to lunch with me. Will you accept my invitation." She turned toward him and the light in her quiet eyes was a beacon of hope.

Curlip read the look, and knew then there was but one man that interested Miranda, and that man was not himself. He looked at Nancy admiringly and concluded that a rose was dearer to his heart than a lily. Therefore both luncheons were successes as luncheons go, one of them unusually so, for the bringing of two separated hearts together. If a fellow kisses a willing girl, say, when he is twenty and she is eighteen, if there is no impediment, the chances are more than equal, should they again meet when he is forty, they will kiss again as a matter of custom.

Therefore, Nancy and Curlip started where they had left off four years before. With wonderful foresight Curlip had the engagement ring in his pocket and, with many pretty compliments, placed it on the willing finger of the fair singer. From that episode a trip to a

jeweler's for the selection of a wedding ring was a matter of minutes and the next day they were married.

Curlip telegraphed the yacht for his baggage, and he remained at Cairo with his bride until the close of the season. Nancy's next engagement was to bring her to the Metropolitan Opera House in New York.

CHAPTER XVIII

"Have just said farewell to Nancy and Mr. Curlip," wrote Miranda, in her diary. "If she doesn't make a man out of that egotistical brute, my discernment is of no value. He will be Miss Burroughs's husband and she will have him in a month's time eating out of her hand!

"Every time a member of the 'delectable five' left us, the boat seemed to grow larger and the air purer, and now that the last one has departed, the yacht seems five times roomier than before.'

"I don't know how I am ever to tell Mr. Stoneman what an abject fraud I have been. From the first day I met the Alimony Club men, with malice prepense, I have acquiesced in all their more or less idiotic views about women. Not one of them, if I can except Mr. Anderson, has the remotest idea on the subject. They

draw their deductions from their own narrow point of view, and dismiss the entire sex with their supposed knowledge of one. There is nothing more unfair than that, for men do not judge men by the carload, but by the individual, and these brutes want to place their strictures on the whole sex very much as horses for sale in a corral are disposed of by numbers instead of breed or disposition.

"Of course, I had to feed their vanity or they would not have allowed me to remain on board, and I knew one of the ways was to snub the young man of the party. I wonder if Edward Stoneman realizes!"

Ponta Delgada, in the Azores, provided the next stopping-place for the *Southern Cross.* As soon as the yacht was at anchor, she was boarded by several newspaper correspondents, seeking information from the captain on the result of his expedition and the success of his observations. Captain Bradley's party was the first of the expeditions to return from the Orient and there was keen rivalry among the

correspondents of the newspapers of America and Europe to get a "scoop." Captain Bradley, Miranda and Stoneman received the party in the library of the yacht, and the captain gave a full account of the expedition, its work and its triumphs.

One individual, calling himself Von Stuefen, asked whether it was possible to see the negatives of the photographs of the Transit.

"No," replied the captain. "They are securely locked in a box and are kept in Miss Bradley's stateroom. She is largely responsible for the success of the expedition, and the photographic plates have been entrusted to her care."

"My paper," said the German, "is anxious to secure pictures of the event before the other expeditions arrive in Europe, and will pay handsomely for the privilege."

"I regret," said the captain, "it isn't a matter of money, but purely one of patriotism. The first publicity of the fruits of our voyage is to be made in America. After that the world is welcome to them."

"Very well," replied Von Stuefen. I will wait until the German Expedition arrives."

At the request of Von Stuefen, the captain took his passengers on a tour of inspection of the yacht. The German asked more questions about the boat than all the rest combined, and was particularly interested in the staterooms. He did not fail to single out Miranda's, by the telltale articles of feminine use—curling-irons, powder-puffs, high-heeled shoes and long silk stockings. The captain opened the trunk in Miranda's room, and said, "There repose the fruits of our voyage and observation."

All of this Von Stuefen noted with extreme care.

In the afternoon, liberty was given the crew and only the lookout watch was left aboard, and Miranda, the captain and Stoneman also went ashore on a sightseeing visit.

At ten they returned. The captain and Stoneman went to the former's room to have a nightcap and a cigar. Miranda, tired and

sleepy after an unusually strenuous day, bade them good night and retired.

Except for the occasional sweep of the oars of some passing boat or the "kick" of a launch, absolute silence prevailed in the harbor.

A small rowboat silently reached the stern of the *Southern Cross,* then glided along the side of the vessel to the landing-bridge, and two men, cautiously and noiselessly, ascended the steps, keeping well within the shadow of the boat. They reached the top of the gangway, crouching and tiptoeing, and then passed along the promenade-deck outside the upper staterooms. Suddenly the one in advance touched the other on the arm and took from his pocket a bottle and a handkerchief. They were under the window of Miranda's stateroom. The window was open and the regular breathing of a sleeper could be heard. The leader—Von Stuefen—whispered to his confederate, telling him to creep around the companionway and hide himself in front of stateroom No. 7. "When I touch the door

with a gentle rap, you open it, and, at the left of the door you will find a trunk; lift the lid and you will find at the top a large black portfolio. Hand it to me through the window and get back to the rowboat as soon as possible. Wait for me there."

Saturating the handkerchief with chloroform, he wound it about the ferrule of his cane and, following the sound of the sleeper's steady breathing, he extended the handkerchief into the window and pressed it against the mouth and nose of the sleeping girl. After holding it there for some time, he withdrew the cane and rapped softly on the door, at the same time turning on a flashlight. The sleeper was unconscious. The door opened, the confederate crept in, raised the lid of the trunk and took the portfolio out, handing it to Von Stuefen. The man immediately withdrew, closing the door noiselessly. He crept along the narrow promenade and disappeared. Picking up the portfolio, Von Stuefen walked towards the gangway, when suddenly he bumped into a figure

coming from the opposite direction. It was Stoneman.

"Hello! Who's this?" asked Stoneman, at the same moment striking a light.

"Oh, it's only I," said the man, "I have just left the captain."

"You've done what?"

"I've just left the captain."

"You're a liar," said Stoneman, and he wrenched the up-raised cane from the other's hands. "Throw up your hands before I shoot you."

The frightened Von Stuefen put down the portfolio and raised his arms in supplication, as Stoneman's revolver was poked in his face.

"Watch ahoy," shouted the young man.

The watch came.

"Call the captain." The captain was there in a moment. At the same time, the sound of a boat, hastily rowed, was heard to leeward.

Stoneman carried the portfolio of plates, the watch held Von Stuefen firmly in arrest, and the captain led the way into the messroom.

The captain recognized the intruder. "You were the man that wanted to buy these plates this morning and when you found you couldn't get them, you came here to steal them and, in that way, have us return to America with our labor for our pains."

The man was silent.

"Did you notice the flag we are flying?" said the captain.

"Yes," he mumbled. "It's the Stars and Stripes."

"Exactly, the Stars and Stripes mean America. So, master-at-arms, lock this man up, and when we get to New York, we'll find out what he means by trespassing on American property."

The man was taken away to the brig, while the captain took the plates and locked them in his own iron-bound chest, to remain there until the yacht reached Amercia.

"Wait till I see if Miranda is awake," said the captain suddenly, and tiptoed to her cabin. He rapped; there was no answer. He

rapped louder; still no answer. Then he opened the door softly; the strong odor of chloroform filled the air. He turned on the light, and called to her. She did not answer. Horrified at the thought that she might be dead, he shook her, then shouted, "For God's sake, tell Dr. Kayder to come.

The telltale handkerchief had fallen from her face. The doctor came quickly and put his head to her heart. It was beating with all the strength of youth and health.

When Miranda was restored to consciousness she was told of the attempted robbery.

"And the plates?" she asked.

"Safe in my iron chest, thanks to Stoneman's quickness in getting the thief before he could get away."

She held out both hands to her uncle and said, "Please tell Mr. Stoneman I will thank him when I see him to-morrow."

Stoneman was on the other side of the door and heard her. His heart began to thump. It is strange how easily some hearts start thumping.

The next morning they were on their way again.

One evening, as they were coming within hailing distance of "God's own country," the two were standing near the bow, looking wistfully westward towards the home of their hearts, the haven of their hopes.

"I've been thinking," said Miranda, "what a wonderful event it was when your father and mother were born!"

"Why?"

"Because they married each other."

"And?"

"God gave them you for a son."

He looked at her curiously.

"If we had lost the pictures of Venus, my heart would have been broken, but, of course, you saved them and—saved my heart."

"And you think it was a wise provision of Nature, that brought me on earth?"

"I do," she whispered.

"And I think it was a wise provision of Nature, that brought you on earth," he said.

And then—if the Statue of Liberty had shaded her eyes she would not have witnessed a long drawn kiss of love.

Two days later Mr. John Stoneman received this letter from his son:

"Dear Dad:

"Just got back from long trip. My views about responsibility are rotten. Yours about heredity equally so. My bookkeeper tells me I have drawn from you to date $484,767.52 for which find my check enclosed.

"She is the sweetest thing on earth. Her name is Miranda Bradley. And the wedding takes place next Tuesday. Come."

THE END