

THREE.

Three comrades walked with me when life was new, And one was Youth, whose brow from care was free;

A LOVE AFFAIR.

The girl I am going to tell you about is rather pretty, and her name is Edith. She has dark hair, and her eyes are blue, and she dresses well.

What I want to tell—and it won't take long to tell in my dry fashion—is the story of old Browne's courtship. I make my living by keeping the cash accounts of a big Market street wholesale house, and Browne is the man whose desk is next to mine in the counting room.

Old Browne rented the second story front room the day after I told him about it. He had been living away up town, and he was glad to get a little nearer to the office, besides enjoying all the social prestige which geographical conditions could give him.

After that all my affairs seemed to go wrong, and I began to seriously consider whether I shouldn't rent every room in Mrs. Burke's house myself. I was actually contemplating this proposition one night in my own apartments, smoking my last bowl of tobacco while the while, when the colored girl who waits on the door said that a man had called to see me.

With this idea in mind I told the girl to delay the man below stairs for a moment while I slipped into other clothes. Then the door opened, and old Browne came ambing in. I was disgusted on the instant, but I managed to conceal my real feelings and invited him to be seated.

"Thank you," he said, "I only want to see you for a moment." I offered him a pipe, and he declined it. I told him my cigars were out.

fectly respectable people—otherwise I would not have taken lodging there. You and I are old friends, and you will take away even the slight doubt there is in my mind. Are they perfectly respectable?"

"Thank you again," he proceeded. "The reason that I asked you is that I am going to marry Edith."

"No, because I haven't proposed yet. I have given the matter a good deal of thought, but before I took so serious a step in my life I wanted some such wise old head as yours to advise me. Now I am happy, and we'll get married at once."

He shook hands with me, and the old idiot didn't notice that I failed to respond. At the door I managed to ask him this question:

"What makes you believe she'll have you?"

He seemed astonished. "Have me!" he repeated. "Why, she's been after me ever since she knew me. I'll settle it tomorrow evening."

As he turned the stairs I noticed that he had on a suit of new clothes, a white vest and a red necktie. He said something about feeling like a schoolboy, and I rushed back to my room more affronted than I had ever been before in my life. I can always think best when I am in bed, and so I undressed and got under covers very quickly. When I had thought diligently for an hour, I turned over and said this to myself:

"The old fat beast! The idea of her marrying him! I'll propose myself to her tomorrow morning. She has been expecting it, I know, for a long time."

I didn't sleep very well and arose a little after 7 o'clock. It took me an hour to dress myself, and having no appetite for breakfast I only drank a cup of strong coffee. I then walked nearly a mile before I had decided what to say, and was barely satisfied with the result. Edith was the sort of a girl to be particular about such things, and I wanted to please her fancy.

Mrs. Burke came to the door and was just as much surprised to see me as I thought she would be.

"It was very good of you to come so soon," she said, "and I didn't think you knew it yet."

"Knew what?" said I. She pulled me inside the hall and looked at me, half smiling and half fearful.

"Didn't you come to—er—congratulate anybody?"

Then I sat down on the hatrack and shook my head. I felt that it was all over, and that old Browne had won, and never in my life did I suffer so much misery in so small a space of time.

"Then," said Mrs. Burke, "I am glad to be able to inform you myself. Edith and Bob are engaged to be married."

I arose and sat down again. I thought of many things, but only one sentence struggled through my lips.

"Does—does old Browne know about it?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, but it won't interest him. Before he went down town this morning he told me that he would have to give up his room on account of the sun shining in it too brightly in the morning. I'm going to turn the whole house now over to Edith."—R. B. Cramer in Philadelphia Times.

Texas Hospitality. "The latching hangs out," expressed the hospitality of the southern frontier in the days "before the war."

If a traveler rode up before the fence that separated the log cabin from the road, he was greeted by: "Light, stranger, light!" Without this salutation no one dismounted, but it was rarely withheld. Mr. Williams, in his book, "Sam Houston," thus describes the impulse of hospitality, which made every traveler a guest, during the early settlement of Texas:

The traveler who rode up to the front fence was instantly invited to alight. His horse was staked out or hobbled to feed on the prairie grass, and the visitor sat down to exchange the news with his host. The coffee mill was set going, if there were any of the precious grains in the house, and the hopper in the hollow log to grinding the corn. The venison or bear meat was put on the coals, and the ash cake baked.

After the meal and the evening pipe, the visitor stretched himself on a buffalo robe on the floor with the members of the family and slept the sleep of health and fatigue. In the morning the response to any inquiry as to the charge was: "You can pay me by coming again."

The story that a certain hospitable settler used to waylay travelers on the road and compel them to visit him at the muzzle of a double barreled shotgun was only a humorous exaggeration of the instinct for hospitality which characterized the community.

The visitor was a living newspaper, who brought the only news obtainable, and was a welcome relief to the monotony and loneliness of the wilderness.—Youth's Companion.

Reflected Light. A dead white surface has decided advantages for reflecting light over a looking glass or a bright surface. Good white blotting paper reflects back 82 per cent of the light cast upon it. Many persons are under the impression that looking glass must be a better reflector than paper or whitewashed surface because with looking glass a strong shadow can be cast, while from a dead surface no heavy shadow is obtained. The reason is not so much that the reflected light is less from the dead surface, but that the reflection is concentrated in the case of the looking glass. With paper or whitewash it proceeds from a vast number of points.—Brooklyn Citizen.

TEN SHOTS A SECOND.

MARVELOUS WORK OF CAPTAIN OD-KOLCK'S MACHINE GUN.

It is Claimed That This Weapon Has Been Fired at the Rate of Six Hundred Shots a Minute For the Space of Three Hours Without Heating.

It is easy to say that the new Hotchkiss machine gun will fire ten shots a second, or 600 a minute, provided it is furnished with the necessary ammunition, but it is not easy to comprehend what that means. It is easy to understand, however, that the introduction of such a weapon into modern warfare means nothing less than a revolution in fighting, and there are those who claim that this gun and other improved killing machines are like to do away with war altogether, since men cannot be found to enlist as soldiers and stand up against such terrible weapons. It is perfectly clear that one man armed with one of the new guns could sweep everything before him within the arc of a half circle by simply keeping the machine in operation and swinging around from side to side. The execution would be terrible, and it is hard to see anything wrong in the statement that one such man would be equal to at least 100 armed with the old guns.

Unlike most other machine guns, this new weapon has but one barrel, and all the bullets pass through it and all the explosions take place in the same powder chamber. At first thought it would seem impossible to operate such a gun without causing the chamber and barrel to heat in a very short time to such a degree as to render further firing impossible, but this trouble has been overcome by an ingenious yet extremely simple arrangement, the essential features of which are that the barrel is permanently fixed in the breach and that none of the moving parts is subjected to the heat developed by the power gas.

In France the gun has been fired rapidly for three hours, during which time 100,000 cartridges were discharged, without any inconvenience because of expanded parts. The total weight of a gun that will fire 30 caliber cartridges is 20 pounds. It can be mounted on any type of naval or military carriage or on a tripod like that shown in the cut for use by cavalry. It can also be attached to a ship's rail or mounted in the tops of armored masts. One man can handle it readily, but the services of another would be required to supply ammunition. Inasmuch as 600 shots a minute means 36,000 an hour, the cartridge puffer would naturally be kept reasonably busy during an extended time of continuous rapid firing. The mechanism of the piece is extremely simple. Exclusive of the sights, but including barrel, shoulder piece, etc., there are only 38 separate parts and only four springs—the main spring, the sear spring, the extractor and the pawl spring. All the parts are made to fit together without the use of screws, and no tools are necessary to completely dismount or to assemble the gun excepting a small monkey wrench.

The most novel element of the gun is its automatic feature. Beneath and parallel to the barrel is a cylinder, which is the largest part of the mechanism. Communication between the barrel and the cylinder is established through a small port or hole through the lower side of the barrel. At the rear end of the cylinder is an exhaust port opening to the air. When the gun is fired, as the bullet passes the forward port, the gas of the exploded powder passes from the barrel into the cylinder and quickly forces a long piston of small diameter toward the rear with extreme rapidity and force. As the piston rushes backward it comes in contact with mechanism which throws out the empty shell, places a new one in the bore and discharges it, all with the most incredible rapidity. Of course this operation is repeated when the second shot is fired and so on indefinitely, as long as ammunition is furnished. When it is desired to begin firing, the gunner pulls the trigger. If he desires to fire but one shot, he releases it instantly, but if he desires to fire rapidly he simply holds the trigger back, and the automatic mechanism above described keeps at work. Releasing the trigger throws out of position the sear spring, so that the piston, after its impetuous backward rush, remains at the back of the cylinder. In order to insure rapid firing the cartridges are packed into metallic clips, each containing 30 rounds. These clips are carried in pasteboard boxes from which they can be fed regularly through the gun, and when placed in position are moved forward automatically by mechanism connected with the piston. It is possible to fire as much slower than 600 times a minute as may be desired, and it is claimed by the Hotchkiss company that as accurate aim may be taken for single shots as with any ordinary gun.

This gun is not the invention of an American, Captain Adolph Odkolck of the Austrian cavalry having produced it after long and careful experiments. It should be said, however, that in its present form it is the result of several improvements made by the Hotchkiss company after that corporation purchased it from Captain Odkolck. The new gun is soon to be thoroughly tested by the United States authorities along with other machine guns at Indian Head.



GUN IN ACTION.

A MARVEL OF LONDON.

The Admirable Manner in Which Its Street Traffic is Handled.

It has long been a marvel that, although foreigners sojourning in London have accustomed themselves to praise the skill with which the street traffic of this world city is handled, yet none of them has carried the lesson home and put it into practice in his own town. There is no secret in the matter. The information can be had for the asking, and they that dwell in towns will be the gainers by it. Well, then, how did it come about?

Go to Hyde park corner any day in the season and watch the streams of traffic as they flow in and out of the open space around the Wellington statue—thousands of cabs, omnibuses, drays, private carriages, hand barrows, dog-carts, bicycles—every sort of thing that can go on wheels. Chaos would come again if it were not for a policeman here, another there and one at the opposite corner.

Hamilton place, at the bottom of Park lane, pours a strong current into Piccadilly. Two policemen get you through it without so much as a sneeze, a wink or a loss of breath! Without the two policemen there would be no getting through. One of them controls the traffic entering Hamilton place; the other controls the traffic leaving it. A motion of the hand stops the stream in Piccadilly and lets the stream from Hamilton place flow in, or vice versa. No matter who you are, or what you are driving in, or in how great a hurry you may be—cabman or costermonger, duke driving a four-in-hand, coachman of a prince, with his royal highness impatiently waiting in his red lined carriage—you must stop when the policeman's hand is raised, and you may not go on again until it is lowered.

Break the rule, and you shall see what happens—a summons to the police court and a fine, whether you are coster, cabman, duke or his high mightiness himself. Is this autocracy or democracy? Call it what you choose, it is good management. Without it London would be impossible, because it would be impassable.

There is no "slanging," no "sassing back," no picturesque oburgation of any sort. If you make a disturbance, so much the worse for you, not for your bones, or for your flesh, but for your convenience and your pocketbook, and peradventure your reputation as a peaceable subject. The policeman does not flourish a "billy." He does not carry one. He does not abuse you or lay hands upon you. He is imperturbable, and he produces a notebook and takes down your name and address, wishes you good morning, and the next day you are summoned to the police court. There is no shilly shally. The whole thing is done on the principle of paying the piper if you choose to dance.—Boston Herald.

Attack by a Rhinoceros.

The author of "Discovery of Lakes Rudolf and Stefania" had shot a zebra, and his men were making ready to cut it up, when two rhinoceroses appeared in the distance. Apparently the firing of the gun had disturbed their nap and made them thoroughly angry.

Though more than 400 paces off, the rhinoceroses swerved aside when they saw us and then dashed upon us with the speed of race horses. As usual, my black companions took to their heels, making for a solitary tree some distance off. It was hopeless for me to think of reaching it, and there was not so much as a blade of straw for cover anywhere. And behind the dead zebra, which would have been better than nothing, three of my men were already crouching.

There was nothing for it but to brave the situation out, so I knelt on one knee, the better to take aim, and with my elephant gun in hand waited to fire till I could hope to kill. It seemed a long time before I could cover the shoulder of either of the huge beasts, and I knew any other shot would be useless. The result was that I did not pull the trigger till one of the animals was only some eight or ten paces off.

It staggered and fell, but the next moment was on its feet again. It was not killed, but its ardor was cooled, for it turned away, followed by its companion. Twice it seemed about to fall, and I did not think a second shot would be necessary, but it got away with undiminished speed, and though we followed it for some distance we lost it.

Plan For Second Class Cars.

William Gates, the veteran ticket agent, is of the opinion that America could profit by adopting at least one feature of European railway service. "I believe that we would secure a large amount of travel which we do not now secure by adopting the second class feature," said he. "The luxurious manner in which our large sleepers and chair cars are constructed involves an enormous expense. The fellows who do not use these cars are obliged to pay for the luxuries enjoyed by wealthier travelers. The companies are obliged to charge a uniformly high rate of mileage in order to furnish swell service. I advocate having a strictly second class train between here and New York. Put the price at \$10. I am positive that it would greatly increase travel. Put it on a slow schedule. The people who patronize it would not expect 'flier' service, and as long as it carried them over the ground they would be satisfied. The train would be well patronized from this station. Then the first class trains could be made strictly first class, and each fellow would pay for the service he required. I would like to see it tried."—Toledo Blade.

A Blood Sucking Earthworm.

South Africa is the home of a species of earthworm, a creature closely related to our common angworm, who is not only a giant among the denizens of the soil, but which is reputed to have a taste for human blood. There are two species of this uncanny wiggler—one of a dark red color and the other almost black. They are larger than one's finger and from three to four inches in length.—St. Louis Republic.

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