

A Deed of Separation.

It is usual, I believe," he said, "before dissolving partnership to take accounts. Let us see what each brought into the firm."

"You begin," she answered. "I brought fair ability, energy, ambition, a decent position, means of comfortable life and an unblemished name. You said I wasn't a bad sort, and more than all, I brought deep, true, passionate love."

Said the woman: "I brought beauty"—her statement was splendidly true—"youth, physical purity—to which you do not lay claim." He bowed. "Perhaps little else, for he was generous of you to marry the daughter of an undischarged bankrupt."

"What have we got out of our marriage?" continued the husband. "Let us speak. Of course the honeymoon was a failure. Poets and novelists—he spoke bitterly—"tell wickd falsehoods about honeymoons. They are never wholly happy, unless, perhaps, when it's the wife's second honeymoon. After that, three months of exquisite, almost mad joy, then four months of happiness, followed by three of contentment, ending in a year of gradually increasing misery."

"Of course the honeymoon was a failure," she answered. "The next three months were happy, the following four not bad, the subsequent three indifferent, and the year was intolerable. You got more out of the business than I, for you put more in. Alas, I had not the mind love's capital, and yet—"

"And yet," interrupted the man, misunderstanding, "you have wasted that capital, and the beautiful mad love has gone, and I, who once would have died for you—more than that, would have lived disgracefully for you—am content to dissolve partnership, willing that we should part as friends."

"Content? William?" she asked. "Tell me, what do you regret most?"

"I regret my bankruptcy," he said. "I began our partnership with what I thought a splendid, inexhaustible fund of love. I look back to moments of happiness beyond description, and now I am insolvent in love. After all, I believe, I continued, with a pleasant, manly smile, "I believe that it is better to have loved and lost, even if it is the loss and not the sweetheart that one has lost. Do you regret nothing? What elings to your mind?"

She shook her head. "Come, you should tell me. There, on the table near you is the deed of dissolution, the separation deed—it hasn't even been engrossed on parchment, but is printed on paper. At the end are two seals. We execute the dissolution deed by putting our fingers on the seals. The partnership was executed with our lips. In a quarter of an hour, Mr. Hawkins, the lawyer, will be here to witness the execution. Tell me."

She shook her head again—her splendid head, regular in feature, delightful in complexion, crowned with gorgeous auburn hair, illumined by deep, large, violet eyes.

"You regret nothing?"

With a sigh she answered: "I regret that you have cast your pearls before me. I regret that I have misprized and lost your love: that I gave you little in return. I regret that my very inability to return your love truly has irritated me by making me feel your debt; that feeling of irritation has made you miserable and me miserable, too."

"I did not use the word regret quite in that sense," he answered. "I meant is there nothing you look back to of happiness that yet lives in your memory?"

She put down the fan that had fluttered in her tender hands, and, with half a smile, half a blush, she answered, "There was one thing, one moment, that I regret."

He rose and walked up and down the daintily furnished room, everything in which was a note in a dead love story. "A year ago today we were at Etaples, you recollect?"

"It was for economy I went because it was ridiculously cheap and very pretty and I hated Boulogne."

"I remember how we wandered about, how, alas, we quarreled in the pine woods, or, to be exact, I quarreled and you suffered, and the splendid seashore, where I said bitter things, because my friends were at Trouville and I at the little quiet Paris Plage, and you were sad and silent."

"My dear," he interrupted, "I was greatly to blame."

"Hush! You must not interrupt. Then one day we took a boat—a clumsy boat—and sailed out. I didn't care, you didn't care—what happened. We had quarreled, or, rather, I, at lunch, said harsh things."

"My dear," he interrupted, "there were faults on both sides. They rendered life intolerable and love impossible, but—"

"Hush. We rowed out. You had the sculls and I steered—at least I lay in the stern and spashed the waves with my hands—the hands you used to kiss so often."

She paused to look at the hands—firm; plump and white and decked with rings of curious workmanship. He, too, looked at them and sighed. She sighed.

"But out we went. Then the skies became darker, the water darkened, too, and grew rough and you tried to turn. We were far out from shore. You must have been looking at me instead of the land, or you would have seen that we were floating fast in a current. Oh, you looked splendid! Your thin jersey showed the lines of your strong, supple body, the muscles of your arms and chest rose superbly, and your manly face, flushed and firm, fascinated me."

The man smiled, half scornfully, "You pulled hard, and I don't think I was frightened. I didn't care what happened. Then the rotten oar cracked, and you bound it round with your handkerchiefs, but it still was weak, so you tore off a long strip of my petticoat to use it with, and we drifted, drifted. When at last you tried again to turn, the oar broke and the blade fell into the sea. You came to me, to the stern, and

took the tiller from my hands. You put your arm around my waist and said: 'Don't be afraid, dear wife! I knew we were drifting out to open sea, to storm and death, and was aware that you knew it. 'Don't be afraid, little wife,' you said, and suddenly you put your arm around my neck."

"I remember."

"Yes, I know: Let me go on. You brought my face to yours and laid your lips on mine. Oh, that kiss—that kiss! It still stings on my lips. In it I felt the depth of your love. I felt that I loved you, felt that we were man and wife, and the only beings alive on land or sea. That kiss is what I regret—that kiss, the one moment of rapture in my life."

She paused.

"I remember."

"Why did that foolish steamer save us? I could have died there, happy in your arms—quite happy."

"Quite happy?"

"Yes, quite. To think that we quarreled within a week—at least I did—and things went worse than ever afterward! What are we women made of? The old song is wrong, we are made of gall and wormwood and marble. To think that we are here, and that paper lies there! You've acted handsomely, allowing me more than half your income and letting me keep the flat."

"Do you think I could live in it after you had gone?" he answered, with a break in his voice. "There's nothing in that does not speak of you. It's a graveyard of memories."

She looked at him over the fan and saw tears in his eyes. Then she rose and walked across the room.

"Herbert," she said, in a timid voice, "it is 4 o'clock. He'll be here in five minutes to see the deed executed."

The man bowed his head and hid his face in his hands.

She took out her handkerchief, a ridiculous bit of lace and lawn, and touched her eyes.

"Herbert, to-morrow is just one year after that day. The night train starts at 8 o'clock. If we went to Etaples we might find—might find—that kiss again."

"They both took hold of the deed and tore it into two pieces. 'It is a new way,' he observed, 'of executing deeds of separation.'—From After Dinner.

Having Fifty Years Ago.

At the present time, when so much of public attention is being directed to having at college and in government academies, the following extract from a letter written over half a century ago will be of interest. The writer was not at the college when inditing the epistle. He says:

"I had a letter from—the other day—they are having great times at Yale playing the fresh, etc. That business is carried on to a great extent here. Many of the poor devils have been ducked under the windows a dozen times, etc., etc. The greatest sport is to break into their rooms at midnight (a whole party of sops at a time), make the scart fellow get up, mount the table in his shirt sleeves, answer questions in geography, arithmetic, Latin grammar, etc. (the simplest possible, so as to be suited to a freshman's comprehension), read a little Greek, and then, what is the greatest trial, declaim. If he refuses to comply he receives a shower from his water pail until he submits. If he answers well he is highly complimented and dattered and politely bid good-night."

Not Second Night.

In happenings that savor of the supernatural, there is often less rather than more than "dreamt of in our philosophy."

In the English county of Wiltshire there lived a woman whose deceased husband had been a pig-dealer. After his death it was her habit to remark to chance visitors, without looking out of the window:

"That's a nice lot of young pigs, those."

"Where?" the person present was sure to ask.

"Comin' down the road," was the invariable reply. "They're in a cart, and what's more, there's a fine fat sow among 'em."

And it would not be long before a cart would appear, and in it a litter of pigs, and among them the sow which the woman had perceived at such a distance up the road. One day a visitor who saw in this exhibition an evidence of second sight, exclaimed:

"How do you do it? It is simply wonderful!"

"'Taint no miracle," was the modest reply. "I've just got my ear trained to pigs—that's all."

Hamlet's Grave.

Everywhere the vandals are; but, on the whole, says Jacob A. Rile in the Century, I rather think that Elsinore has turned the tables on them. Hamlet being dead, there had to be a Hamlet's grave, of course. The English tourists demanded it, and in due course of time there appeared a mound on the bluff, marked with a plain granite shaft that bore the name of the melancholy Dane. The relic-hunters chipped it to pieces in one brief season. The hotel-keepers provided another, and it went the same way. When last I stood at Hamlet's grave I beheld it a mighty heap of stones and slag, several cart-loads. My friend, one of the solid citizens of the town, nodded knowingly at my look of amazement.

"We caught up with them at last," he said. "We just have enough carted out from the glass-works every year to fill up the holes they made the season before; then let them go ahead. Want to go and look at Ophelia's spring?"

When a woman goes away to visit for a long period, and comes home in a few days to "surprise" her husband, people wonder if she really got homesick, or wanted to catch him at something.

If you want to abuse somebody, abuse a mail carrier. The government does not allow them to talk back.

Heat Growing in the Argentine Republic

NOT many years ago wise men said that grain could never be grown to any extent in the Argentine Republic. The country was then importing millions of dollars' worth of wheat every year, and the farmers who were pasturing stock on what are now the principal wheat fields were eating flour shipped from the United States and Chili. To-day the Argentine has to a large extent the wheat trade of South America, and is shipping wheat to Europe. It plants millions of acres every year and it produces from thirty to eighty million bushels a season according to the weather and to the invasions of locusts. When the Argentine has a good crop the prices of wheat in the European markets are affected and our farmers often get less for their wheat in consequence. In the past year or so four million bushels have been springing up and the Argentine has now more than 500 flour mills, many of which use machinery imported from the United States. The grain-producing area of the Argentine increases every year.

In the United States the average yield of wheat per acre, taking the whole country, is from twelve to thirteen bushels. That of the Argentine is not over ten. In England, where the soil is more carefully studied and cared for, the average is twenty-nine bushels per acre, in Holland twenty-five bushels and in France eighteen. The most of the wheat of the Argentine is raised by Italian immigrants, many of whom farm the land on shares. They do their work in the roughest and most slovenly way. Much of the wheat is sowed on the ground as it is first plowed, the grain being dropped among the clods. Other farmers drag brush over the field and some of the better farmers use the harrow. The plowing is done with bullocks, who drag the plows through the furrows by means of a yoke attached to their horns. The only idea of the man seems to be to get the wheat into the ground and then sit down and wait for the crop. The farmers do not seem to care for anything but their wheat crop. Most of them have no garden, nearest grocery and make annual settlements when they sell their wheat. Most



of them drink to excess, and few have any thought beyond this one crop. The result is that the failure of a crop means partial starvation.

The city of Rosario is the Chicago of South America. It is the chief wheat market of the Argentine Republic. It ships thousands of tons of wheat, corn and linseed every week. Rosario is situated on the Parana river about 200 miles by land from Buenos Ayres. It is 200 miles by water from that city and about as far inland from the Atlantic ocean as Pittsburg. Ocean steamers sail for 200 miles up the Rio de la Plata past Buenos Ayres into the mouth of the Parana, and then for about 300 miles up the river to Rosario. Rosario itself is one of the thriving towns of the Argentine. It was founded about 175 years ago, but wheat raising in the Argentine gave it a great boom, and within the last

ten years it has almost trebled its population. It has now about 150,000 people. It does a big wholesale and retail business, but the most of its money comes from wheat.

The wheat is barged on the farm. The cars carry it to the edge of the bluff, and Italian laborers take the bags and pitch them into chutes leading to the vessels. The bags fly down one after the other at the rate of several to the minute. At harvest time the wheat becomes congested at Rosario. The railroads have more than they can do to carry the crop, and almost all other traffic has to be suspended. The result is that the wheat is piled up in bags at the stations and left there until it can be shipped. There are no barns in the Argentine. The weather is such that the stock feeds out of doors the year around. There is no chance for the farmer to store his wheat in barns

and he has to rely upon the railroads for getting it to the markets. The wheat is carried to the cars from such farms as are far from the railroad in bullock carts, the wheels of which are about eight feet high. A load weighing several tons is balanced between a couple of these wheels, and from a dozen to sixteen bullocks are harnessed in front of it. In some few of the large farms modern machinery is used, and the threshing is commonly done with European or American threshers.

The Argentine is subject to droughts, and the crop rises and falls according to the weather. The worst thing, however, is the locusts. The pests that infest the Argentine are fully as bad as the locust plague with which the Lord afflicted Pharaoh. The only difference was that Pharaoh had his locusts for a few days, but the Argentine seems to be having them as a regular thing. The locusts are produced by the millions every year, and a swarm thinks nothing of a flight of 500 miles from its breeding ground through the heart of the wheat country. The locusts appear in great swarms, which often darken the sun if they fly between you and it. They light on everything green and begin eating. The branches of the trees bend down with their weight, and you can hear the snapping of their jaws as they crunch the leaves. They will clean the crops from the fields, eating the grain down to the ground. Sometimes they will take the green wheat from one side of the field and pass by that on the other, and they sometimes fly on and on for days over rich fields to feed on those beyond. The next swarm may eat that which is left.

This pest of the Argentine government has been spending large sums of money to get rid of them. The methods for exterminating them are many and costly. Thousands of dollars are spent every year to kill them. They are caught in traps of corrugated iron. They are scooped up with scrapers and killed; poisons are used, and the grass, plants and weeds are sprinkled with arsenic, kerosene and creosote. They are caught in bags, driven into ditches and are killed in all sorts of ways. In 1896 it is estimated that \$200,000,000 worth of wheat was destroyed by locusts in two states of the Argentine. This impoverished the farmers of those states, and the national government spent \$10,000,000 that year in giving them seed wheat. If the locusts are to come every year it will be a long time before the Argentine can have a serious, permanent effect upon the wheat market of the world.

Then comes the man who sells belts of every description, and parasol handles. Perhaps your next neighbor will have such a display of diamond necklaces as would justify you in supposing that the stock would make Tiffany choke with envy; but if you enter you will find yourself in an apartment in the wall which holds an iron safe, a two-by-four showcase and three chairs, and you will find that everything of value the owner has, except the clothes he wears, is in his window.

"So long as these shops are all crowded together, and so small, to shop in Paris is really much more convenient than in one of our large department stores at home, with the additional delight of having smiling, interested service. The proprietor himself enters in to your wants, and uses his quickness and intelligence to supply your demands. He may be, and very likely is, an American, but if your business spirit is like mine you will be perfectly willing to pay a little extra for politeness. It is a truth that I have brought home with me no article from Paris which does not carry with it pleasant recollections of the way I bought it. Can any woman who has shopped in America bring forward a similar statement?"

How One Firm Struck Oil.

A peculiar accident near Six Points, Ohio, recently gave an oil-producing firm visions of limitless wealth. This firm drilled a well on the Wakefield farm, near the village. All of the nitroglycerin shells were lowered safely into the well except the last one, which lodged within twenty-five feet of the surface, and was exploded in the efforts of the shooter to dislodge it. This was considered unfortunate, but to the amazement of the men the oil began to gush forth in the manner which promised to make it the biggest well in the history of the oil business. The flow was so strong that the derrick was almost instantly deluged from top to bottom, and it soon caught fire from the boiler and was burned to the ground.

The Buckeye Pipe Line Company's eight-inch line, through which 6,000 barrels of oil pass each day, suddenly shut down. The company stopped its pumps and started to make an investigation. Before many hours the shut-off had been traced to this well. They discovered that the well had been drilled almost on the line, which had been broken by the shot, and the oil was coming from the pipe line. This investigation ended the career of the greatest spouter in Northwestern Ohio.

China Rich in Coal Deposits.

China contains some of the richest coal deposits in the world. Last fall Professor Drake, of Tientsin, visited the coal fields in the province of Shan-shi, which were examined by Baron von Richthofen in 1870, and found that they are of immense extent. The coal area is said to be greater than that of Pennsylvania and the anthracite coal alone contained in these fields has been estimated at 630,000,000 tons. The Shansi formally in a horizontal position that its practicability has been suggested of running long lines of railroad tunnels through the beds so that the cars can be loaded in the mines all ready for distant transportation.

No lady should listen to the gossip of her servant girl, or repeat it, but nearly every lady does it.

Some men acquire that tired feeling from looking for an easy job.

DICKENS' OLD HOME.

Demolition of Tavistock House, in which He Lived Nine Years.

An interesting memorial of Charles Dickens is now in course of destruction by the house-breaker, says the London News. Tavistock House, Tavistock square, to which he removed on leaving Devonshire terrace in 1851, is being pulled down by the ground landlord, the Duke of Bedford. Up to the present the house, which was a handsome, substantial and well-kept building, remained externally just as Dickens left it in 1850, and as it stands in the engraving in Forster's "Life of Dickens." It has undergone some vicissitudes since Dickens' days. He sold it to Mr. Davis, a Jewish gentleman, of whom he said in a letter to Mr. Willis: "I must say that in all things the purchaser has behaved thoroughly well, and that I cannot call to mind any occasion when I have had money dealings with a Christian that have been so satisfactory, considerate and trusting."

Mr. Davis was succeeded by Mr. and Mrs. Weldon, with whom Gounod lived for some time, holding singing classes in the large drawing room. Of late years the house has been a Jew's college, and latterly has for some months been empty. It stands behind the northeast corner of Tavistock square, and, like its neighbor, Bedford house, which is also being dismantled, is too large for the neighborhood.

Dickens occupied the house for nine years. He bought it of his friend, Frank Stone, who had lived there several years. Dickens' house in Devonshire terrace had become too small for him, and his lease was falling in. Stone was also preparing a new house for himself, and moved his furniture into the Devonshire terrace house, that Dickens might carry out some changes in Tavistock house, which were planned by his brother-in-law, Henry Austin. Dickens and his family went to Broadstairs while these works were being carried out, and removed into Tavistock house in November. Mr. Forster tells us that "Black House" was begun in his new abode of Tavistock house, at the end of November, 1851.

In the first Twelfth Night in the new home the children's theatricals were being acted, and were renewed till the chief actors were children no longer. "The best of these performances," says Mr. Forster, "were 'Tom Thumt' and 'Fortunio,' in 1854 and 1855. Dickens now joining first in the revels and Mr. Clark Lemon bringing into it his own clever children and a very mountain of child-pleasing fun in himself." At a later period the schoolroom was turned into a theater, Clarkson Stanfield providing the scenery and Cooke, of Astley's, planning the seats. "You will be surprised at the look of the place," wrote Dickens. "It is no more like the schoolroom than it is like the sign of the Salvation Inn at Ambleside, in Westmoreland."

Dickens was overwhelmed with requests from friends to see the play. "My audience is now ninety-three," he wrote, in despair, "and at least ten will neither hear nor see." So the play was continued for several nights. After he acquired Gadshill place, and made it a temporary summer residence, he still regarded Tavistock house not only as his London residence, but as his home. It continued to be his permanent family abode till 1859, when he sold it and finally removed to Gadshill. His nine years' occupancy of it has made it an object of much interest, and American admirers especially have constantly sought it out.

The Hen's Delusion.

Ephraim Knox lived in the center of his native village, and his hens wandered here and there at their own sweet will, to the frequent annoyance of his neighbors. Ephraim, however, was no respecter of persons, and considered his hens "as good as anybody," and desirable visitors.

When it was decided that the town library should be built in a vacant lot "next door to him," Ephraim was filled with pride and joy, and he and his hens superintended operations from the first.

Ephraim's brother Seth was not devoted to the hen. One day he was passing the site of the library with a friend and stopped to view the progress of affairs. Ephraim's hens were there, cackling away as if their lives depended on it. Seth looked at them in disgust.

"What in the world are those hens making such a noise for, do you suppose? There ain't any grain in there," said the friend.

"Well," remarked Seth, dryly, "they've had the oversight of 'most everything in town. You know the cornerstone of the building was laid yesterday, and I calculate that speckled hen over there thinks she laid it!"

A Trick of the Trade.

"I—I think I would like to look at a diamond ring," said the young man as the jeweler came forward.

"Exactly, sir. A diamond ring for a lady?"

"Yes."

"A young lady?"

"Yes."

"A young lady to whom you are engaged?"

"What's the difference whether I'm engaged to her or not?" asked the customer, with considerable tartness.

"A great deal, sir. You intend this ring for a Christmas present, probably?"

"I probably do."

"Very well. We have diamond rings for \$25 and diamond rings for \$50, \$75, and \$100. If not actually engaged to the girl, take a \$25 ring, and when she brings it in here to find out the cost we'll let \$50 worth for your benefit. If really engaged, take a higher price, and you can pawn it for two-thirds of its value after marriage. Now, then, make your selection.—Washington Post.

No Backbiter.

Mr. Johnson—Did you remark at the club night that I looked like a lobster, huh?

Mr. Jackson—No, huh. I am no backbiter, huh. If I wished to cast any aspersions upon the lobster family I should go right to a fish market and do it straight to the face, huh. Dat's my style, huh—Puck.

If a man can't find work in a year, he might as well quit looking.