

Married in the Dark.
About twenty years ago there lived in central Michigan a curious old Benedict named Dodsforth. At the age of fifty he married a girl of twenty, and when the burden of sixty years bore him down, his wife was only half his age. Dodsforth was noted for his peculiarities, but the climax came when he found himself on his dying bed. He was worth about thirty thousand dollars, and he had a blood relation living, so far as he knew. He wanted to leave his property to his wife, as the pair had lived very happily, but he could not leave it without displaying some of his peculiarities in the provisions of the will.

Some old men display a mean spirit when making their wills, and draft in a provision cutting the wife off with a shilling if she marries again. This old man wanted of that stamp. His young wife was good-looking, vivacious, full of society, and it was folly to suppose she would mourn for her "late departed" any great length of time. Therefore Mr. Dodsforth turned his heel on the usual custom, and said in his will:—

"In case my wife, Cecilia, does not take unto herself another husband within thirteen months from date of my burial, all bequests otherwise made in this will are to revert to the State of Michigan, to be used for building and furnishing a home for old women."

Whether Cecilia was pleased or displeased at this provision, deponent saith not, but the old man had not been under the sod more than six months when the widow was said to be looking out for another man. If it was singular for the dying Dodsforth to urge his wife to marry again, it was singularer still that she should desire the ceremony to be performed under the following circumstances, viz:—

"And it is made incumbent on said Cecilia Dodsforth that, in taking a new husband, the marriage ceremony shall be performed in the big barn on my farm, on the H— road. It shall take place at ten o'clock in the evening, on the main floor, without lights of any description, with all doors shut, and a free invitation shall be extended to all. The clergyman shall stand in the stable, and the bride and groom on the main floor, and the principal parties to the ceremony shall be dressed in black throughout."

The widow announced her intention to faithfully obey in spirit and letter. The will was probated, and the twelfth month had scarcely passed before she issued an invitation for the nuptial dinner, to be held at the big barn. Just who the groom was to be no one could positively assert, as the widow had been keeping company with a widower, a bachelor, and two young men; and as far as any outsider could judge, she loved one as well as the other. Being good-looking and talented, and having a fortune behind her, it was not strange that she should have a number of suitors. She seemed to enter into the spirit of the affair with great zest, as also did the minister; and to further mystify the people in attendance, the bride entered the barn alone at one door, the groom alone at another, and no one knew that the minister had arrived until his voice was heard in the stable.

There were at least two hundred people present, and each one understood that even the striking of a match would break the will. Many jokes were passed, and considerable confusion existed, but at length the minister announced that all was ready. The ceremony was gone through with, and at its conclusion, the affair having been a "profound success," a rush was made for the bride; she was carried by a hundred men, and was then hurried home—a distance of a mile and a half—in a big chair.

Now came the mystery. When the lady was set down on her own door, the widower, the bachelor, and the two young men, each claimed to be her true and lawful husband. None of the crowd could say who was the lucky man; the minister was at sea, and the bride herself seemed to have doubts. The widower was the man of her choice, but in the confusion he could have been hustled aside, and he did affirm that an attempt was made to cheat him and get him out of the barn. The bachelor vowed that she had promised to marry him, as also did both the young men, and each was sure that he held the widow's plump hand and was legally married to her. The four men had a fight, but that didn't mend matters. The crowd ducked two of them in a creek, but that didn't decide the question.

Just how it would have terminated, had not the widower been a man of nerve, no one can tell; as the other three had already appealed to the law, when the widower stepped in and took his place as husband, and settled with the others for two thousand dollars each.

One of the young men, now over thirty years old, and having all the wife he wants (she weighs two hundred pounds), is living in Jackson, Michigan, and during an interview had with him, he solemnly and earnestly assured the writer that he was legally married to the Widow Dodsforth that night in the big barn. Another of the parties lives in Clinton county, and he has time and again asserted that he is the woman's true and lawful husband, so help him God. The bachelor is dead, but were he alive he would renew his oft-repeated protestations: "I married her, by gum! and, by gum! I ought to have her!"

THE VICISSITUDES OF A MOSQUE.
Twice the Temple of St. Sophia was destroyed by fire and twice rebuilt; twice the great dome fell and twice it was restored. The arches, having resounded to the music of Chrysostom's voice, came at last to echo the blasphemies of the infidel and the groans of the wounded and dying. At the capture of Constantinople the clergy, the virgins dedicated to God, and a multitude of people of all classes, crowded into the church and sought refuge before the high altar. Mahomet, at the head of the Osmanlis, rode into the sanctuary, forced his way through the affrighted throng, and leaping from his horse at the altar, he cried, "There is no God but God, and Mahomet is his Prophet!" A hideous scene of slaughter followed, and the temple was desecrated. The sultans have despoiled it of its pictorial beauty; have added minarets and buttresses to support the tottering southeast wall; have caused the brick freecoats to be plastered over with a yellowish substance; have clipped away wherever it was possible the carved symbol of the cross; have hung great disks graven with the names of the four companions of the prophet over the seraphim under the dome, with their slender wings crossed above and below them. Beneath the cupola is inscribed in fantastic and beautiful characters a line from the Koran, "God is the light of the heavens and of the earth."

The Russians in Asia.
The Russians are attacking the Turks, not only on the Danube, where they meet most readily approach Constantinople, but on the Asiatic side, where the Russian territory of Transcaucasia lies beside the Armenian frontiers of the Sultan's dominions. We have seen that the Russians have had many difficulties to contend with on this Asiatic side. The many ranges of high hills and mountains, for the most part bleak and bare of vegetation, the very bad roads, the cold in the higher regions and the heat in the lower, have been so many obstacles in the way of the invading army.

Armenia, indeed, is one of the most dreary countries in the world. A large part of its population consists of the wandering Kurds, who, like the Arabs, go from place to place, and pitch their tents wherever they find it convenient. Villages are few and far between, and when you reach one, you find it composed of wretched huts, which we should hardly think fit habitations for our domestic animals.

While the upper part of Armenia, extending from the Black Sea to Bayazid, is thus dreary, mountainous and lonely, the lower portion of it consists of plains, some of which are smiling and fertile, and are graced with luxuriant vegetation, while other plains are but vast sandy wastes, reminding the traveler of the Arabian Desert. Horses, cattle and sheep are raised on these plains, and iron and copper are also found in some of them.

The principal towns of Armenia, for military purposes, are Kars, Trebizond, and Erzeroum. Kars is situated on a bright in the midst of valleys, beyond which rise high mountains. Trebizond is the principal Asiatic Turkish seaport on the Black Sea.

Erzeroum stands on a height, as does Kars. Some one who saw this important fortress recently, says of it that in the distance "it looks like a large ship thrown ashore under the mountain-side, and its mainmast distinguishable a great way off, is a tower of the Tzepi minaret." Above the town rise the citadel and fortresses. Erzeroum is not a cheerful place. It has poor, unpaved, straggling streets, little tumble-down mud-houses, and is very dirty and slipshod. But it has almost all the curious features of an Oriental town. There are markets and bazaars, baths and fountains, mosques, with their bulb-like domes, and more modest churches for the few Christians who dwell there.

In a military point of view, Erzeroum is the most important of all the fortresses in Armenia; and its capture by the Russians will give them military control of a country full of places of sacred and historical fame. It is the last defense of the Turks in that part of Asia. If Erzeroum falls, the invaders will find little difficulty of obtaining command of the Euphrates Valley, and may hope to approach Constantinople from that side with little danger of very formidable opposition.

A glance at the map will show what famous places would fall into the hands of Russia should she succeed in depriving the Sultan of his dominions in Asia. Palestine and the holy places, with Jerusalem, and Bethlehem, and Mount Sinai, and the banks of the Jordan, would be restored to Christian rule, and the ambition of the Crusaders of the Middle Ages would at last be fulfilled.

Damascus, Smyrna and Aleppo, famous cities of the biblical times, and of periods still more remote, would become Russian. The lovely and romantic island of Cyprus, and the renowned plain and site of ancient Troy, would be rescued from the Moslem. Bagdad, which no reader of the "Arabian Nights" can forget, for it was the home of the good Caliph Alrashed, and the ruins of the once proud and mighty Babylon, and of the not less mighty Nineveh, would become the possession of the Christian.

Military and commercial advantages of such a conquest would be very great. The Russians would not only get a footing on the Mediterranean, through the long line of coast from the Dardanelles to Suez, but would also have access to the Euphrates Valley, to the Persian Gulf, and by Arabia Petraea to the Red Sea, and thence to the Indian Ocean.

ROMANIAN MEN AND WOMEN.—Generally the Romanians, and more particularly the Wallachians, have handsome dark faces, eyes full of expression, and beautifully cut mouths, showing, as they smile, teeth of remarkable whiteness. Their hands and feet are singularly small, and their wrists and ankles as delicate as those of a Grecian statue. Adroit in body, light and graceful in their movements, they are indefatigable on the march, and support, without a murmur, the most severe fatigue. Their national costume is worn with imitable elegance, and even the Wallachian shepherd, with his tall cachaous, his broad leather belt, his sheepskin mantle, and full drawers, which recall the Russian "bryuki" sculptured upon Trajan's column, strikes the traveler as a model of native dignity. The women are grace personified. Whether they have retained faithful to their traditional costume, with the wide embroidered chemise, floating vest, many-colored apron, and hair-net brilliant with gold and sequins, or have adopted modern tolets, they always charm with their perfect beauty. Besides this, the Roumanian lady adds to her exterior advantages a quick intelligence, a communicative gaiety, and a readiness of repartee which has made her the Parisian of the East. It is the women of Wallachia, who have given birth to the proverb: "O Dimboviza! he who has drunk from her can no longer leave thy banks!"

BOOKS.—Books are not made for furniture, but there is nothing else that so beautifully furnishes a house. The plainest row of books is more significant of refinement than the most elaborately carved sideboard. Give us a house furnished with books rather than furniture—both if you can, but books at any rate. To spend several days at a friend's house, and hunger for something to read, while you are treating on costly carpets, and sitting on luxurious chairs and sleeping upon down, as if one were bribing your body for the sake of cheating your mind. Books are windows through which the soul looks out. A house without them is like a room without windows. No man has a right to bring up his children without surrounding them with books, if he has the means to buy them. It is wrong to his family. Children learn through being in the presence of books. The love of knowledge comes with reading, and grows upon it; and the love of knowledge in a young mind is almost warrant against the inferior excitement of passion and vice.

A STRAIGHT line is the shortest in morals as in geometry.

The Dumb Bell Nebula.
In Vulpecula there is a remarkable object called the Dumb-bell nebula, or star cloud. It cannot be seen well without a very powerful telescope. It was formerly thought to consist entirely of small stars, so remote that they could not be separately discerned; but it has lately been discovered that the greater part of this nebula's light comes from glowing gas. The vastness of the space occupied by this cloud of luminous gas will be understood—though no mind can possibly conceive it—when I mention that at the distance of the nearest of the fixed stars the whole of our solar system would appear but as a mere point, even in a powerful telescope. The Dumb-bell nebula covers quite a large space, as seen in such an instrument. It is also, probably, much farther away than the nearest fixed stars. However, the material put forth to illustrate this title are illustrations of the nebula of dyspepsia which it has cured, you would be convinced. Evidence of the influence of dyspepsia on the mind, and this relates not only to cases of dyspepsia, but also to uterine troubles, constipation, urinary and uterine troubles, and general debility. The success which has attended the great stomachic has incited unscrupulous parties to manufacture cheap imitations of it, which they attempt to palm off as the genuine article. But, so familiar is the name with the real elixir, that these nefarious attempts are rarely successful. Neither imitations nor cheap copies will affect the popularity of the standard article.

The Mid-summer Holiday Scribner.
In pursuance of the custom introduced last year by Scribner's, the August number is issued as a special Mid-summer Holiday number. Among the material put forth to illustrate this title are illustrations of the nebula of dyspepsia which it has cured, you would be convinced. Evidence of the influence of dyspepsia on the mind, and this relates not only to cases of dyspepsia, but also to uterine troubles, constipation, urinary and uterine troubles, and general debility. The success which has attended the great stomachic has incited unscrupulous parties to manufacture cheap imitations of it, which they attempt to palm off as the genuine article. But, so familiar is the name with the real elixir, that these nefarious attempts are rarely successful. Neither imitations nor cheap copies will affect the popularity of the standard article.

Very strange is the thought that astronomers should have been able to find out what this mighty mass of glowing gas consists of. Placed under amid the glories of the Milky Way, lost to human vision through its vast remoteness, only brought within our view at all by means of powerful telescopes, and only revealing its true shape when seen with the most powerful telescopes men have yet constructed, what at first sight can seem more amazing than that men should be able to tell what kind of substance it is which gives out the mighty lustre of that cloudlet in space? The very light which comes to us from the Dumb-bell nebula has probably taken hundreds of years in crossing the tremendous space separating us from that object. Yet that light has conveyed its message truly. Examined with that instrument, the spectroscopist whose office I lately described in a paper on the planet Venus—the light of the Dumb-bell nebula presents, not the rainbow-tinted streak which comes from glowing solid and liquid bodies, but three bright lights only. At least three lines are seen if the nebula is examined through a fine slit; if the field of view is opened, there are seen three faint images of the cloudlet. The correct way of describing what the spectroscopist tells us about this object is to say that, instead of its light presenting all the colors of the rainbow, it is found, when sifted by the spectroscopist, to contain three colors only, all of them greenish, but slightly different in tint. One of the colors is precisely such a tint of green as comes (with four other colors) from glowing hydrogen gas, and shows us that there are the same masses of hydrogen in that remote cloud; another tint shows in like manner that there are immense masses of nitrogen; but the third tint has not yet been found to correspond with a tint emitted by any known substance. The skin of light from that double nebula has thus been unraveled by the spectroscopist, after journeying millions of miles from the nebula, and has been sorted into three tints, and the three tints matched against the known tints of earthly gases, but the third remains as yet unmatched.—Prof. R. A. Proctor, in St. Nicholas.

Life Insurance Claims.
The Supreme Court of New York State has decided that the law allowing six months for the payment of life insurance claims is not to be construed as requiring the insurer to pay the claim at once, but that it would not be sufficient to file a claim after that time, even if done before the expiration of the six months. Therefore, claimants must take prompt action to protect their interests, because in some instances the time allowed has nearly expired.

James Mansell, Jr. has made special arrangements in the East for presenting in due form claims against Life Insurance Companies in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Parties filing claims through this Agency will be relieved of all further trouble, and the settlement will be made with them at this office on the first day of the third dividend, as usual made by the Receivers.

Double Boats.
This old form of boat, modified to meet modern requirements, has been revived in a number of yachts in our eastern waters. The boat consists of two distinct hulls exactly alike and placed side by side and securely joined by a deck that covers both and all the space between. The hulls are long and narrow with deep straight bows and very short stern-posts, the keel rising quickly at stern. Each hull may have a centre-board or not, as seems desirable, and the deck frames for each extend over the space between the hulls. Extra timbers, braced by knees at the ends, are also put in, so that as far as possible the two hulls are united by one deck over all. Calms are placed in each hull, and thus the deck between the hulls is clear and open. The deck is square at the end and flush with the stern of each hull, and at the bows it is brought to a point, and at the end of this projection is placed the bowsprit. The masts are placed on a line with the centre of the deck, and to furnish a step for the foot of the masts an iron frame extends from the hulls on either side below the deck, and, if necessary, rises to the water. The standing rigging is brought to the outer side of each hull, and one single roller is placed on a step-post placed between the two hulls. When about such a boat as this is designed to rest high out of water, and to give a clear, dry deck. The advantages claimed for this class of yachts are, steadiness in the water under a side-wind, increased space on deck and increased capacity and light draft. This form of boat might also be useful in river barges where capacity and light draft are needed.—Mid-summer Holiday Scribner.

Good Advice.—Culture your mind and heart. Be honest. Pay your debts as soon as you get money in your pocket. Do without what you do not need. Aim to possess purity of heart and decision of character. Speak your mind when necessary. Hold your tongue when prudent. Speak to a friend in a steady coat. Cut acquaintances who lack principle. Bear with infirmities, but not with vices. Respect modesty, despise duplicity. Wear your old clothes until you can pay for new ones. Aim at comfort and prosperity, but not at fashion. Acknowledge your ignorance, and don't pretend to knowledge you haven't got. Entertain your friends, but never beyond your means.

The Citizens of Mott Haven, New York, were started the other day by the sight of a number of young women marching through the streets, their nakedness slightly concealed by bathing dresses. It appeared that some one had stolen the street dresses of the bathers, and they were compelled to run the gauntlet of the town.

Why Suffer Dyspeptic Tortures.
When the famous regulator of enfeebled acid or bilious stomachs, Hostetter's Bitters, will cure you! Cures the tendency of the stomach to dyspepsia which it has cured, you would be convinced. Evidence of the influence of dyspepsia on the mind, and this relates not only to cases of dyspepsia, but also to uterine troubles, constipation, urinary and uterine troubles, and general debility. The success which has attended the great stomachic has incited unscrupulous parties to manufacture cheap imitations of it, which they attempt to palm off as the genuine article. But, so familiar is the name with the real elixir, that these nefarious attempts are rarely successful. Neither imitations nor cheap copies will affect the popularity of the standard article.

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