

A WEDDING GOWN.

"Oh, missus, missus! Somefins done happened." Blank horror and dismay were depicted upon the face of my small African, as she stood upon my threshold with upraised hands and eyeballs that seemed starting from their sockets. Her pause was one of preparation, for with the innate consideration of her race she sought to break the news gently to me, but the burden of it was too great for her, and with the next breath she exclaimed: "Dem pigs done chewed up Miss Lyddy's weddin' gown!"

strained gravity would allow. "And you might have a fitch, and a founce on the bottom." She looked down. She had not before realized that the skirt of the venerable relic lacked a full quarter of a yard of touching the floor. "However could they? they ejaculated in an undertone. But she quickly recovered herself, and looked up to me cheerfully over her spectacles. "How ingenious you are!" she said, with an air of sweet relief. "I knew you would help me out."

lovely embroidered India muslin that the old captain brought home from India himself. "How well I remember him in my boyhood! A jolly old soul! A grand-daughter of his go off to the Cannibal Islands to be eaten up by savages! I won't have it!" "Her heart is set upon going," I continued. "The wedding gown was set out to bleach, and this very afternoon those little Berkshire pigs of yours—they are a nuisance to the whole neighborhood, Major—trampled and rotted it to pieces, so that it is utterly ruined."

Common Sense About the Piano. Little girls fear the piano, and long for the time when, having at last mastered its difficulties, they will not be called upon to play upon it any more; while numberless great girls regard it as one of the many nuisances which they must put up with until they get married. Once, however, liberate young women from that piano to which like serfs they have so long been "assigned" but not "attached," and some of them will take to cultivating it for its own sake; while the remainder will at least spare both themselves and their friends a considerable amount of annoyance.

TAKING BOARDERS. "It was a scandal," the neighbors said, "that Miss Delia should be obliged to take boarders, after all she'd been through; and heaven knows boarders did not help a body to work out her salvation. And so much money in the family too, taking it by small and large. Wasn't her Uncle Eben, over at Dover, well-to-do, and not a chick of his own to care for, except the boy he had adopted, who was no credit to him? It was odd, now, that a man with poor relations should take a stranger when his own flesh and blood was needy; but sometimes it does seem as if folks had more feeling for others than for their own kin. Then there were consins in the city, fore-handed and fashionable, who were never worth a row of pins to Delia, and there was her great-uncle John's widow a-larkin' on the continent, a-gaming at Baden-Baden, and trying the waters of every mineral spring in the three kingdoms, for no disease under the sun but old age! She had been known to say that her folks were too rich already, and probably she would endow some hospital with her property. Plainly, wealthy relatives were of no value to Miss Delia. To be sure, she had never seen her great-aunt since she was a child, when her Uncle John had brought her into their simple life for a month's visit, with her French maid and dresses, her jewels and fallals, which won the heart of her namesake. Since then Uncle John's widow had become a sort of gilded creation, always young and beautiful; for, though Delia had received little gifts from time to time across the seas for the last fifteen years, she had neither heard nor seen anything of the being who had inspired her youthful imagination, and was quite uncertain if such a person as Mrs. John Rogerson was in the land of the living. Dead or alive, she seemed to have made no material difference to Delia's humdrum life. After having nursed her father through a long sickness Delia found that he had left a heavy mortgage on the homestead and her mother and herself on the high road to the poor house, unless they should better themselves. As her mother was already bed-ridden, the stirring very naturally fell upon Delia, and she advertised for summer boarders.

"I believe I'll stay on," she said. "I'm getting too old to move often. Perhaps you take winter boarders at reduced rates. Eh?" "Do you think my terms high?" "By no means. But when one's purse is low—" "Yes; I know. Do stay at your own price. I can't spare you." She had grown such a fondness for the old lady that to refuse her at her own terms would have seemed like turning her own mother out of doors; beside, one month more would not signify. But she found it hard to make both ends meet, and often went to bed hungry that her mother and Mrs. Clement might enjoy enough, without there appearing to be "just a pattern." At Christmas, however, came a ray of sunshine for Delia, in the shape of a \$100 bill from an unknown friend. "It can't be meant for me," she cried. "It's directed to Delia Rogerson," said her mother; "and there's nobody else of that name, now that your Aunt Delia's dead." "We are not sure she's dead," objected Delia. "Horrors! Don't you know whether your own aunt is dead or alive?" asked Mrs. Clement, in a shocked tone. "It isn't your fault. She is rich and lives abroad. I was named for her. I used to look in the glass and try to believe I'd inherit her beauty with the name, though she was only our great uncle's wife." "She ought to do something for you." "How can she, if she is dead? I don't blame her, anyway. Her money is her own to use according to her pleasure. Uncle John made it himself and gave it to her." "But if she should come back to you, having run through with it, you'd divide your last crust with her, I'll be bound." "I suppose I should," replied Delia. The winter wore away as winters will, and the miracles of spring began in fields and wayside; and Delia's boarders returned with the June roses, and dropped away again with the fading leaves; and still Mrs. Clement stayed on and on. Just now she had been some weeks in arrears with her reduced board. No money had been forthcoming for some time, and she was growing more feeble daily, needed the luxuries of an invalid and the attention of a nurse, both of which Delia bestowed upon her, without taking thought of the morrow. "I must hear from my man-of-business to-morrow, Delia; I'm knee-deep in debt to you," she began one night. "I'd rather never see a cent than have you take it to heart. You are welcome to stay and share pot-luck with us; you are such company for mother and me." "Thank you, my dear. I've grown as fond of you as if you were my own flesh and blood. There, turn down the light, please. It grows chilly, doesn't it? You might kiss me just once, if you wouldn't mind. It's a hundred years or so since any one kissed me." And next morning, when Delia carried up Mrs. Clement's breakfast, her boarder lay cold and still upon her pillows. The first shock over, Delia wrote to the lawyer of whom she had heard Mrs. Clement speak as having charge of her affairs, begging him to notify that lady's relatives if she had any. In reply Mr. Willis wrote: "The late Mrs. Clement appears to have no near relatives. Some distant cousins, who have an abundance of this world's goods, yet served her shabbily when she tested their generosity as she tried yours, are all that remain of her family. In the meantime I inclose you a copy of her last will and testament, to peruse at your leisure." "What interest does he think I take in Mrs. Clement's will?" thought Delia; but she read, nevertheless: "Being of sound mind, this 16th day of June, 18—, I, Delia Rogerson Clement, do hereby leave \$100 to each of my consins; and I bequeath the residue of my property—viz.: \$30,000 invested in the Ingot Mining Company, \$50,000 in United States bonds, \$20,000 in the Fortune Flannel Mills, and my jewels to the beloved niece of my first husband, John Rogerson, Delia Rogerson, of Croftsborough, Me. "For I was a stranger and ye took me in; hungry, and ye fed me; sick, and ye ministered unto me." "Goodness alive!" cried the neighbors, when the facts reached their ears. "What a profitable thing it is to take boarders! Everybody in town will be trying it. Of course Steve Langdon will come and marry her if she were forty old maids. You may stick a pin in there!" Delia did not open her house to boarders the next season. She found enough to do in looking after her money and spending it; in replying to letters from indigent people, who seemed to increase alarmingly; in receiving old friends, who suddenly found time to remember her existence. And, sure enough, among the rest appeared Steve Langdon, and all the village said, "I told you so." "It's not my fault that you and I are single yet, Delia," he said. "And we are too old to think of it now, Steve." "Nonsense! It's never too late to mend. I'm not rich, Delia, but I've enough for two and to spare." "I wouldn't be contented not to drive in my carriage and have servants under me now," laughed Delia. "Indeed! Then perhaps you have a better match in view. Capt. Seymour asked me, by the way, if I had come to interfere with Squire Jones' interest." "Yes, Squire Jones proposed to me last week." "Now, see here, Delia. Have I come all the way from Melbourne on a foolish errand? There I was growing used to my misery and loneliness, when the mail brings in a letter in a strange hand, which tells me that my dear love Delia Rogerson, loves and dreams of me still, in poor and alone and needs me—mel And the letter is signed by her aunt, Mrs. Clement, who ought to know. I packed my household goods and came." "I'm glad that you did." "In order that I may congratulate Squire Jones?" "But I haven't accepted him. In fact, I've refused him—because—" "Because you will marry your old love, like the lass in the song, Delia?" "In Croftsborough, people are not yet tired of telling how a woman made money by taking boarders. A Kentucky man has for clock weights two pint bottles filled with whisky."