

A SUMMER'S FOLLY.

BY ETHELIND RAY.

From the Portland Telegram.

A soft, pale, opaline sky, with snow white clouds floating over it; gold and crimson waves lingering amongst the blue at the top of the mountains behind which the sun had just sank peacefully to rest; crickets and katydids chirping and contradicting each other, (and perhaps making love—who knows?) in the tall, green grass; a far-away sweet-voiced robin trilling in the woodland; a sweet, fresh breeze kissing the flowers and carrying their fragrance up to the wide, cool piazza on which Constance Arlington sat with her hands clasped idly over her head, and her dreamy, dark eyes wandering over the peaceful scene before her. It was all so different from the restless, exciting life in her city home, where all her hours were passed in gay, fashionable pleasures and idle flirtations.

Here, in this quiet, cool, old-fashioned farm-house, she had spent one short, peaceful, quiet, blissful summer among the roses and butterflies, and she was thinking it all over this evening as she sat here alone listening to the katydids. In a few moments the farm laborers would be going home their day's hard toil, and behind them, last of all, would come their young overseer, the owner of all these broad lands, and of this house Laurence Devon—with his broad, straw hat pushed back from his white brow and waving hair, and the light of a new-found happiness shining in his honest blue eyes.

Constance knew very well just how he would look, and what song he would be singing—"Annie Laurie"—his favorite song. He was her cousin, her second or third cousin, but she had never seen him until she came here this summer for her health, and now, in one short summer he had fallen in love with her.

Presently the farm laborers came along, and scarcely had they disappeared when another step rang along the hard road, the gate clicked loudly and Laurence Devon came up the walk.

"I am a little early this evening," he said, sitting down on the steps and fanning himself with his broad hat. "Would you like to take a boat ride after supper, Connie?"

How sweetly her name sounded from his lips; it had never sounded half so pretty before.

"I would like nothing better," she answered with a little sigh, as she glanced down at the tranquil river flowing at the side of the lawn. "It will be moonlight, too, Laurence!"

A young girl leaning out of the window just above them, heard the words, and she drew back with burning cheeks. "Moonlight!" she muttered bitterly. "Ah, yes! it used to be moonlight for me to go boat riding and to take long walks with Laurence Devon; he used to sit on the steps with me; and when over the fields of golden wheat the dear old song of 'Annie Laurie' floated to my ears, I knew he was thinking of me; but now—and the red lips were pressed tightly together for a moment—"she has come and it is all changed. O, God! my cross is heavy, yet help me to bear it, in Thine own good time, and Thine own good way, it is removed!"

The girl who uttered this passionate prayer was young, and though not pretty she had a pure, sweet, attractive face; she was a pure, sweet, attractive girl; one who could be loved and trusted for herself alone, for the true, noble soul, that looked out of her eyes.

It was just as she said. Laurence Devon had once been her lover; her father's farm adjoined his, and he had been wont to spend a great many of his summer evenings on farmer Goodwin's good porch, listening to Mary's sweet cheery voice, or silently watching her as she fitted about her household duties and thinking to himself what a bright, lovable little thing she was, and how her presence would lighten any home. "Even his," he added to himself sometimes, with a little smile. And yet he had never seriously thought of asking Mary to be his wife; marriage was a far off bliss in the future to Laurence Devon until Constance Arlington came, with her rare and radiant beauty, her wonderful toilets, milk-white hands that did not even understand arranging the soft, golden hair which had always been the work of a maid.

Laurence, not being a "man of the world," did not know that his jewels alone were worth more than his whole farm—his home, all he had in the world. And so he learned to love her with a strong, pure, passionate love—such as men only know once in their lifetime; and when the dear old song of "Annie Laurie" floated across the fields his thoughts wandered to Constance, and in imagination, he could see her lying in a hammock out under the trees, in her cool, white wrapper and delicate lace, lying the afternoon away, and longing for the coolness and fragrance of evening; and then his loyal heart would throbb more swiftly and lightly in his bosom, and his eyes would glance often and impatiently at the sinking sun.

In the afternoon of which we write, Mary had come over to assist Laurence's sister with some sewing, and remained alone while the latter was preparing supper, as she did not particularly enjoy Miss Arlington's society. The flush died out of her face as she listened to the conversation on the veranda and her eyes filled with tears as she remembered the sweet dreams that had once visited her, but which had alas! died with the coming of summer! It seemed so hard that this beautiful, innocent girl who could count her city lovers by the score, who had every thing wealth could buy—who had nothing to do but flirt and enjoy herself—should come, and scarcely with an effort take one from her true heart she had ever cared for, the only prize she had ever coveted, and only for amusement, only for a pleasant way of passing the summer.

The supper-bell rang, and she went down, pale and quiet as she always was now.

"You look very weary, Miss Goodwin," said Constance, with well-bred interest. "I hope Mabel has not made you sew too much. I would have offered to help you, but to tell the truth—with a frank little smile that was truly fascinating—"I never sewed a stitch in my life, and was afraid to try."

"We did not need any assistance," said Mary, coldly. "Mabel and I were taught to depend upon ourselves."

Miss Arlington favored her with a look of quiet surprise, as though the sarcasm of the remark was beneath contempt, and turning with superb indifference, made some careless remark to Laurence.

Alone in her room, a few minutes later, Constance threw herself in a chair by the open window, and leaning her head on her hands, looked thoughtfully out into the twilight. She was trying to make a decision which she felt should be made this very night. If she went boat-riding with Laurence she knew he would ask her the question that was always trembling on his lips, and which she dreaded to hear, because she knew not how to answer it. She loved him—ah! God alone knew how passionately—but how could she marry him? How could she leave her home, her luxurious life, the fashionable city, and settle down as a common farmer's wife?—do her own sewing, live cheaply, dress plainly, and perhaps raise a large family of children to wear out her life—having no more balls, or conquests, or flirtations to lend excitement or pleasure to her life.

For the twentieth time she read and re-read the letter she had received that evening from a friend in the city.

"MY DEAR CONSTANCE: Why don't you come home? We are all dying to see you, and we have waited so long our patience is all worn out, and we have decided that you must have fallen in love with some country fellow whom you are teaching a few accomplishments before daring to brave our sarcasm by introducing him. If our surmise is correct, I give you fair warning we shall give you the 'cut direct,' so take heed. But, meanwhile, my dear girl, you are losing your very best chance. Jack Strzychler is very devoted to that pretty Miss Wheeler, and it is rumored that they are engaged! *Adieu*, and do you give my love to the country fellow."

"Good by, sweetheart," muttered Constance, with a little sob, as she folded her letter, "I must, oh! Laurie, my darling, I must give you up. Jack Strzychler is waiting for my answer; if I say no, he will marry Georgia Wheeler, and I must have wealth and power. Farewell, dear love, farewell sweet blissful dreams!"

Ten minutes later, she joined Laurence on the piazza, as calmly, indolently graceful as usual, her costly lace shawl thrown over her shoulders and half hiding the jewels flashing on her bosom. No one would have guessed that she had just made the greatest decision of her life—just cast from her the sweetest, truest happiness she had ever known.

Out on the bosom of the peaceful, mellifluous river, with the stars smiling softly down, and the katydids gaily chirping as if in mockery, Laurence Devon tenderly told his love, and was rejected. And Constance Arlington told him the truth—told him that she loved him better than life itself—that the sweetest dream of her life had ended, and yet she was so weak, so foolish, so cowardly she could not say yes.

One moment she was clasped to the truest heart that had ever beat for her; one long, almost painful passionate kiss was pressed on her lips, and then—her dream was broken.

One sweet summer evening, ten years later, a carriage drove slowly along the river road by the Devon farm, and a pale, sad-faced woman leaned from the window, and looked wearily over the scene—it is our friend Constance—now Mrs. Strzychler.

The fields were golden with grain, the fragrance of flowers floated in the window, the river flowed along its green banks, and the crickets and katydids chirped in the green grass; from far over the fields of golden grain floated an old familiar song—"Annie Laurie"—and Constance listened to it as she had listened ten years before, and a look of passionate longing and bitter regret came into her face.

It was not sinful to remember that dead summer—that dear happy time—now, for her husband was dead and she was free.

Free! Ah! She wondered if her freedom had come too late. She was so tired of the world and its empty honors. If she could only find one true heart—the one she had thrown away long ago—how sweetly, how peacefully her life could glide here in this quiet home.

"What a weak, miserable fool I was," she said bitterly, as she left the carriage and went up the old familiar walk; "but oh! I have been punished enough; surely I am not too late. He loved me once; I know he loves me still."

A little boy with brown hair and sweet blue eyes was sitting on the piazza steps. "What is your name, dear?" Constance asked kindly.

"Con-stanti-us Devon," lisped the little fellow, wondering. "They call me Connie!"

Constance's face turned deathly white. "What is your father's name?" she asked.

"Laurie, mamma calls him; and mamma's name is Mary; but papa calls her Pet," said the child, sweetly.

Constance stooped and kissed the fair brow.

"For his father's sake," she murmured through her tears. And taking from her throat a locket containing her picture, she threw it over the child's head, and entering the carriage, drove away.

God pity the woman who will sacrifice love to wealth and power—her golden yoke will bear heavily upon her.

And this was the result of a "Summer's Folly."—*Literary Videlte.*

A JOKE ON AN ACTOR.—Mr. Sol Smith Russell, the actor who was in Oregon last winter, is the subject of a pleasant little story in *The Winsted* (Conn.) *Press*, which says that Mr. Russell has been spending a few weeks in Pine Meadow. Being given somewhat to sketching he went out one day and curled himself up comfortably on a rock beside the highway, and while engaged with his pencil was seen by a passer, who hastened to one of the selectmen of the town and reported that he had discovered the escaped lunatic from Middletown, for whose capture a reward had been offered. The selectman hastened to the spot and began to ply Russell with questions as to his birthplace, his business, his age, and so on, all of which questions were so lucidly answered that the official became convinced that his man was no lunatic. Russell returned to his lodgings and unconsciously turned the joke on the selectman by describing a visit he had just received from a lunatic who asked him all sorts of nonsensical questions.

ALL FOR A LADY'S HAND.

I was an artist. I was baptized Smith Jones. There was some little disagreement concerning my odd Christian name until he occurred to my mother the unhappy idea of adding to my surname her maiden patronym. This idea pleased my father exceedingly; he said it was "simple and unique." My mother was a person of considerable tact. Dear soul! she did not survive my infancy.

Smith Jones. Body of Bacchus! What a name for an artist! But I bore it stoically, although it frequently caused me a little mortification. At first I painted for mere amusement; ultimately I was compelled to resort to it as a source of maintenance.

My father had set his heart upon my marrying Estelle St. Clair, the daughter of his dearest friend. I had never seen the young lady in question, and, besides, had no notion of marrying. I looked upon marriage with horror, and fairly detested women. At the age of twenty one I was a confirmed bachelor. My father coaxed, threatened, scolded and implored, and finally, with more vehemence than good manners, I told him that Miss St. Clair might go to a very wicked place; and thereafter he was silent, and I congratulated myself that, becoming wearied, he had altogether abandoned his pet hobby. He died soon after our last interview on the subject, and when his will came to be opened, it was found that I was sole heir to his large fortune on condition that I would marry Miss St. Clair; but until I became her husband I could not touch a penny. Preferring independence and poverty to winning a wife for the sake of wealth and luxury—splendid misery—I began my career as a professional artist. In the beginning it was slow work, but persevering industry will accomplish wonders, and I soon found myself becoming quite a man of note.

An exhibition of paintings was held in the city in which I resided and I sent thither a painting which I had just finished, the portrait of a hand. I was perfectly crazy on the subject of the human hand; it was one of my bizarre notions. I had painted a man's hand and now the desire possessed me to paint a woman's; but a living model was necessary, and on account of my natural dislike of the fair sex, I had perfectly abandoned the idea.

It was one afternoon, if I remember aright, that I was in the academy, standing behind my painting, which rested upon a large easel, when my reveries were disturbed by the accents of a musical voice. I caught the words, "it should have been a woman's hand," and a lady placed her own hand on the frame of the painting. My eyes were riveted upon it. As I hope to live, it was perfect. Impelled by some irresistible impulse, I stepped forward without looking up, and seizing the hand, covered it with kisses. In an instant a sense of my folly flashed through my mind, and, covered with shame and confusion, I rushed wildly from the building, not daring to lift my eyes.

I hurried to my studio, and threw myself hot and breathless, in an easy chair. "O fool! dolt! blockhead!" I muttered in anguish; and if anyone had happened in at that moment, I would have considered it as a personal favor had he kicked me down stairs. To think that I, Smith Jones—the calm, deliberate, the cynical Smith Jones—should at the idyl in one of the most public places of the city! I paced up and down the room muttering some very hard words, and laying myself open to the imputation of having broken the third commandment, and finally lay down on the sofa and fell asleep to dream of all sorts of horrors, of a horsewhipping by the father of the insulted lady, and maybe a challenge from her furious brother.

I awoke about five o'clock in the afternoon, and concluded that it would be wise to absent myself from the city for a couple of weeks, until this affair had blown over, and accordingly I hastily packed my valise and took the first train for D— Springs. It was early in the season, and I knew the hotels would not be half filled. Arriving at the Springs, I found a rather lonely, and became very wearied during my exile there. I was out walking one evening just before dusk and had made up my mind to return to the city. "But would it be prudent?" I asked myself, half aloud. At that moment a lady, unaccompanied, passed me; she had proceeded but a short distance when her hand attracted my attention. I walked hastily after her, but perceived that she also had quickened her pace. "Ah!" thought I, "it is undoubtedly she, and I have been recognized." Although she was now almost running, I was rapidly approaching her when I saw that she had overtaken a middle-aged man and heard her exclaim: "Oh, John! that horrid man!"

Though the remainder of the sentence was to me inaudible, I saw that John looked very uninviting; yet his looks did not in the least deter me from my purpose, for John was a very small man; so I drew near and stood before him.

"Sir!" said the little man, fiercely. "Sir!" I replied, modestly. "Ah!" said the lady, fiercely. "Sir!" reiterated the little man with the big voice.

Turning to the lady, I began calmly: "Madam, I beg you will excuse me, but you will remember—" and here I blushed and looked at her hand.

Great heavens! It was not the hand after all. I turned sharply on my heel and strode away. When the little man had sufficiently recovered from his astonishment, he followed me, saying something about satisfaction, but I paid no attention to his remark, and when he saw the futility of making his steps commensurate with my own, he turned back. Utterly disgusted with myself, I proceeded to the hotel, repacked my valise and started for the city.

I breathed freely when I found myself once more in my studio.

The days passed by, and nothing was said concerning my piece of folly in the academy. It was evident that my friend had not heard of it, and I regained my wonted calmness and serenity of demeanor.

One afternoon I received an invitation to attend a masquerade party at the parlors of my friend and patron, Madam—. I decided to go—but in what costume? Smith Jones could hardly cut a

fine figure as a Roman or Othello. Finally I concluded to personate a Turk, and, on donning my costume, saw that I made a very respectable Oriental.

The party proved to be a very large one, and I listlessly wandered through a mass of figures attired in every variety of costume under the sun.

I was standing beside a tall Roman, who happened to be my friend D—, when the hand of a passing gypsy girl arrested my attention, and I attempted to follow her, but she plunged into the crowd of guests and disappeared.

"What on earth is the matter, Jones?" asked my friend the Roman in a very un-Romanlike manner, too.

"The hand!" I replied breathlessly; and at that moment the gypsy passed just behind us.

Leaving D— too astonished for utterance, I followed her. Tripping through several rooms, she gained the door which led out into the arbor, and, seeing me stop for a moment, beckoned me on. I was not slow in following her, and soon we were conversing merrily together, seated upon a rustic bench. I observed that her form was shapely and graceful, and her hand—ah, that beautiful, jeweled hand! I blushed behind my mask as I gazed upon it, for I knew it to be the one which I had so vehemently kissed.

In the course of the evening I was introduced to the fair gypsy and ere she departed I had received an invitation to call on her. Estelle Loraine was her name, and she was a very beautiful young lady.

For three days I wandered restlessly about the city trying to persuade myself that I was in no hurry to call upon Miss Loraine. Of course, I did not care a snap for the lady; it was her most exquisitely molded hand that fascinated me. The fourth day I called, and was ushered into the presence of an elderly lady who proved to be her aunt. Presently in tripped my gypsy with a mischievous smile on her face, and cordially extended her hand, which I fear I pressed slightly, for it was quickly withdrawn. The conversation was rather stiff at first, but presently Miss Loraine's aunt excused herself, and left us together alone.

I began manfully by making a humble apology for my shocking behavior in the academy, which was accepted with many blushes. It appeared that no one had noticed the rash act, not even her aunt.

It is needless to state how frequently I called upon Miss Loraine and her aunt, and how well acquainted we became. The father and mother of Estelle were traveling upon the continent, and she had preferred to remain at home with her aunt.

The conviction gradually dawned upon me that it was the heart and not the hand of Miss Loraine after which I was seeking—and one day I asked her to be my wife. She blushed painfully, and evaded my question by saying that she had wronged me.

"I have been the innocent cause of your father's fortune being withheld from you," she said, with tears in her beautiful eyes, "and I have been deceiving you in regard to my name; it is Estelle Loraine St. Clair."

"Estelle St. Clair!" I exclaimed, starting back in astonishment; but the next moment she was clasped in my arms.

On the return of Estelle's parents from Europe we had a joyous wedding, my dead father's wishes were finally fulfilled, for I married the daughter of his dearest friend.

I am now the possessor of a large fortune, a prosperous profession and a beautiful wife, and am, withal, a very happy man.

My wife has been leaning over my shoulder, and says, inquiringly: "All for a lady's hand?"

"Say, rather, for a true woman's heart," I tenderly responded.

The Secret of Successful Oratory.

They were holding an outdoor ward meeting the other night, and a speaker had just commenced to warm up to his work when a stranger with all his worldly "duds" in an old sheepskin on his back, boots gone, hat going and a dyed-in-the-wool tramp air about him, halted on the outskirts of the crowd. The speech soon caught him, and he began to applaud. At the end of every sentence he clapped his hands and roared like a log horn. No matter whether the speaker "hit 'em" or not, the stranger never failed to come down with the applause, and he carried a good share of the crowd with him. After the speaker had finished, and while he was wiping his heated brow, the tramp approached him and said:

"That 'ere speech was one of the bet I ever heard in all my life."

"Ah! I'm glad it pleased you."

"Pleased me! Why it lifted me right off'n my feet! I tell you, you're a orn orator, and I just wish I could stay in this town and hear you make a speech every night."

"Yes, I wish you could."

"But I can't. I am on my way West. I shall, however, think of your speech a hundred times a day. I can feel the electricity of it yet, and—say can't you lend me half a dollar to help me on?"

"Why, I don't know you. Why should I lend you half a dollar?"

"O come now—don't try to ride any high horse over me; you know how I'd hollered, and you know how I do that that I hadn't put in my last ticks you'd have fallen as flat as a shingle! You are a great orator, sir, and that was a great speech, if you don't know that, hollerin' what does the business, you'd better hang right up."

The orator pondered over the matter for a few seconds, and then probably concluded that the reasoning was sound as he passed over the money.—*the Press.*

When a signman and an undertaker meet and one another. "Well, how's trade? It excites quaker and perhaps gins emotions in the bystanders.

Lola Montes.

The adventurous career of Lola Montes is told in the September number of *The Eclectic Monthly*, and the story is one well told. This brilliant, erratic woman was born in Ireland while her father, an officer in the Forty-fourth regiment, was stationed there. Her mother was of Spanish descent, and the young girl was partly reared in India. She lost her father while she was yet a little child, and her mother, re-marrying, sent her daughter to Scotland to be reared. From that country Dolores, or Lola, went to France and then to Bath, to finish her education in a fashionable school. Her visit there was a crisis in her life. By nature she was fierce and passionate, and education did not modify her temperament. Her mother was ambitious, unscrupulous and vain, and did nothing to correct the faults of her child. She was anxious to be rid of her daughter, and arranged to marry her to a gouty old judge of sixty. The girl objected, the mother insisted, and an elopement with an officer, a Captain James, followed. For a time the couple lived in Ireland, but later he was ordered to India, and his wife accompanied him. Had he been her equal the world would never have heard of Lola Montes, perhaps, but he proved to be the gilded shell of a man, and her exacting nature could not be content with him. They were divorced and Lola returned to Europe. She was expected to make her home with some of her late husband's family, but she preferred her liberty, and when she reached England she had determined to be an actress. Her deficient English led her to be a *dansuse*, and after hard study she made her debut at Her Majesty's Theatre. She was not a great success as a *dansuse*, but her charming manners and impulsive style won her admirers in every city, and gained her in Paris the acquaintance of the talented Dajarnier, and eventually placed her in power at Munich. The political ability of Lola Montes has ever been underrated. She was wise and able, and she had great capacity for appreciating and giving practical effect to great political ideas. Her disposition was generous and her sympathies were large, and her position being assured, she would have retained the power she gained in Bavaria, and been a worker in the cause of radicalism. King Ludwig was passionately fond of her, and raised her to the ranks of the nobility, with the title of the Countess of Landsfeld, and gave her an estate of the same name, with an income of over £5,000 per annum, and certain feudal privileges and rights. Popular disturbances drove her from Bavaria, and her estates were confiscated. She was vain and wayward, and injured her own interests by her willfulness. The description of her personal appearance at this time was as follows:

"In person she was of middle height, with a mass of raven black hair, and large lustrous eyes of a deep blue, almost approaching black, with long black lashes. The lower part of her face was symmetrical, the upper part not so good, owing to rather prominent cheek bones. Her chin was somewhat ungracefully sharp, her nose was delicately fashioned, with thin, mobile nostrils, whose vibrations betrayed every emotion of anger or pleasure. Her complexion was pale and dark. Seen in repose, she did not merit her great reputation as a beauty; but when in motion or speaking, her vivacity and the expressiveness which lit up her mobile features and magnificent eyes made her undeniably fascinating. She was a charming and eloquent talker, and displayed in her conversation a wide and keen intelligence and a mental grasp unusual in a woman."

From Bavaria Lola was taken, under arrest, to Switzerland, from whence she came to London. While there a young lieutenant named Heald fell madly in love with her, and, much to the annoyance of his friends, married the beautiful but too notorious *dansuse*. The couple left England and went to Spain, and traveled in that country and France. They were ill matched, however, and eventually Heald left Lola and returned to England, where he obtained a divorce. The restless spirit of the woman led her from one end of the world to the other, and she was heard of in quick succession at the theaters of the United States and of Australia. She returned to America and delivered a series of lectures in New York, written for her by the late C. Chauncey Burr. She made money but wasted it, and was never rich again. Her health was shattered, and her life, away from old associates, became wretched. She fortunately met an old schoolmate in New York, and in her society enjoyed more rest than she had done since her childhood days. The last few months of her life were spent in charity work in that city. She died of paralysis, at the age of forty-three, January 17, 1861. She was buried in Greenwood Cemetery, and a marble tablet inscribed with her name and the date of her birth and decease. The remains of her property she gave to the Magdalen Asylum near New York. Thus lived and died Lola Montes, a woman whose passionate, enthusiastic and loving nature was her strength, which, by fascinating all who came in contact with her, was her weakness.

CURIOSITIES OF FIGURES.—Here's a curiosity of little students. The multiplication for 987654321 by 45 gives 44,444,454. Reversing the order of the digits, and multiplying 123456789 by 45 we get a result equally curious, 5,555,555,595. If we take 123456789 as the multiplicand, and interchanging the figures of 45, take 54 as the multiplier, we have another remarkable product, 6,666,666,606. Returning to the multiplicand first used, 987654321, and taking 54 as the multiplier again, we get 53,333,333,334—all three except the first and last figures, which read together 54, the multiplier. Taking the same multiplicand and 27, the half of 54, as the multiplier, we get a product of 26,666,666,667, all sizes except the first and last figures, which read together give 27, the multiplier. Next interchanging the figures in the number 27, and using 72 as the multiplier, with 987654321 as the multiplicand, we obtain a product of 71,111,111,112—all ones except the first and last figures, which, read together, give 72, the multiplier.

Never be afraid of a man who challenges you to fight a use. He will feel all that you feel, and more too. A man who rushes at you with a spade is the cheap to look out for.

Postal Cards.

In a long article on the history and manufacture of postal cards, the *New York Sunday News* says that the American Phototype Company—to whom the contract for making the postal cards of the United States was awarded in 1877—carried on the business in that city for two years, but to save the expense and risk attending the transportation of paper from the mill at Holyoke, Massachusetts, the business was removed thither in the spring of 1879, a new building being erected for its accommodation. The main portion of the building is divided by a partition through the middle. One side is used by the contractors for manufacturing cards, and the other by the Special Agent of the Post Office and his subordinates in the transaction of the Government business pertaining to making up of orders and forwarding cards to the various Post Offices ordering them. No business of whatever nature is transacted with more systematic precision than is maintained in both departments of the postal card agency.

On entering the contractor's side, the first thing noticed are the large piles of paper, which are delivered to the contractors by the Parsons Paper Company in loads of 3,000 sheets each. The works consume on the average about three tons daily at present. The process of manufacturing cards is neither lengthy nor complicated, but is at once so novel and interesting that a brief description is worth recital. The sheets are about thirty by twenty-two inches in size, and are just fitted by the plates from which the cards are printed, each plate covering forty cards, four in width and ten in length. The printing is done on two Hoe super-royal presses, by skillful pressmen, and as each sheet passes into the press the number of cards is unerringly recorded by registers attached to the presses, and which are carefully locked every night to prevent tampering. The sheets are then piled up and allowed to dry, in order that they may not be damaged by future handling. Incident to the rapidity with which this work is performed, now and then a sheet is misprinted, but this occurs only rarely, the number of cards being spoiled in this way being not over one-tenth of one per cent, or one in 1,000 on the average.

After drying thoroughly the sheets are then passed through the rotary slitter, a machine fitted with circular knives, which cuts them into strips of ten cards each, and trims the edge of the outside strip. These strips are then passed transversely through the rotary cross cutters, the mechanism of which is similar to the "slitters." The cross cuts divide the strips into the single cards, which drop into a rotary hopper containing ten compartments. As soon as each compartment has received twenty-five cards the hopper revolves and throws the cards out upon a table. A number of girls then take them, and, after throwing aside all damaged cards, bind the perfect ones into packs of twenty-five each. Other girls then take the packs, and, recounting them, put them in pasteboard boxes containing twenty packs of 500 cards each. The boxes are made entirely of one piece of pasteboard, without seam or waste, and, after being filled, are all weighed. Each box is supposed to weigh three pounds and two ounces. In the rear of the building is a large fireproof vault, with a capacity of storing 25,000,000 cards. By the stipulation of the contract, the American Phototype Company is required to keep at least 10,000,000 in store all the time.

So rapidly has the popular demand for postal cards increased that the works have lately been run night and day, employing in all nearly fifty hands, and producing nearly a million of cards a day on the average. The Government portion of the work is no less interesting than the other. Here the business is carried on in a manner similar to that in the general Post Office in large cities. Every Post Office in the country requiring postal cards sends its order, together with a requisition for other supplies, to the office of the Third Assistant Postmaster-General at Washington. There the orders are separated, and all the orders for postal cards are made up in one general order to the agency at Holyoke, the names of ordering Post Offices being put down alphabetically. An order is sent every day, and often includes the orders of several hundred Post Offices, and requiring all the way from a few thousand to two, three and even four million cards to fill it. During the first month in each quarter the orders average much larger than at other times, for, as a rule, a large number of offices order supplies in those months to last for the quarter. As an example of this there were ordered during the month of January last, 36,488,500 domestic cards, while 16,582,000 filled the orders for February.

A large portion of all the cards made are used in the Eastern and Middle States. New York alone uses about ten per cent of the entire production. Chicago stands next to New York, using more cards than Boston. The Southern States take but few cards.

The total number of cards issued during the fiscal year ending June 30th, 1899, was 221,807,000. The Department estimate for the year ending June 30th, 1880, was 450,514,100, an increase of seventeen per cent over the previous year's issue, but if the number issued for the first eight months of the year should be continued proportionately till the close, the year's consumption would amount to 275,839,650. If a like increase were to be presumed from year to year, before 1890 the yearly issue of cards would exceed 1,000,000,000.

Congress passed an act March 3d, 1879, providing for the issue of international cards at a postal charge of two cents each. It was not, however, until December 1st, that the first was issued. The demand for them has not been as large as was anticipated. Up to March 1st, this year, three months from the first issue, only 2,500,000 have been ordered, and of this number 1,000,000 went to New York City.

LITTLE RED ANTS.—C. R. writes: I have found by experience that little red ants cannot travel over wool or rag carpet. I covered my floor with coarse wool or rag carpet. I covered my floor with coarse baize, set my safe on that, and have not been troubled since. Cover a shelf in your closet or pantry with flannel, set whatever you wish to keep from the ants on it, and they will at once disappear. I have tried it.