

only to read as we run. But not alone are the small-fry of writers and wits and humorists to be proved implicated in this very common and almost universal practice. We find that even learned and dignified personages—sages, divines, philosophers and scholars,—some of the world's most honored and best known, have stooped to aim a shaft at the petticoats, to assail the pride or the vanity of the fair sex in the tenderest part. The gentle and philosophical Addison, in the *Spectator* and also in the *Guardian*, in good natured satire bit off what he conceived to be the follies and foibles of his time, but it is noteworthy that his mild raillery and entertaining irony is oftener and more pointedly directed against the fashionable dames and maidens than against the gallants and fops. To the styles of ladies' dress we know as "low-necked" and as "short," he resolutely stood opposed, and makes one of his shocked and protesting correspondents say that the lady who keeps all muffled or wrapped up while at home, but appears divested of much that she should be careful to wear when in society, and thereby exhibits so much of her charms to more than satisfy the desire of her lover, and to leave nothing to the exquisite bliss of eager imagination virtuously warmed and honestly indulged, does but simulate the folly of the showman who places his principal attractions at the door of his exhibition place for the outside crowd to see, and leaves but little for those who pay to enter to enjoy. He may cry out "Pray, gentlemen, walk in!" as often as it pleases him to do so, but they, having already viewed the rarest of his offerings to free gratification if not to tiresomeness, pay no heed to his solicitous invitation in his own behalf, and walk away to be better and less publicly entertained. The venerable and amiable sage pithily remarks that though the ladies have white skins and beautiful faces and lovely forms, it is not expected by either worthy suitors or devoted husbands that they should go less than decently clad to demonstrate their possession of such precious personal gifts from Nature, or to manifest their proper pride in the rare endowment. So quaintly and amusingly does he comment upon the sort of *fichus* of this day that the ladies of fashion in his day wore—which Addison calls a "modesty piece,"—that we would commend the perusal of that number of the *Guardian* to our lady readers, and to the married as well as the maidens. And also, wherein he refers to the difference inaugurated by the married ladies in those days from the regulation of Lycurgus for the matrons of Sparta. The great law-giver obliged the maidens to expose, or rather disclose, their charms in order to excite the Spartan youths to honorable union;—this accomplished they were to dress with severe discretion, so that no part of their person below the neck should be exposed or seen. But the great English essayist and moralist called attention to the fact that they were the matrons and not the maidens who were the readiest to reveal to the gaze of all "The yielding marble of their snowy breasts;" and to this in mild expression but in strong sense he opposed his influential pen. But Addison has long since gone to the immortal life from out of this world, and Imperious Fashion, universal queen of an unshaken realm, which differs only in degree and never in kind whether between the zones where the highest civilization and grandest barbarism exists, or in those wild and barren regions where only the lowest grades of human beings grovel and survive, is still as despotically regnant as she was when the lovely successors to the fig-leaf and to the robes of richest stuffs in the most ancient periods among the world's wealthiest tribes and nations surrendered their beauteous forms to the cunning of her garniture and the skill of her costliest adornments.

Resolved not to enter upon the dangerous ground of criticism ourselves,—mindful of that paraphrase, of how "Fools rush in where Angels go to dress," and also of

the fate of Actæon for having barely glanced at Diana where she had gone to undress,—no living mortal in man's shape that may appear can persuade or constrain us to say a word in raillery or satire as to the "latest agony" of this day (which, if it be not an agony the use of the word is paralyzed in one sense, our Don Giovanni avows), the "pull back" style; but "goodness gracious," as Tom Collins says, wouldn't we like to read what Addison might have humorously and satirically written upon the swelling subject. And, worse to befall—suppose the ladies should control the press and become the critics to slash away at random at men's fashions! Whew! How the "Wrecks of matter and crush of worlds" of little people in their own fancy greatly important would be scattered upon the shores of remorseless oceans ever dashing fresh victims in its rollers to the unpying sands, and from beneath the overpowering weight of indignant and long persecuted but at length paramount and avenging femininity would in the end be extricated fragments of padding and batting and all that, from vests and coats and pantaloons torn out, and remnants redolent still of the original perfumes which had been used in the process of the toilet of the arch exquisites who were in their day the "lady-killers," and on whom the Erinyes of long-endured but galling outrages upon female forms inflicted at length paid off old scores. To point a moral and adorn a tale here let us men reflect on what might happen if the dear ones should, according to Reade, put themselves in our place—and compel us into that we have forced them,—and then "go for us" in print on the score of our absurdities or extravagance in dress, and in slavishly following the fashions! Wouldn't they have us—or, Snobs might, referring to his own case, dolorously wonder, Would they, or his fond particular, have him? Yet which of us, with columns at our disposal that have been so used, or who have been given to such ungraceful and ungallant criticisms, could fairly consider the exchanges from the ladies as retorts discourteous or undeserved? They would simply cause us to feel "how it is ourselves," and in the study, perchance, from such engaging teachers [this rhymes with charming creatures] what an impressive and blissful lesson we might learn? Thus would Woman's Wrongs lead finally to Woman's Rights, and Fashion's Queen should maintain her sway undisputed, let "pull-backs" or circumventing crinoline—as extremes will—oppose or meet to cry her from her everlasting throne. And this brings us to discover that this long article on the subject proves the correctness of the Persian King that no matter what it is men will do or suffer, be sure we may that, after all, Woman is at the bottom of it—she the fulcrum, we the lever.

#### A STRANGE ENEMY.

A true record of incidents which occurred here not many years ago. The affair made some talk in private circles, but never "got into the papers." For obvious reasons I have substituted fictitious names in the subjoined narrative. D. G. F.

I never liked him. Nay, my whole nature fairly recoiled from him in terror when my glance first met his small, piercing eyes, as he suddenly passed through the reception-parlor, where I sat gayly chatting with Lieutenant Charles. The Lieutenant noticed my terrified start, and the change of color which doubtless accompanied it, for he sprang up instantly, and would have followed the intruder had I not promptly checked him, and, with a forced smile, endeavored to resume the conversation so unpleasantly interrupted.

"And you will not give me the picture, Fanny?" asked the Lieutenant, after a few moments' pleading concerning a *carte de visite* which I had lately had taken. "You will not give it to me!" he echoed, sadly, after reading his answer in my countenance; "but surely you will show it to me?"

"Certainly I will," I answered, quickly, half regretting the coquetry which had prompted me to deny him at all in the

matter. "It is in my room; I will bring it to you in an instant."

Rising from my seat as I spoke, I hastened into the hall. Good gracious! there he stood, at the very foot of the stairway, motionless, as though he had been listening to our conversation. I sprang back into the room with a beating heart, and tears of vexation gushing to my eyes.

"You have seen him again!" exclaimed the Lieutenant, starting from his seat.

But before the door was reached my hand was upon his arm—

"No," I urged, "do not go; it will be useless, and excite an unnecessary alarm in the household. In a moment he will go away, and I will then get you the picture, and laugh at my folly at the same time."

"Your folly in getting me the picture?" bantered the Lieutenant, gayly. "Forgive me, Fanny," he added, hastily, and an anxious cloud passed over his countenance. "This matter is more serious with you than I at all imagined. Surely there is—"

"Say no more about it, I interrupted, trying to smile. "There are some influences which it is useless to attempt to explain. We can only recognize them, and, if need be, struggle to resist them. I am ashamed of the weakness on my part which you have witnessed this morning, and must trust to your generosity not to interpret it too harshly."

He pressed my hand respectfully, and was silent. But what meant that shrewd, almost sarcastic smile, when, a moment afterward, as we heard the hall door shut heavily, he said, "Your enemy is probably out of the way now; will you bring me the picture?"

"This 'enemy,' as, alas! the Lieutenant had only too truly called him, was, like myself, a lodger in my boarding-house. The landlady, Mrs. Hone, heard me sympathetically when, in confidence, I hinted at the annoyance he caused me, and, in her peculiar phraseology, promised "to rid the house of him" as soon as she possibly could; but begged me to say nothing of the matter in the meantime, for there was nothing, she said, which she dreaded so much as "a stir" among her boarders, and among her lady boarders she was sure "this business would make a stir if any thing could."

I promised to remain silent, though more than once afterward I was tempted to regret my hasty acquiescence. There was Mr. Williams, a strong young man, with whom I was a favorite, living on the third floor, who, could his assistance have been asked, would doubtless soon have effected the removal I so much longed for. As for leaving, myself, that was impossible. I was an orphan—a dependent on a wealthy though invalid uncle, who, being once comfortably settled in Mrs. Hone's excellently kept house, would not of course be tempted to leave it except for some more potent and tangible reason than I could offer.

Whether my tormentor, knew my sentiments toward him or not I can not say; but I never, during the uneasy days that followed, heard him hurrying along the hall, or stealthily passing my room close to its very door-sill, but I felt an involuntary shudder, and with difficulty suppressed the cry that arose to my lips. Once I met him on the stairway, and scarce conscious of what I was doing, I bounded past him with a quick scream, and rushed into my room. Ah! I can not tell, except that my whole being loathed the creature, and felt a presentiment of coming evil from his presence. Not one word had we ever exchanged, and I do believe if he had spoken to me I should have fainted with terror; but his restless, intense glance had more than once met mine, and that was enough. There was a natural antipathy between us: we were born to be enemies.

In the meantime my Lieutenant had gone back to the Modoc campaign. He had, after all, taken my picture with him, and my heart also. Only those who love and are beloved in return, and are doomed for a while to be parted, with chances of danger and death between them and their loved ones, can know of the eagerness with which I awaited his first letter. Soon it came, one glorious summer afternoon, with its more glorious news: "Our army is moving rapidly, and we shall occupy the Lava Beds (the Modoc stronghold) in a few days. 'We shall fight! We shall conquer!' the letter said, "and some of us must fall; but, living or dying, dearest, remember that one heart shall—"

I read no more; for at the bare thought of the possibility of losing my hero the half-read sheet fell from my hands, and there, in the solitude of my room, I leaned upon the window-sill and wept long and bitterly. My brave, noble lover! If he should perish what would the world or the light of Heaven itself be to me? Suddenly a rustling outside of my slightly-opened door aroused me; and recalled to my let-

ter. I stooped to pick it up. *It was gone!*

Bewildered and alarmed I hastily shook the folds of my dress, and searched floor, table, and chair, quite certain that no other human being had been in the room since I had entered it with the letter—when the door opened wider, and our landlady's head, decked in all the pride of her gorgeous dinner-cap, was thrust into the apartment. Her face was paler than usual, and her manner somewhat flurried, as she laughingly exclaimed,

"Miss Fanny, if you leave your love-letters lying about the halls you can't expect to keep your secrets long. Not that I have learned them," she added, quickly; "but some less trusty personage might have picked it up, you know."

"Mrs. Hone," I gasped, scarcely heeding her words as I almost snatched the precious sheet from her hands, "I entreat you to tell me how you came in possession of this letter."

"Why, I've told you already," she replied, rather sharply, "I picked it up in the entry just outside of your door. It was no ghost dropped it there either (so you needn't turn so white), but only that R—"

A sudden thought seemed to check her intended confidence, for she muttered something about people being so "awful nervous," and breaking into a disagreeable laugh, hastily left the room. A moment afterward I heard her angry voice checking Betty, the house-maid, for some real or fancied neglect of duty; with the sharp reprimand not to "leave that door open again if she valued her place."

That door! Could she mean my door? And was I, as far as practicable, to be kept shut up in my room, so that *He* might wander unrestrainedly about the house? And what had meant my landlady's flurried manner, her sudden reticence, if in some way my tormentor had not been concerned in this mysterious occurrence? For though I by this time knew well enough *who* had taken the letter, *how* it had been accomplished without my knowledge was a mystery. It was not more than a week since I had first spoken to Mrs. Hone of the object of my fears, and already she would flush up angrily if I even alluded to the conversation and her solemn promise to relieve me of his odious presence. She had even gone so far as to say that "some persons were too fidgety for comfort; and for her part she couldn't, for the life of her, see what there was to make such a fuss about. Goodness knew! she didn't want any such creature as him in her house, and if I thought she did I was mistaken, that was all!" After this singular change of feeling evinced itself I kept my own counsel in the matter, though I was fully resolved to avail myself of the first opportunity of persuading my uncle to change his boarding-place.

This was the way in which matters stood on the day that my letter was so mysteriously borne away almost from my very hands. After recovering it I eagerly read it through again and again—shuddering, in spite of myself, at a certain passage which the reader shall have the privilege of perusing. The Lieutenant, considerate in all things, had evidently tried to express himself so as to annoy me as slightly as possible; but it thrilled me for all that. Here is the passage:

"By-the-way, my dear Fanny, you must know that there came into our tent last night what seemed to me the very identical being who so startled you that evening. Has he disappeared from No. 123? If so, it was himself. If not, it was his double. Size, color, and gait were the same. He had the identical quick, glancing eye, sharp white teeth, and pointed nose. Can there be two such beings? Was it from sympathy with you that I felt such an instinctive aversion to him? I made a dash at the fellow, but he escaped into the darkness as mysteriously as he had come. Our captain and a few of our boys were in the tent at the time, and seemed to be much astonished at my violent movements, and at my remarking (as I quietly sat down among them again), 'That fellow came precious near receiving his finishing touch! They all protested that they had seen no one enter the tent; and begged for an explanation, but I chose to let them remain in their mystified condition. A mysterious coincidence, at least, was it not? Does it portend any thing?"

To me it would have been a terrible circumstance, and so I told him in my reply; but my brave hero knew not the meaning of fear.

At last, after reading the precious epistle over (I am ashamed to tell how many times), I sought the bedside of my uncle, and endeavored to render the long summer afternoon less tedious to the dear sufferer. He was aged, and the natural infirmities of his years had been hastened and increased by a slow, incurable disease. How my heart went forth toward him as, with loving hand, I brushed back the beautiful silver locks from his temples, longing that my touch might heal as well as soothe! Ere long he passed into a tranquil slumber, and carefully adjusting the sashes so that the soft breeze might play refreshingly about