

The Masked Lady.

It was the carnival season in Paris, and Colonel Eugene Merville, an attaché of the great Napoleon's staff, who had won his way to distinction with his own saber, found himself at the masked ball in the French Opera House.

Through in so mixed an assembly, still there was a dignity and reserve in the manner of the white domino that rather repulsed the idea of a familiar address, and it was some time before the young soldier found courage to speak to her.

Some alarm being given there was a violent rush of the throng towards the door, where, unless assisted, the lady would have materially suffered.

"Ah, lady, pray raise that mask, and reveal to me the charms of feature that must accompany so sweet a voice and so graceful a form as you possess."

"You would, perhaps, be disappointed. No, I am sure not."

"Are you so very confident?" "Yes, I feel that you are beautiful. It cannot be otherwise."

"Don't be too sure of that," said the domino. "Have you never heard of the Irish poet Moore's story of the Veiled Prophet of Khorassan—how, when he disclosed his countenance, his hideous aspect killed his beloved one? How do you know that I shall not turn out a veiled prophet of Khorassan?"

"Ah, lady, your every word convinces me to the contrary," replied the enraptured soldier, whose heart began to feel as it had never felt before; he was already in love.

She eludes his efforts at discovery, but permits him to hand her by her carriage which drives off in the darkness, and she throws herself upon his fleetest horse, he is unable to overtake her.

The young French Colonel becomes moody; he has lost his heart, and knows not what to do. He wanders hither and thither, shuns his former places of amusement, avoids his military companions, and in short, is as miserable as a lover can well be, thus disappointed.

One night, just after he had left his hotel on foot, a figure, muffled to the very ears stopped him.

"Well, monsieur, what would you with me?" asked the soldier.

"You would know the name of the white domino?" was the reply.

"I would, indeed," replied the officer.

"How can it be done?" "To the end of the earth if it will bring me to her."

"But you must be blindfolded." "Very well."

"Step into this vehicle." "I am at your command."

And away rattled the youthful soldier and his strange companion. "This may be a trick," reasoned Eugene Merville, "but I have no fear of personal violence. I am armed with this trusty sabre, and can take care of myself." But there was no cause for fear, since he soon found the vehicle stopped, and he was led blindfolded, into the house.

When the bandage was removed from his eyes, he found himself in a richly furnished boudoir, and before him stood the domino, just as he met her at the masked ball.

To fall upon his knees and tell her how much he thought of her since their separation, that his thoughts had never left her, that he loved her devotedly, was as natural as to breathe, and he did so, gallantly and sincerely.

"Shall I believe all you say?" "Lady, let me prove it by any test you may put upon me."

"Know, then, that the feelings you avow are mutual. Nay, unless your arm from my waist. I have something more to say."

"Talk on forever, lady! Your voice is music to my heart and ears."

"Would you marry me, knowing no more of me than you do now?" "Yes, if you were to go to the very altar marked!" was the reply.

"Then I will test you." "How, lady?"

"For one year be faithful to the love you have professed, and I will be yours—as truly as heaven shall spare my life."

"O, cruel suspense!" "You demand?"

"Nay, lady, I shall fulfill your injunctions as I promised."

"At the expiration of a year, you do not hear from me, then the contract shall be null and void. Take this half ring, she continued, "and when I supply the broken portion it will be yours."

He kissed the little emblem, swore again and again to be faithful, and pressing her hands to his lips, bade her adieu.

He was conducted away as mysteriously as he had been brought thither, nor could he by any possible means discover where he had been, his companion rejecting all bribes, and even refusing to answer the simplest questions.

Months roll on. Colonel Merville is true to his vow, and happy in the anticipation of love. Suddenly he was ordered on an embassy to Vienna, the president of all the European capitals, about the time Napoleon was planning to marry the Archduchess Maria Louise. The young colonel is handsome, manly, and already distinguished in arms, and becomes at once a great favorite at court, every effort being made by the women to captivate him, but in vain; he is constant and true to his vow.

But his heart was not made of stone, the very fact that he had entertained such tender feelings of the white domino had doubtless made him more susceptible than before.

At last he met the young Baroness Carolina Von Waldroff, and in spite of his vows she captivates him, and he secretly craves the engagement he had so blindly made at Paris. She seems to wonder at what she believes his devotion; and yet the distance he maintains! The truth was, that his sense of honor was so great, that though he felt that the love of the young baroness, and even that she returned his affection, still he had given his word, and it was sacred.

The satin domino is no longer the idea of his heart, but assumes the most repulsive form in his imagination, and becomes, in place of his good angel, his evil genius.

Well, time rolls on, he is to return in a few days, it is once more the carnival season, and in Vienna, too, that gay city. He joins in the festivities of the masked ball, and wonder fills his brain, when about the middle of the evening the white domino steals before him, in the same white satin dress he had seen her wear a year before at the French Opera House in Paris. Was it not a fancy?

"I come, Colonel Eugene Merville, to hold you to your promise," she said, laying her hand lightly upon his arm.

"Is this a reality or a dream?" asked the amazed soldier.

"Come, follow me, and you shall see that it is a reality," continued the mask, pleasantly.

"Have you been faithful to your promise?" asked the domino, as they retired into a saloon.

"Most truly in act, but alas, I fear not in heart!"

"Indeed!" "It is too true, lady, that I have seen and loved another, though my vow to you has kept me from saying so to her."

"And who is it that you thus love?" "I will be frank with you and you will keep my secret?"

"Most religiously."

"It is the Baroness Von Waldroff," he said, with a sigh.

"Nevertheless, I must hold you to your promise. Here is the other half of the ring; can you produce its mate?"

"Here it is," said Eugene Merville.

"Then I, too, keep my promise!" said the domino, raising her mask, and showing to his astonished view the face of the Baroness Von Waldroff!

She had seen and loved him for his manly spirit and character, and having found by inquiry that he was worthy of her love, she had managed this delicate intrigue, and had teased him, and now gave to him her wealth, title, and everything.

They were married with great pomp, and accompanied the Archduchess to Paris. Napoleon to crown the happiness of his favorite, made him at once general of division.

HOW TO HAVE A LOVING WIFE.—If you have a loving wife, be as gentle in your words after the marriage; treat her as you would wish a man to be treated as when a wife; don't make her maid of all work, and then ask her why she looks less tidy and neat than when you first knew her; don't buy cheap tough beef, and sell her because it does not come on the table "porter-house;" don't grumble about squalling babies, if you can't make up a "nursery;" and you remember that "baby" may take after papa in his disposition; don't smoke and chew tobacco and thus slobber your nerves; spend your temper, and make your breath nuisance, and then complain that your wife declines to kiss you. Go home joyous and cheerful to your wife and tell her the good news you have heard, and do not sit upon your hat and go off to the club or the lodge, and afterwards let her learn that you spent the evening at the opera, or at a fancy ball with Mrs. Dash. Love your wife, be patient; remember you are not perfect but try to be; let whisky, tobacco and vulgar company alone; spend your evenings with your wife, and live a decent Christian life, and your wife will be loving and true—if you did not marry a thoughtless beauty, without sense or real worth. If you did, who is to blame if you suffer the consequences.

YORK MASONS.—The brother of King Athelstan, Prince Edwin, being taught Masonry, and taking upon him the charge of Master Mason for the love he had to the said Craft, and the honorable principles whereon it is grounded, purchased a free charter of King Athelstan for the Mason; having a correction among themselves, as it was anciently expressed, or a freedom and power to regulate themselves, to amend what might happen amiss, and to hold a yearly communication and general assembly.

That accordingly Prince Edwin summoned all the Masons in the realm to meet him in congregation at York, who came and composed a general law for the love he had to the said Craft, and the honorable principles whereon it is grounded, purchased a free charter of King Athelstan for the Mason; having a correction among themselves, as it was anciently expressed, or a freedom and power to regulate themselves, to amend what might happen amiss, and to hold a yearly communication and general assembly.

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The eccentricities of editors would form a curious volume. It is possible that other classes of men may have as many distinctive marks, but the editor stamps himself so clearly in print that the observer has in him a first-class opportunity to get at some of his characteristics. Editors, too, lead so nervous and exciting an intellectual life that it is likely they really have more contradictions, whimsicalities and oddities than men in other walks of life. The writer has searched out a few of their peculiarities, and give them here with the assurance that all the examples given are genuine.

A noticeable feature in the profession is the names they often throw at each other. These expressions are often indulged in by the Southern and Western press, and from them pass, in the form of a two or three line paragraph, from Maine to California. Commencing with the comparatively mild expressions of "A Walking Nihilist," "An Ante-Mortem Dead-Beat," "An Old Sausage Cover," "A Disorganizing Malignant," or "An Illiterate Hedge-Priest," they often get on a little more steam, and come out with the bogus biography of a rival, with their heads in the clouds, or "A Mean Swindler," "An Editorial Corruptor," or "A Word About Live Carion."

Of late, editors do not seem to go so deeply into the business of calling each other very wicked names, yet we sometimes see such expressions as "Villainous Truck-and-Dicker Fellows," and that "Scoundrelly and Ridiculous Old Pudding Pan of Podunk." The following Paragraph in this vein, from a recent paper, was doubtless considered a triumph by its writer:

"The mass of condemned slum extracted from the Bowery street culvert at low water, packed into the shape of man, and placed in the editorial chair, amid the filth of the hotel in which the scavenger sheet in the hollow is printed, is shaking his carion paws at a party of ladies and gentlemen—who are so far his superiors that they would not soil their shoes by wiping them upon his filthy carion—because he did not get dead-head tickets to the entertainment now held at the Union Hall for the suffering poor."

It is surprising that we see lines like these:

"The season for editors to call each other 'mangy, smelking, mongrel whelps,' has opened in Indiana."

Or, like these:

"Editors are taking advantage of the coming state election to call each other by the endearing title 'Crooked-necked Old Wire-pulling Thieves and Bastards.'"

Sometimes the name-calling takes a much pleasanter vein, and by creating a laugh, appears less disgusting in the eyes of the reading public. One editor in Indiana stated that a rival paper was coming to town to start an opposition paper, was pretty good fellow but "parted his hair in the middle." Every man in the place who could leave his store went to the depot to see the new comer, but instead of seeing the spruce and dandified young man they expected, they saw an elderly and shabby gentleman who, as he raised his hat in honor of the crowd, they found to be as bald as a billiard ball. His hair was parted in the middle and the parting was four inches wide. The incident created such a laugh that the new publisher could not stand it, so he departed next day for "pastures new."

Editors often speak of themselves in a funny way. One would think by some of these expressions that they were made to fill out a column. For instance:

"Sometimes we feel like a vial of pepper sass, and then again like a molasses jug; never like a tar barrel."

Here is an example of refreshing frankness which does not often occur. The editor seems to have a just estimate of his ability:

"We esteem ourself better on a conundrum than a philosophical paragraph."

We find here and there a funny specimen of "the dun direct." An editor is always frankest when asking for money.

"Money is close, but not close enough to reach. Nobby gets what is due them. We doubt if even the devil gets his dues."

Here is one with a little more steam on a subscription:

"Old fence rails wanted at this office on subscription."

And this is decisive enough:

"No paper next week, unless something turns up to raise some money."

But Mr. J. J. Barton, who signs himself "defunct publisher of the New Era," at Carbondale, Ill., takes the palm. He presents to his ex-patrons with a portrait exhibiting his sadly attenuated proportions, and says:

"I want you to liquidate! I've not had a square meal, a drink of good whiskey, nor a decent chew of tobacco for so long a time that I have forgotten how they taste. I have 'boarded round' so long that my acquaintances have shook me. The store-keepers smile in my face when I ask trust for a peck of potatoes or a pound of codfish. My wife is growing cross and jaws me fearfully. My children are crying for bread. I have made up my mind that I can't stand this sort of thing any longer. Money I must have. If you do not shell out by the 1st of April, I'm blasted if I don't sue you, that's all!"

On love matters and affairs which concern the sex generally the country editor is almost always as gentle as possible. But once in a while his expressions show him to be a little discontented with the sex. This man has doubtless been jilted:

"This sweet to court, But oh! how bitter To Court a girl And then not get her."

Here is one who appears to be a little mixed in his sentiments:

"The statements that tight lacing saves the country \$2,000,000 annually in board alone, is a villainous and habitual lie. I know a girl who laces so tight that my arm will go around her twice and lap over clear to the elbow, and one wouldn't think to look at her that she could eat anything except soup, but she has got an appetite like a cross old sow, and she moves a swath at the table like a self-raising reaper."

This chap takes to see the dear things suffer with toothache:

"Pulverized alum and common salt

put on a piece cotton and chucked into a hollow tooth will shut up its aching so quick that you will want to hug us for telling you; but you cannot, unless you have a certificate of a good moral character, are a married woman, and not over twenty five.

Another has been greatly shocked as follows:

"They sent home with our washing yesterday a thing that branches off in two ways a little below the top like a railway junction, and has puckered frills edged with 'tutting' on each end of the divide. We don't know what it is, and we're a poor, friendless man, with only our virtue, and none but villains would seek to injure that."

Once in a while, even a country editor will improve the sex,—as the man in Michigan, who kept as a standing heading for marriages, "Melancholy Accidents."

In obituaries we have seen eccentricities enough to make an article of themselves. As they are mostly of the same nature, however, we will give but two as samples:

"John Garder was blind of an eye, and in a moment of confusion he stepped out of a receiving and discharging door in one of our warehouses into the ineffable glories of the celestial sphere."

The reader will perhaps remember the celebrated notice already in print: "While we cannot undertake to write obituary notices *gratis*, we will make those of our friends with pleasure," and almost every one has seen specimens like the following:

"A New Hampshire paper, announcing the death of a man, says: 'He leaves a wife and child by a former husband.'"

In requiems of departed cotemporary sheets, editors are sometimes eccentric. Here is a single example:

"Leaf by leaf the roses fall, While the daisies in the garden run dry; One by one beyond a-r-r-r, Mushroom papers drop and die."

While giving poetry, we may as well insert a curious specimen of brotherly love (?) clipped from a Western paper:

"Free-love!" We love him, we love him, and who shall dare To chide us for laughing Sam, Sinclair.

On certain occasions, as, for instance, when the paper has gone to press just too soon to insert a leader containing important news, the country editor will get over the difficulty in a very ingenious manner. Here is a simple leader from a Republican paper, expressing the editor's regret at the result of a recent election:

"New Hampshire has gone Democratic."

"Could a double-leaded article have said more?"

A late exchange says this of an equally eccentric election notice:

"The Norwich Bulletin heads its Connecticut election returns with the sombre likeness of a solemn owl, and gives as a multiplex to the whole, the likeness of a drooping noser."

From time immemorial editors seem to have had a fancy for fish stories, and in this country particularly it is not unrequently the case that a half dozen writers will take up the quill to surpass the exaggerated tales of their brother editors. The public are often amused at these tribulations of skill, but after three or four exhibitions of it something new is necessary. Here is the latest attempt. The New Orleans Times commenced:

"A bar round in our city has a peripatetic oyster of the Barataria breed, which is thoroughly domesticated, and wanders all over the lower part of the house, but never attempts, however, to mount the stairs."

And this is the response from the Bangor Whip.

"It is stated that one of our fish dealers has a tame clam, which he has taught to come at his whistle and follow him in the house. The clam will stand on his hind legs and beg, or lie down at the counter in our city, and will sing, whistle, and count as high as three, and if reports are true, is a most remarkable example of what patience will accomplish."

"As we have stated, no attempt has been made to even allude to all peculiarities in editors, but these few chance examples are enough to show that they are fearfully and wonderfully made."

Perhaps in closing, we cannot do better than to give an extract by one of ourselves. It is a parable in itself:

"Those Editors.—A Californian is puzzled to know how to get ahead of 'those editors.' He says that an effort to deny them information is certain to result in wholesale publication of what ought not to be known. Whenever they are sued for libel the plaintiff in the case gets whipped. Whenever a fellow goes to their with a horse-whip, he knows his is himself—that is, how the horse-whip is. If they are attacked through the papers, they invariably get in the last lick; and if they are remunerated with the affair is reported at length as one of those interviews. But he flatters himself that after all he knows how to get ahead of 'those editors.' He says that a stip of paper inscribed with the ten commandments over the sally-port of a hornet's nest, and leave the concert on the editor's desk. The villain can't stand the delectable; he can't see it without dropping everything, and methodically violating each separate injunction; he is as certain to punch his fist through that paper as was Ulysses to uncoil his sack of stings." If his man wants to die, he had better try the thing on; that's all."

—American Newspaper Reporter.

CRAZY BONES.—The number of bones broken in the English lunatic asylums has given occasion for a curious scientific inquiry, and it is now asserted that the ribs of crazy folks are more brittle than the ribs of the sane. Dr. Heardon instituted an examination of the bones of twenty patients who died in the Cornwall county asylum. In nine of these cases, "the very framework of the chest was found to be in an abnormal and diseased state." In two instances the chest-bone broke in removing it, and generally the bones were so stronger than stout card-board. In one case the surface bone was so spongy and soft that it was easily crumbled up between the fingers. Some of the ribs were easily cut with a common knife, there being, through the action of the diseased brain a wasting away of the phosphates.

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