

LAST WINTER'S OVERCOAT.

When the stormy breezes bluster
Through the shade trees, hark and hark.
And the frost flakes sparkle
In the chilly morning air.
Then we take an inventory
Of our useful things we hoard;
Naught can wake our tender interest
Like last winter's overcoat.

Tenderly we pick the mothballs
From the pockets where they've lain,
And with sponge and brush we labor
To remove each spot and stain;
Mourning o'er the frequent tears
Of our hungry friend the moth,
Where he foraged at his leisure
On the sleek imported cloth.

But at length, with some misgivings,
We pronounce it fit to wear;
Yet we shun our dear companions
And resent their haughty stare.
And we're apt to lose some slumber
And some envy we devote
To the man who need not worry
Over last winter's overcoat.

The Little Lacemaker.

MILIE NOEMI VERDIER, a lacemaker of Valenciennes, as good as she was pretty, and her modesty and simplicity commanded the respect of all.

Left an orphan at thirteen years of age she lived with her brother, three years her senior, who, having suddenly become the head of the house, labored for his little sister and himself at cabinet making.

The two lived happily together; but the years passed and the time of military service came. Louis was obliged to go. The separation was terrible to those two children, who loved each other so much.

Left alone in the little lodgings, this suddenly became too large for her, Noemi with bleeding heart applied herself to her work and wrought marvels from the flax fields.

Each Saturday she carried back her work and when she returned home divided her earnings in two parts. Must she not send a small subsidy to her soldier, who was thinking of her there in his far-away garrison?

On his side Louis behaved in his regiment as he did in Valenciennes; that is to say, like an honest man, and so, at the end of the second year of his absence he was able to announce one beautiful morning that he had been promoted to be sergeant.

You can imagine how happy Noemi was! How her heart throbbed with joy! Oh, how proud she was of her dear brother! But her happiness was short. In a few weeks came a letter. The warcloud had burst all at once; armed France rushed to the frontier of the East.

The dreadful war began. From the letters of her beloved Louis she learned the successive defeats of the French army, Worth, Rosenleville, Saint-Privat, Gravelotte, Sedan. Then silence followed—no more letters, no more news, nothing.

Noemi, who never read the papers, hastened now to the office of the Gueudeur de Valenciennes and of the Echo de la Frontiere, seeking there some little ray of hope. She listened to the talk on the street, she mingled with the groups of people commenting on the news, she gave ear to the painful accounts of the war and she learned, with a sinking heart, that her brother's regiment had met with severe losses.

Meanwhile the wounded soldiers were sent, through Hirsan and Avesnes, to the towns and cities on the northern frontier. Every day fresh convoys arrived in Valenciennes.

All the hospitals were full, and still they came. Then private ambulances were organized everywhere, churches and factories opened their doors to the unfortunate wounded soldiers.

One morning the report was circulated that a convoy of wounded from her brother's regiment had arrived during the night.

To the poor girl a glimmer of hope returned. She ran from one to the other, asking of the nurses, bending over every cot; but the hope of the morning vanished.

All at once she remembered that the day before they had opened in Saint-Saulve a hospital intended especially for the officers. Was there any possibility that an unknown sergeant might have been brought there? Surely not. Yet, notwithstanding, she found strength to go thither.

An army surgeon came toward her. "What do you wish, mademoiselle?" "Oh, monsieur! Pardon! I am looking for my brother, Sergeant Louis Verdier."

"You mean Lieutenant Louis Verdier?" And pointing with his finger down the long row of mattresses on the floor, "there he is in the sixth bed."

To the poor girl it seemed as if the earth vanished from beneath her feet. She choked back an exclamation of joy, tottered forward a few steps and, with an outburst of infinite happiness knelt before the bed of Lieutenant Verdier, who, with his head wrapped in linen, was lying in a heavy stupor.

"Louis! Louis! It is I," she exclaimed, trembling, with clasped hands, ready to fall.

At this appeal the wounded man recovered his consciousness, opened his eyes and perceived his sister, but not being able to raise his head he stretched forth both his hands, which she seized in hers and covered with tears.

In the meantime the surgeon approached, and, half unwillingly, led her away.

"You must not cause him any emotion, or we cannot guarantee anything, sapristi! Your brother's wound is doing well; he will recover, that is certain, if you do not undo our work."

"Oh, monsieur le docteur—"

"Never mind, monsieur le docteur. This is enough for to-day. Come back to-morrow morning, but now go home."

"Do you see, my dear Louis," said the happy Noemi to him a few days later, sitting by the bedside of her brother, "yesterday the merchant for whom I work ordered of me a piece of magnificent lace for a wealthy English house. I began to work on it last night and I hope to finish it to-morrow. For this work they will pay me a very high price. Do you know what I am going to do with the money?"

EVOLUTION OF A SIGNATURE.

Signature of Lieut. McKelvey in 1864.

Signature of President of United States in 1900.

Those fond of studying character in handwriting will find much of interest in the signatures of First Lieut. William McKelvey, Jr., of the Twenty-third Ohio volunteer infantry, and William McKelvey, President of the United States. Unless one looks closely at the signatures it may seem hard to trace much similarity. Still, it is there, and can be found in a number of places.

When the older of the signatures was written the father of the boy lieutenant was alive, and the future President was William Jr. This signature was written across the face of a small photograph, and there was not room to spell the "William" out in full, even if the lieutenant had wished to do so. The photograph was taken and the signature written when President McKelvey was 21 years old, and when he had not had occasion to sign the name more than a few times, comparatively. The other signature is thirty-five years older, being that of the President of the nation. For all the changes that time made in the signature and in the man who wrote it, there are interesting similarities in the two fac-similes.

"Speak, my darling," answered the young officer.

"The surgeon says that you will soon be able to get up. I am going to take you home to our little nest and take care of you day and night. You shall see how happy we will be and how quickly you will be well."

"Dear, dear sister! Oh, what a good idea, and how I shall hasten to get strong, so as to be able to go with you."

One morning, when she came in, radiant with gladness, her brother bade her speak low and pointed with his eyes to a small wounded officer, whom they had brought in and placed on a mattress beside his own. The wounded man was M. de Lauterac d'Ambroise, lieutenant "aux chasseurs a pied" and had been struck in the shoulder by a bombshell.

"Poor young man!" said Noemi, compassionately. "He has no sister to take care of him." And she became interested in this man, whose death seemed certain.

In the meantime the days went by and Louis' convalescence progressed rapidly. Had he not promised to hurry? On the morning of the tenth day Noemi arrived, joy in her face, bringing a precious package wrapped in tissue paper.

She, too, had kept her word; her marvelous work was finished and she brought it to show her brother before carrying it to the merchant who ordered it, and in her joy at being able to take her brother home she forgot about the poor, wounded man lying beside her.

"See how beautiful it is!" she said, displaying the delicate masterpiece upon the bed—proud of it, not because of its overwhelming difficulties, but because it enabled her to realize her most ardent wish, to bring her dear convalescent into their little nest in the little street, into the small lodgings where happiness would come back at the return of her beloved brother.

And they were both happy. With hands clasped, they contemplated the delicate lace.

All at once a piercing shriek drew them from their ecstasy.

In making an effort to rise M. de Lauterac d'Ambroise had disarranged his bandages, the wound reopened, and the unfortunate man fell back on his bed covered with blood.

At the scream the surgeon was on the spot and in a twinkling had removed the bandage.

"Quick, quick! Some lint!" he cried. "Hurry, hurry!"

And while the nurses, beside themselves at the cries of the patient, searched everywhere for what was at hand, the stream of blood kept on flowing and the anxious surgeon multiplied his appeals.

The brother and sister, motionless, pale with fright, exchanged one glance. Noemi seized her precious lace, tore it in pieces, and gave it to the major, who applied it to the wound.

The hemorrhage was stopped. Louis and Noemi, trembling with emotion, looked at each other.

"Dear sister, thanks—"

"It will make but a few days' delay," lisped the young girl, keeping back the tears just ready to flow. "I will begin my work again."

Lieutenant de Lauterac d'Ambroise is to-day colonel; he is the father of three children; one a big, pretty girl, almost as beautiful and sweet as her mother, whose name she wears, Noemi; and two fine-looking boys, who are "terrors," as their uncle assures us, the brave commandant Louis Vernier.

ANKLE BRACE FOR SKATERS.

Device for Giving Artificial Aid to Weak Ankles.

Many a person is prevented from learning to skate, both with roller and ice skates, by weakness of the ankles, and as skating is such a fascinating sport it is not to be wondered at that artificial aid is to be provided to brace the ankles for this sport. The latest device for this purpose has just been patented by Arthur J. and Robert T. Brauer of St. Louis, Mo., and is illustrated herewith. The brace is not intended to be attached to the ankle, but depends entirely upon the force exerted by the strap pulling the triangular plates over either ankle in a downward direction. The plates are of leather and carry semi-circular steel braces, which are connected by a strap passing underneath the hollow of the foot.

When the ankle starts to turn, the plate on the side toward which it bends draws the bones back into place, and there is no upward pull to the brace. The sole of the shoe is also prevented from tilting in either direction, and as this movement always takes place when the ankle turns a further aid is

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NOW WED AT HOME.

FASHIONABLE BRIDES TABOO CHURCH FUNCTION.

Simplicity of Arrangements Contrary to Former Elaborateness—Society Leaders Say Home Wedding Is a More Sacred Event—Guests Still Numerous.

The weddings of the fashionables are no longer "brilliant functions," says the Chicago Chronicle. The elaborate affair of the past few years has been replaced by a quiet home wedding, which does not lend itself to long descriptions. "And why have a home wedding?" some people ask. "Wasn't the old way the best?"

These fashionables who have planned and executed the change have many reasons for it. In the first place they say a home wedding is so much more sacred. One is inclined to ask them why they did not think of that long ago, before Mrs. So and So or Mrs. Somebody Else thought of it. Why didn't they have a plain home wedding when their first daughter was married?

Why was the church so much better than it is now? Not that it would do any good to ask all these things, for the fashionable mother of the fashionable bride would look at you in a scornful manner if you did. "A home wedding is so simple and pretty, and my husband likes it so much better, really, we never could think of having another church wedding," she would repeat, much impressed with the words. All of these reasons are an avoidance of the point in question, which is simply that home weddings are now fashionable and are, therefore, generally observed. Within the past three months there have been thirty weddings among the ultra-fashionable of Chicago, and of this number but three were church functions.

But there is more to it than the mere fact that the home has succeeded the church as a place for such affairs. With the change the whole tone of the function has changed, the bride is no longer so elaborately gowned, the decorations are not so extravagant, the bridesmaids and groomsmen are not so numerous and the guest list is essentially much reduced. The wedding is still a pretty affair, but it is not so gorgeous and the efforts of the most imaginative society editor could not

make it so. One maid of honor and one bridesmaid are at most the attendants of the party and frequently the maid of honor alone accompanies the bride, while the groom has no attendant. The bride is gowned simply yet with all the adornments necessary to the proverbial bride and the costume of her maid is likewise simple.

In spite of all its apparent simplicity, the home wedding is not a small affair, 200 or 300 guests are frequently in attendance and the reception which follows is always largely attended. Take it all in all, the home function is no less brilliant, though less showy, than that of the church and even when it is announced as simply a family affair there is a reception afterward for friends. There is still the "Lohengrin" wedding march and the "Oh, Promise Me," played softly through the service, and there is always the bride, a happy and altogether charming person, who is after all the center of general interest. And there is still a wedding ring, although there is no page in white velvet to carry it on a cushion, and there is still a bride's bouquet to be thrown at her girl friends after the ceremony, although there is no small flower girl to hold it. And there is always the rice and the old slippers to be thrown at the departing couple, for happily the wedding journey is not as yet tabooed.

Home Wedding Is Better of Two.

Take it altogether, there are a great many people who will agree with the society matron that the home wedding is the better of the two, although it is noticeable that they are in every case the people who will be guests at the affair wherever it is held. Yet if there is to be a change in the style of marriages, and it has undoubtedly been deemed necessary, it is perhaps wisest that the wedding should be celebrated at home, "quietly," as the society columnists say, and in the old-fashioned way. The church wedding has held away for more than ten years and it certainly was getting to be a bore to have a family of daughters married in exactly the same way. The first could have a pink wedding and the second a blue one and so on to the end, but as for any further individuality it was simply impossible. A bride could be a bride after just so much fuss and flurry and running to the church and back again. There was a strict code for the arrangement of such an affair and no one dared to depart from it. For all these years society has been a slave to this code and when it did finally rebel it was to the great satisfaction and relief of numerous brides-to-be.

Beautiful Cora Livingston.

"Under the John Quincy Adams administration Cora Livingston was recognized as one of a trio of the foremost beauties of the United States," writes William Perrine in the Ladies' Home Journal. "During the period from 1820 to 1830, said Josiah Quincy who had a critical eye for pretty girls, 'who has not heard of the three great beauties of this country—Miss Cora Livingston of New Orleans, Miss Julia Dickinson of Troy and Miss Emily Marshall of Boston? Indeed, he observed that he would need to know how to paint the rose to describe Miss Cora.' 'In the first place,' he went on to say, 'she is not handsome; I mean not transcendently handsome, but she has a fine figure, a pretty face, dances well, and dresses to admiration. It is the height of the ton to be her admirer, and she is certainly the belle of this country.'"

"The beauty of Cora Livingston Barton had ripened early and it faded early. Long after the days of her supremacy as a belle were gone Josiah Quincy was taken to her home at Montgomery place, on the Hudson. He had not seen her for thirty years. 'Will you come into the house and see Mrs. Barton?' he was asked. He assented, and he saw an old lady in cap and dress of studied simplicity. 'You would not have known me,' she said, and he could not make reply. 'Come into the next room,' she then said, 'and you will see the Cora Livingston you knew in Washington.' There he saw the full-length portrait of the beauty to whom he had paid homage a generation before, and he could gaze upon it only in silence."

How Many.

Jonesby and his wife took the family tandem with them on their summer vacation, and in due time returned home, greatly refreshed by the outing.

"You are not as much tanned as I expected to see you, Jonesby," remarked Brownson, meeting him the next day after his return. "Tell me candidly how far you traveled on that tandem."

"Well," he replied, lowering his voice, "I have hired a boy to turn the front wheel just I'll look at the cyclometer and tell you exactly how many miles we made on it."

Church Weddings Are Now Out of Date.

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Now that it is not only proper but proper to have one's wedding at home and to have it a simple, unpretentious affair, the ordeal is no longer so trying. The preparation and celebration of her wedding will not leave the bride in a state of nervous collapse and her entire family exhausted. The last of the church weddings were eight-day wonders for splendor and no one would have dared to outdo them. They had worked themselves out of novelty as a means of display and it only remained to repeat the wonders that had already been accomplished. The home wedding is a kindly respite from these shows and a respite for which both society and the newspaper reading public is thankful.

PROVED TO BE FORGERIES.

Tanagra Figurines in the Boston Museum Are Fake Imitations.

The discovery that twenty-five of the twenty-eight Tanagra figurines in the Boston art museum are forgeries has attracted much attention from artists and art critics, largely because the Boston figurines were the best specimens of the peculiar Tanagra pottery in this country and have been widely copied, cheap imitations of some of them being found in the shop of almost every dealer in art goods and bric-a-brac. The collection has been valued at \$30,000 and was given to the museum in 1879 by Thomas Appleton, whose authority on art subjects was so great that the genuineness of his gift was never questioned. It is not believed that Mr. Appleton knew that the figurines were forgeries, as the museum judges at the Louvre, at Berlin and New York were also deceived by forged figurines made by the same persons who are now known to have faked the Appleton pieces.

The first intimation that the Boston figurines were forgeries was the statement of John Marshall, an English authority, that he believed them to be spurious. Later a Greek shopkeeper from New York told the museum authorities that the figurines were part of a lot made in Athens in 1874, and that he knew the maker. He produced proof that fifteen of the men engaged in the manufacture of the fictitious figures were now in prison for the offense. Curator Robinson of the museum, after hearing the Greek's story, recognized the man named as the principal maker of the forgeries as one known to him for similar work in other lines. The man is now dead. To the credit of the museum authorities, they at once decided

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LET US ALL LAUGH.

JOKES FROM THE PENS OF VARIOUS HUMORISTS.

Pleasant Incidents Occurring