THE STRANGE GUEST.

He brought a branch of olive-This stranger guest of mine; Could I deny him entrance, Who bore the peaceful sign?

Ah, no! I hade him welcome, I set him ment and wine: But while he drank and feasted How laughed his eyes divine!

I took the branch of olive (The soothest plant that grows). And from the carven ceiling I hung it with the rose. "But why to me this token. Who never lacked repose? Why this to me," I questioned. 'Who know no feud nor foes?"

He smiled beneath the olive-This strangest stranger guest. A branch from off the thorn-tree Had told his errand best; For since my house he entered There's ne'er a heart at rest. To mock me with the olive! But Love doth love his jest.

## UNEXPECTED \$10,000.

Willie Smith was 19-pretty, vivaclous, ambitious, but just now the very death of her grandfather, and, as there was no other relative, had entered at principal of her school at Staunton. once into possession of the property. A few days after the funeral the owner of the mortgage had made an ostensible visit of condolence, but had so interpolated his expressions of sympathy with matters of practical significance that when he left Willie was for the first time aware that she was only the nominal owner of her plantation.

At first she was stunned, for she had already begun to make plans for the improvement and extension of the ancestral acres. The poor cabins of the negro tenants were to be replaced by new ones, neglected fields were to be again fenced and brought into cultivation, and better methods and better machinery were to be used. Her grandfather had been easy-going and impracticable, but she had supposed that her schooling and the house expenses had been met by the rents paid him by negro tenants, Now she knew that the mortgage had been gradually increased to meet the deficits.

This morning she was in the kitchen helping Aunt Chloe with the ironing, but her thoughts were busy with the formidable problems of the future. There were the expenses and the interest to be met, and, worst of all, there was \$100 still due her school at Staunton. She could not see any possible way to pay it, for the season had been bad, and the renters, instead of paying what they owed, were beginning to clamor for advances on the next year's crops; and the creditor had delicately hinted that her grandfather had already raised the mortgage out of all proportion to its security. In anxious succession her mind went over her own accomplishments in search of something that would be money-producing. She was fond of scribbling, and was fairly good at drawing and music, and had won a school reputation as a linguist. But she was too honest and crisis. No, she must struggle as best she could until the creditor forcelosed; then she would go out and seek a place liked the place to stay permanently." among the wage earners.

"Heyer's yo' mail, Mis' Willie," called Uncle Tobe's voice through the open window, and a black hand was thrust in with a package of letters. She took them and glanced over the postmarks carelessly. Most of them were from school friends at Staunton. Several were circulars, and one was one from Leadville, Col. She selected this and examined it curiously. She had no correspondents in any part of the West. Inside was a check and a short letter, with the printed address of a Leadville banking house. The letter read:

"Willie Smith, Talbottom, Ga.: We are requested to forward you the inclosed check for ten thousand dollars improvements, sub-wonderful! And (\$10,000) Please acknowledge receipt, do you know," lowering his voice, "if and oblige, yours truly,

"WALDRON & CO."

the stared at it for a moment, then burriedly examined the check. Yes, it was for \$10,000, made in favor of Willie Smith. But, of course, it was a mistake. If she had any relatives in the world, they were so far removed as to have been overlooked, and certainly none of them was rich enough to send ber \$10,000.

Talbottom was a small, unprogresreached out drowsily to the line fence ed two fields and went down a short street. There was but one bank, and its cashler was an old friend of her him and explained her errand.

"I reckon it's all right, Willie," said the old man, after he had carefully examined the envelope and its contents. "It's directed to Willie Smith, Talbottom, and you're the only Willie Smith I know. And Waldron & Co. are all right. Our house has dealt with them. And I'm bound to say, my dear," putting down the papers and looking at her beamingly, "I'm plumb glad for this windfall. I can almost hear yo' grandfather chuckle in his grave."

"But it can't be mine," insisted Wil-He. "I don't even know that I have a

relative in all the world." "Somebody yo' family has lost sight of," said the cashier genially. "Now, there's a man over in Jasper County got a fortune from a cousin be hasn't heard from in thirty years. I reckon this is something that way. It's likely | Smith." yo' mother's cousin or somebody else. Anyhow, it's all right, and I'm willing and motioned the young man to an which a man distinguishes himself!

money, or leave it on deposit?"

"Well, suppose I telegraph to Waldron & Co. Can you come in again this afternoon?"

"Yes." When she returned in the afternoon the cashier handed her a slip of paper.

It read: "Merchants' Bank, Talbottom, Ga .-Gentlemen: Nothing to explain. We forwarded check to Willie Smith, Talbottom, as requested. If the party presenting it can be identified you may cash same with perfect safety. Yours,

"WALDRON & CO." "So you see it is all right," said the eashler. "Now, you will please indorse the check."

Willie did so with a sudden feeling of exultation.

"How will you have it?" briskly. "Suppose you give me \$6,000. That

will pay off the mortgage and make some necessary repairs. The rest I will deposit with you. And-and suppose you let me have a check book; it will be more convenient."

The next few hours were momentous ones in the young girl's life. The mortmuch discouraged owner of the Smith gage was paid, and visits were made plantation and its encumbrances. Two to grocery and harwware and seed weeks before she had been summoned stores, and to painters and carpenters from her school at Staunton by the and stone masons; and before she went home a check was on its way to the

In the morning men came out and made estimates, and they were followed by painters and carpenters and laborers, who began to repair the old family mansion, and to surround the neglected fields with substantial fences. and to build new cabins under the magnificent live oaks that grew along one side of the plantation.

Willie spent most of her time outdoors watching the work and making occasional suggestions. The new cabins were surrounded by generous truck patches, and when they were finished she was careful to rent them only to industrious, reliable negroes. In this she was greatly assisted by the cashier. who came out frequently to watch the progress of the work and whose advice was always valuable.

One day a brisk, prepossessing young man stepped futo the Talbottom post-

"Any letters here for Willie Smith?"

he asked. "No, she called after them not an hour ago,"

"She?" curlously. "Yes. Generally her man Tobe gets them, but she happened to be in town this morning. You're one of the men working out there, I suppose?"

"No, not exactly." He left the postoffice and walked across the street to the bank.

"Has Willie Smith presented a check here for \$10,000 recently?" he asked. "Miss Willie Smith has," replied the

cashier. "I beg your pardon, I meant Miss Willie Smith. You see, out West, we get in the habit of dropping ceremony." The old cashier looked at him

"So you are a Westerner, are you?" he asked.

"I was, but expect to be a Southerner now," said the young man frankly. practical to overrate these accomplish- "My mother left this country nearly They were good things to thirty years ago, but I have often heard know, but would not help her at this her describe her old home. When I made my pile I concluded to come down here and look around: and if I

The eashier's face cleared instantly, "Good!" he exclaimed, "You can't help liking such a grand country. All It lacks is money and energy. But what part of the West are you from?"

"Leadville, Col."

thoughtfully.

"Ah, I began to suspect it. You have been connected with the house of Waldron & Co., and called in to see if the check reached its destination all right." He came from behind the counter and took the young man's hand warmly. "I am right glad to see you. suh. Yo' house never sent out a better check than that in all its life. Miss Willie has paid off a mortgage on her plantation, and is making wonderful it hadn't been for that check I achally believe she'd been forced to go off and look for work-achally forced, suh."

"Indeed! That would have been too

bad," said the young man, "but-" "There's no but now," interrupted the cashier cheerfully. "Her future's as clear as a June sky. If I'd received the check myself I wouldn't have been half as much pleased. Miss Willie's a fine girl-a gem in a land that is full of fewels. You must excuse my enthusive town, whose straggling arms siasm, suh," apologetically, "but in a sort of way yo' house seems to have to his own with a malign significance, of the Smith plantation. Willie cross- had a hand in the good fortune. But come into my private room and we'll lane, and was then in the principal talk over the country. You're to be one of us now, and maybe I can give you some points on buying a place. And grandfather's. She went directly to I'll tell you about Miss Willie and her plans." Here a new thought seemed to strike him. "How'd you like to go out and see her yo'self?" he asked abruptly. We close early, and I generally go that way for a walk. She'll be glad to

> "Nothing would please me better." "Very well. You'll take dinner with me, and if I can be of any assistance in you' plans do not hesitate to use me. Now, there's the Calboun plantation. Joins Miss Willie and just now can be had for a song. And, really, it's the best thing you can do in the whole country. But you haven't told me yo'

see anyone from Waldron & Co."

name yet, suh!" "Smith-er, Call me Hamilton Smith." "A good name, sub-a good name. We have Smiths in every county in the South, but I tell them a good thing cannot be too common. My mother was a

He led the way into his private room

to take the check. Will you have the casy chair by an open window. Then CH:NESE ARE THRIFTY FELLOWS he settled himself in an easy chair and "I wish I felt more sure," hesitated gave a glowing picture of the Calhoun plantation.

The young man said little, but on his face was an expression of , mingled amusement and indecision. And this of the interpreters and general agents amused indecision remained with him of the Chinese Six Companies, to a Star and even appeared in his voice until reporter, "are way in advance of the they went out to the Calhoun planta- ordinary workingman, and particularly tion. But when they returned late in so in regard to their Ready Money Asthe evening, it had wholly disappeared.

"Miss Willie is an exceptionally fine girl," he said, with suppressed enthusiasm, "and if I am not mistaken the and just how to go about doing it. I ated as a lawyer, could not have planned the improvements better myself. Miss Willie told Chinese laundry places in this city are me she wanted to plant trees along her the result of the Ready Money associabank of the river, which runs between tions; that is, the money necessary to the two plantations, and that it would start them came from the Ready be nice if the owner on the other side Money. The plan is not unlike the could be induced to do the same. Are building associations, which I am told you sure the place can be bought?" have quite a clientele here, and which

for a song." late to get it to-night," regretfully; "but hand, the idea being to keep the money be made out before noon. I'll be infin- spenk of each other as bays, to gather ftely obliged. And I'll make it worth about on Monday, that being their off your while,'

"But you haven't seen the place yet?" expostulated the cashier in amazement. know. Besides, I'm willing to take your word for it. If you can have everything settled before noon I will go over after dinner and talk with Miss Willie about the shade trees. And, do you know," with animation, "I've been thinking that those bluffs above the live oak grove will, be a fine place to throw a bridge across the river. I wonder if Miss Willie will like the idea."

The next day the good people of Talbottom were stirred to unwonted excitement by the news that an energetic stranger had bought the old Judge Calhoun plantation, and that unlimited improvements were contemplated: And, eyen while this report was being circulated from mouth to mouth, it was followed by rumors of lavish contracts and engagements made with the townspeople of the town. Decidedly the stranger was no ordinary man.

And evidently Willie thought so, too, for she would flash covert, inquiring glances at him from under her long, dark eyelashes, and sometimes would listen with almost bated breath, wondering what daring scheme would be people, proposed next. He was so different from any man she had ever met-so energetic and impulsive and chivalrous, tion as he was on his own, but she his money in one.

could see no way to prevent it. it was the most sultable match of the tunity. There is no waiting-no secur-

year. Smith. All of them were destroyed.

duced to ashes, "Some folks see them." -New York Ledger.

The Man and the Snake.

The reputed fascination of the ser pent's eye is the motive of a story in Mr. Ambrose Bierce's volume of tales entitled "In the Midst of Life." Mr. Brayton was the guest of a friend, an eminent zoologist, whose specialty, of which he had a fine collection, was snakes. Stretched upon a sofa in his while awaiting the summons to dinner. and saw, in the shadow under his bed, two small points of light about an inch apart. He gave them no speciar thought and resumed his reading.

In a few minutes he gave an involuntary start, and stared into the obscurity under the bed. His gaze disclosed the coils of a large serpent; the points of light were its eyes, but were no longer merely luminous points; they looked in. from the river. Brayton was a brave man, but this

He had fallen to the floor, scream frem above, rushed to his material was abandoned. friend's room, There lay Brayton, senseless. As he bent over him he glanced under the bed.

"How did this thing get here?" he exclaimed, and pulling out the snake, flung it to the center of the room, where it lay without motion,

It was a stuffed snake: its eves were two shoebuttons.

How time files from the date on

Start in Business on Borrowed Capital and Always Repay the Loans. "In some respects the much-abused Chinamen," said Hong Sing Long, one

sociation."

Hong Sing Long spends most of his time in New York, though he visits Washington several times each year. community will yet be proud of her He is an educated Chinaman and has plantation. She seems to have the fac- had the advantage of several years at ulty of knowing just what she wants Harvard and besides has been gradu-

"With the exception of one, all of the were originally started in Philadelphia. "The Calhoun place? Certainly, and The Chinese plan is to start Rendy Moneys as often as a party of Chinese "Well, I want it. I suppose it's too find they have any surplus money on if you'll arrange for its purchase early moving along. It is the custom of the in the morning, so that the papers can haundry boys, for Chinamen always day, and gossip. All who have spare money put it in a pool and authorize some one to keep it personally as a "Yes, I have across the river, you deposit in a bank. As soon as the pool gets any size the word goes out and it is sold to the largest bidder, if there is more than one applicant for it.

"As a general thing there is but one applicant and he gets it, at a rate of interest agreed upon. It starts him in business and in a few weeks he begins paying back. Now and then there is no demand for the money. It then goes to the cities where it is needed. Just now the Chinamen are starting laundries in a number of small towns of the South, and my errand here now is to assume the headship of the butterflies get some of the Rendy Money funds to be advanced for that purpose.

"Safe! Perfectly safe. The civilization of the Chinese is no new thing. It is 5,000 years old. They have found out that honesty is the best policy; not on account of the moral or religious question involved as you understand it. but on account of the business proposition involved. Honesty is best because it pays, as for many other reasons. In business dealings Chinese are very strict, much more strict than any other

"The Chinaman knows that if he borrows he must pay back, and that the consequences of not doing so are very She could not help liking him, and she serious, much more serious than it is could not withstand his impetnosity with Americans or Europeans. He any more than the reeds of the river knows this before he gets the money could withstand the current in spring- and does not take it unless he means to time. She offered objections to the pay back. The man who acts as secrebuilding of the bridge and he overruled tary of the Ready Money is also the them in a single impetuous speech. She treasurer. He takes pretty good care to did not like the idea of assuming all give a good account of his stewardship, the expenses of improving the river, for his happiness depends upon his conbut did not dare expostulate for fear of duct. The Chinese Ready Moneys frethe quizzical look which she knew quently close up in a week, though orwould come into his merry eyes. In- dinarily they last longer. Each transside of a month she began to feel that action is a separate one. A man may he was as much at home on her planta- be a member of a dozen or have all of ping contest, and the one who proved

"The great advantage of the Ready And, indeed, she did not want to. In Money is that it gives everyone who the fall their engagement was definite- wants it money to open up business for ly announced, and all Talbottom said bimself whenever he sees the oppority is needed except a promise to pay. A few weeks before the marriage he The payment never falls, except for carefully overhauled his papers. There good reasons, such as accident or sickwere many letters addressed simply to ness. In fact, it does not pay to fail to Willie Smith; some were to Willie H. pay, for it will cost more in the long Smith, and a few to William Hamilton run. When your civilization is 5,000 years old, you will know more than you "It isn't well to keep papers," he do now, and will understand things that sollioquized, as the last one was re- now seem to be wonderful in us."-Washington Star.

Big Cotton Presses. Of the many cotton presses which were in operation in New Orleans sixty years ago the two principal ones were the Levee cotton press and the Orleans cotton press. They were large and massive buildings, each occupying, like most of the others, a square of ground. The Levee cotton press was built in 1832 by a company bearing the same own room, Mr. Brayton glanced from name at a cost of \$500,000, and was two the book he was carelessly scanning stories high. It compressed some 200,-000 bales of cotton a year. The Orleans press, also fronting on the river, occupied an area of 632 feet by 308, the building nearly covering the whole space. This press, which was begun in 1833 and completed in 1835, cost over \$753,000, compressed about 150,000 bales per annum, and could store 25,000 bales of cotton. Its immense length gave it a very imposing appearance

Alligators Twenty Feet Long. Alligators were formerly one of the

seemed an occasion when discretion chief animal life tenants of Red River was the better part of valor. He would and the bayous of Louisiana, where, bebeat a retreat and backward, so as not fore steamboat navigation came to into disturb the reptile; but instead of the terrupt them, they could be seen by movement his will had shaped, his hundreds huddled together on the banks right foot was placed in advance of his or massed on the floating or stationary logs-especially of Red River-waking The snake dld not move, but its eyes the solltudes of the forest with their seemed to become larger and more lum- bull-like bellowing. Their length was inous. There were strange noises in generally between eight and twelve Brayton's ears as, with reluctant steps, feet, although they sometimes grew he could not refrain from drawing to be twenty feet long. Their hides nearer the bed. Suddenly something were once used extensively for the struck him a hard blow upon the face. making of shoes, but the leather, not red in the face: they rolled up their proving of sufficiently close texture to The zoologist, startled by a terrific keep water out, shoemaking from this were bared almost to the shoulders.

Likes and Dislikes of Birds.

It is said that birds are nearly as sensitive in their likes and dislikes as dogs. Some people can never gain the friendship of a caged bird. A bird has to learn by experience that it is safe with a human being before it will respond to kind treatment.

No man ever disappeared that some one did not invent a woman story on



GOTHAM SOCIETY QUEEN.

RS. WILLIAM C. WHITNEY cant throne of queen of Gotham's society. Such at least seems to be the understanding among those who gence. Since the decline and fall of Mrs. William Astor Gotham society has been queenless. It was thought for a time that young Mrs. John Jacob Astor would be elevated, but the fact that she is a Philadelphian ruined her hopes. Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont, recently Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt, aspired and was crushed. She will live abroad bereafter. Mrs. Cornelius Vondervilt cannot



MRS. WILLIAM C. WHITNEY.

on account of her husband's illness, Mr. the crown. She is 36, entrangingly beautiful, and as the wife of Captain Randolph had entree to the very best drawing rooms of aristocratic England She is eminently fitted for leader of the smart set by reason of her wealth, family and experience. As mistress of the big Whitney mansion at the corner of Fifth avenue and Fifty-seventh street she will be brilliant.

Chop Wood for a Husband. There was a novel wood-cutting contest in the Seventh Ward of Williamsport, Pa., the other day, in which five young women took part. The girls are all employed in the Lycoming rubber factory, and, having a holiday, they turned their time to good account, be sides settling a much-disputed question as to which was the most entitled to a husband. The girls are Ress Mayers, Flora Mahl, Lillie Mahl, Lillie Dunlap, Belle Gouldy and Mary Russell, all pretty, vivacious young women, who earn their own living and make good wages in the rubber factory. In a banter the other day one of the girls proposed that they have a wood-chop-



herself to be the champion cutter should be entitled to a husband, while and agreeable to the skin.-Ladies' the others, it was agreed, must wait Home Journal. two years before joining fortunes with

her best beau. The girls, each with a brand-new ax, bedecked with red, white and blue ribbons, marched into the back yard of Widow Hartman's home and made an assault on the woodpile. Widow Hartman is a helpless invalid, she having fallen and hurt herself quite badly last winter. Her daughter Lou works In the rubber factory, too, and she was one of the movers in the wood-cutting scheme, although she took no part in the contest.

Five loads of hemlock slab wood, cut to stove lengths, had been delivered at Widow Hartman's place the day before -the girls paying for it-so there was plenty of material for them on which to test their strength and skill. But the way the ribboned axes flew and tongues wagged was only equaled by the shower of split sticks that gradually piled themselves up around each choppingblock William Baskins and Joseph Schell were there as referees. One of the young men, however, had a more direct interest in the contest than being judge, for one of the girls was his sweetheart, and, according to the compart, if she proved one of the losers in the contest he would be compelled to wait two long years before she could become his wife. For four hours the wood-chopping went on; the girls got made gown. sleeves until their plump, plak arms and whacked away at the bemlock blocks as though their lives instead of a husband depended upon it

Finally 12 o'clock came, and at the end of that time there were five weary. perspiring girls and five big piles of nicely split hemlock wood for Widow Hartman. But for the life of them the referees could not decide between the sticks and counting them separately, with or without a jacket.

the discovery was made that the tw girls had cut exactly alike. The contest was declared a draw. And now will soon succeed to the va- all the marriageable young men of the seventh ward are casting their eyes with favor in the direction of these fair young women who so gallantly demonare familiar with fashionable intelli- strated their ability to cut firewood.

Danger in Mock Marriages.

Not a few giddy girls think it is a huge joke to participate in a mock marriage, yet such events have often led to serious embarrassments. Marriage is a matter too serious to be trifled with. Judges in the courts have frequently been called upon to dissolve the ties thus thoughtlessly entered into, sometimes, it is sad to relate, with the connivance of ministers of the gospel and magistrates who ought to know better than to play the part they do in these affairs. If a clergyman were to announce that a baptizing pool would be opened some evening, either in the church or elsewhere, and that he would perform the rite of baptism as a public entertainment on the fattest woman or the tallest man in the neighborhood, there would be no more sacrilege than there is in a mock wedding gotten up for a public show.

Place to Keep a Bicycle.

An ingenious English woman has designed a cabinet for the bicycle in the form of a hall table and hatstand. This cabinet can be made of any wood and finished to suit any style or color. The sunken panels are tilled in with Japanese leather paper, both in the doors and on each side of the mirror back. All the ordinary requirements of the entrance hall are supplied, but naturally the interior required a good deal of skillful arrangement to afford the greatest amount of accommodation with the Whitney's new wife is just the lady for least possible space. The flap in the cabinet above the opening doors is



CABINET FOR BICYCLE.

hinged, to throw back, so that the bievele can go in without any alteration of the handle bars. Then the floor is fitted with grooves and draws out altogether, to be used as a "home trainer," while in its proper place in the cabinet it serves to keep the blcycle in position. There is plenty of room inside for all the bicycle belongings, as well as the cleaning apparatus.

How to Keep Wrinkles Away. A simple preventive against the appearance of wrinkles is this: Saturate a soft towel in very hot water, wring it and apply it to the face, keeping it there for at least twenty minutes. Then dry the face very gently. This must be done just before going to bed. When traveling, if the skin is very sensitive, do not bathe the face except at night and in the morning, and then throw a few drops of tincture of benzoni into the water, so that it may be made soft

Grace Howe McKinley.



Niece of the President-elect, who will take a prominent part in Washington society during the next administration. -Boston Post.

Waistcoats for Fair Wearers Vests of cream lace over white satin are very dressy, and are particularly chic with the all black braided tallor

Pretty serviceable vest fronts are made of gay plaid silks or striped velvets. These are finished with the full pour, which is held in place by small enameled buttons.

For morning shopping excursion nothing is smarter than the bright little scarlet waistcoat of smooth cloth, buttoned high to the throat wit. dull gold or old silver buttons.

Any sort of excessive decoration is piles of wood cut by Miss Dunlap and not considered too much for the little Miss Russell as to which was the larger, vest, which seems to be a necessary And, indeed, after raking over all the part of every gown, whether it is made