

THE FAMILY STORY

THE MAN THAT MARRIED MARY.

When shall I meet thee once again to tell
How thou hast been my life's upraising
leaven—
To answer to thy questions, "All is well?"
Perchance in heaven.
—Verses Grace and Gay.

ALTHOUGH he had, in addition to a local habitation, a name of his own—Peter Dunn to-wit—he was always known as "the man that married Mary." By profession he was a plumber of some repute—that is to say, he knew by heart the meanderings and idiosyncrasies of every drain in the village; and he added to this experience knowledge, for he had the sense to carry about with him such white lead as was necessary to the fulfillment of his calling. Instead of expecting the same to grow wild in every well ordered household—a false expectation which obtains among plumbers. For six days of the week he plumbed, but on the seventh (or rather the first) he dressed himself in a little brief authority and a sort of black nightgown, and stood revealed to the eyes of an admiring village as the verger of the parish church. It was impossible to see him conduct to such seats as he deemed meet for them the strangers within his gates, and the way wherein—during the anthem—he distributed the almsbags among the recipients for whom they were reserved was a function in itself. On one memorable occasion, when performing this last mentioned rite, he stumbled over a top hat, placed in the aisle by some unwary stranger, sent it spinning up the church, and staggered after it in hot pursuit. For one awful moment it seemed that the pillars of Church and State were alike trembling; then the worthy verger righted himself, restored the stumbling-block to its owner, and concluded the function, to the unfeigned delight of the sons of the rector, who longed ever afterward to present a testimonial to the unknown author of the catastrophe. The inhabitants of Cheriton did not wear top hats, and if they had they would have known better than to place such obstacles in the path of the just; so the rector's boys concluded that some alien brow had been, so to speak, the head and front of the offending, and they blessed that brow accordingly, and never forgot the great "kick-off at 7 o'clock," as they called it.

But all these paltry honors and dignities paled beside the fact that Peter Dunn ("plumbing verger" or "verging plumber," whichever one was pleased to dub him), was above all things "the man that married Mary." Beside this crowning distinction all manner honors sank into insignificance. Mary had been the reigning beauty of Cheriton for more years than she would have cared to confess to, when she arrived at the conclusion that "leading apes" was not so satisfactory an occupation as marrying plumbers, and so decided to espouse her devoted adorer, Peter Dunn, who had regularly proposed to her every Saturday afternoon for—well, at least 250 Saturdays, at the lowest computation. With her office as reigning beauty of Cheriton Mary Mills had combined the duties of village schoolmistress. She was a good girl, and did her work well, but she had no natural love of teaching, and she was very thankful at last to lay her occupation aside and become Mrs. Peter Dunn instead. Mary felt (as indeed did all the village, Peter included) that she had conferred an unspeakable favor upon her husband in marrying him, and to the day of her death she treated him more as a King consort than as a verger and plumber in his own right, which he undoubtedly was, for Mary was what the villagers call "genteel," and founded her ideas of men and women upon the heroes and heroines of such silly and sensational novels as came in her way, and, judged according to that standard, Peter certainly fell short of ideal manhood. As long as she lived Mary measured Peter by these stupid measurements and found him short and plain, and commonplace and rough mannered; afterward she probably learned to measure him according to the measure of a man—that is, of the angel—and discovered that her plain little plumber was more of a hero than all the men of straw she had delighted to read about in the foolish days of her flesh, but of this we have, of course, no record. Poor Mary, however, will not be the only one who will find the standards of this world all wrong in the light of the next one; and there is much comfort in this thought.

But, though she looked down upon him on account of his rougher manners and inferior education, Mary Dunn was sincerely attached to her good little husband, and succeeded in making the few years she was spared

to him years of radiant bliss for Peter. As for him, he simply worshipped the ground on which his wife walked. Mary had a younger sister of whom she was inordinately proud, who was a governess in a gentleman's family. She was, according to Mary, "quite the lady," and would, so Mary thought, consider it a degradation to visit so humble a home as the Dunns', which showed that poor Mrs. Dunn's standards of good breeding were as erroneous as her standards of other things. Therefore, though Mary sometimes went to see the beloved Amy, Amy never was allowed to come to Cheriton or to be brought into contact with that excellent man, her brother-in-law. Probably, had she come, Amy would have despised Peter as much as Mary did, for not to every one is it given to see the deeper meanings and to hear the hidden music in the common things of life—least of all to such frivolous little souls as those of the sisters Mills.

After Mary had been dead for some years a general feeling spread through Cheriton that the man that married Mary was becoming a miser. He made a very good income, and as there were no children, had only himself to support now that Mary was gone, and yet he saved and screwed at every point, which brought him into disrepute at Cheriton. The char-woman who cleaned his house told thrilling tales of a tin box, securely locked, which had its abode under Peter's chest of drawers, and into this box the imagination of Cheriton transferred all the savings which Peter so carefully hoarded.

One day the rector's eldest son, Jack, now at Oxford, rushed into his father's study, crying:

"I say, dad, what do you think? The man that married Mary has been robbed of all his savings."

The rector pushed up his spectacles and gazed benignly at Jack from under them.

"Dear me, dear me, what a sad thing!" he murmured. "How much money has been stolen?"

"Nobody knows. But the tin box out of his bed-room has gone and the poor man is demented."

"No wonder," said the kind old rector.

"The thief evidently climbed through the window while Dunn was out, as the door was locked."

"Did he take anything besides the tin box?" asked the rector.

"No," answered Jack, "for the very good reason that there was nothing else inside the house worth the carriage. There must be a pretty pot of money in that box, dad; for never a pipe in the whole village bursts without the man that married Mary being well paid for mending it, and he is remunerated for his pew-opening duties, too; and yet he hardly has enough to eat, I hear, and there is nothing in his house worth a half-crown piece. The savings in that old tin box must tot up to a pretty sum."

"Dear me, dear me! It is very sad. Jack, my boy, when the love of money thus takes hold of a man—very sad, indeed."

"Well, the old boy is punished for it now, anyway," said Jack, with the untimely justice of the very young and inexperienced, "and I am glad of it."

"I'm not," sighed the rector. "I suppose punishments do good, but I am always sorry when there is a necessity for them. If poor Mary had lived Dunn would never have got into these mean ways; she was such a bright, pretty, superior girl."

Which remark showed that the dispensations of providence are wiser after all than the reasoning of the most charitable old rector.

Later on in the day Jack Levett caught sight of a dark object lying in a ditch. He pulled it out and found it to be a tin box, with the lock pried open. In it there was nothing but a packet of letters in Mary Dunn's pretty old-fashioned writing and some faded roses, brown and crisp with age. The former he was too much of a gentleman to read, but he concluded they were love letters, as they were addressed to Peter Dunn, but as there was no money in the box he conjectured that the thief had taken what was valuable and thrown the rubbish away. So he took it straight to Dunn, with many condolences.

"I have found this box of yours in a ditch, Dunn," he said, "but I fear all the valuables have been taken out of it."

Peter seized the box and examined its contents.

"No, it's all right, Master Jack," he cried with excitement; "fifteen letters and ten roses and not one missing. O, how can I thank you enough, sir, for restoring them to me? I shall never

forget your kindness as long as I live!" Jack looked puzzled. "But wasn't there anything else in the box?" he asked.

"No, sir; this is all, and it is all I have on earth that is of any value to me. Fifteen letters that my Mary wrote to me while we were courting, and ten roses that she gave me at different times. And to think that they are all safe, and not one missing! I shall never cease to bless you, Master Jack, for what you have done for me this day—never."

"I thought there must have been money in the box, you seemed in such a way about it."

"Bless you, sir, I shouldn't have made all that fuss if it had only been money. But, you see, these letters are all that I have left of my Mary, and I read them over and over again. She was a rare scholar, my Mary was."

"And so pretty, too," said Jack, kindly.

"Ay, Master Jack, she was that; and the sweetest way with her. Why, I could tell you the history of each of them ten roses, and where we were standing, and what she said when she gave it to me; only I should feel somehow as Mary mightn't like it. But I say her dear words over and over to myself, and never forget them, though it would seem irreverent-like to repeat them to another person, even to one of the quality like yourself."

"Of course, of course," said Jack hastily, feeling a queer, uncomfortable lump in his throat; and then they went on to talk of other things. So the man that married Mary was comforted, and the hiding-place of his savings remained a mystery.

A year or two after this, Jack Levett was traveling in Switzerland, and fell in (and out) with some people called Lawson. Mr. Lawson was a flashy young man, with a great many rings and no manners; and his wife was a pretty woman, who falsely imagined herself a lady, and reveled in the delusion.

"I think I heard you mention you came from Cheriton in Blankshire," said Lawson one day to Jack at the table d'hôte.

Now Jack had never mentioned the fact, but Mr. Lawson had discovered it by a diligent perusal of Jack's luggage labels; whereof Jack was perfectly aware, so he answered shortly:

"Yes, I come from Cheriton."

"Then praps you know a connection of my wife's who lives there—a very wealthy man," continued Lawson in an ingratiating manner.

Jack certainly knew all the wealthy people in or near Cheriton, and he also knew that they belonged to a class which would not have counted the Lawsons among their acquaintances—much less among their relations; so he cautiously inquired the name of Mrs. Lawson's kinsman.

"It's 'er brother-in-law—Mr. Peter Dunn—'er sister's widower," explained Mr. Lawson. "Since 'er sister's death 'e 'as allowed my wife a 'undred a year; and if 'e's as rich as I imagine, I think 'e might increase the allowance."

"Why?" asked Jack dryly.

"Well, you see, my wife's sister married beneath 'er, so I think it is only old Dunn's duty to pay for the privilege of being related to such a genteel family. I gather 'e isn't quite what you'd call a gentleman—not like you and me, you know."

Jack shuddered and felt an unholy desire stirring within him to knock Lawson down; but, stifling his desire, he said quietly:

"Mr. Dunn is an excellent man, and one for whom I entertain a profound respect; but you are mistaken in considering him wealthy."

Lawson's face fell. "Then you don't think 'e could increase the allowance?" he asked.

"I feel sure he could not do so, whatever his wishes might be. It is only by denying himself that he is able to make it as large as it is; of this I am certain."

"And you don't think 'e'll have much to leave, then?" inquired Lawson gloomily.

"I should say, nothing. I can assure you he is a man of most limited means, and under the circumstances the allowance you mentioned is princely in its munificence."

"Oh, my word! You 'ave upset me, Mr. Levett. It's 'orrible to 'ave common relations who aren't even rich, don't you think? Riches is the only excuse for commonness, to my mind."

"Pardon me," said Jack stiffly; "you are deluded in thinking that Mr. Dunn was in any way inferior to his wife or her sister. For my part I can only say that I am proud to count him among my friends;" and Jack stalked off in high dudgeon.

"Oh, my!" exclaimed Mr. Lawson meditatively. "To think of Amy's old brother-in-law turning out to be not so rich or so common as we thought. 'E must be something particular if that young swell counts 'im among 'is friends; for a more unfriendly, stuck-up chap I never met! 'E won't chum with me at any price. But I'm glad to 'ear Amy's people aren't as common as I thought. I despise commonness, and 'ave always prided myself on being quite a gentleman; but I can't help feeling a bit 'urt at that young Levett not being more affable with me."

And it was several days before Mr. Lawson's self-satisfaction recovered

from the bruise Jack had administered to it.

When Jack Levett reached home he endeavored to persuade Peter to cease to deny himself for the sake of such worthless people as the Lawsons, but in vain.

"Bless you, sir, I don't do it to please them—I do it to please Mary; and she'd set her heart on Amy bein' quite the lady."

"But they are so ungrateful—so unworthy," argued Jack; "and I don't believe the money does them any real good."

Peter laughed. "But that don't matter to me," he said. "I do what Mary wanted, and I don't bother about anything else. If Mary had wanted me to throw my money into the river, into the river my money would ha' gone. I don't want money's worth for my money; I only want to please my Mary. The Squire spends his money on hunters, not because he wants to kill foxes for food, but because he loves huntin' for its own sake; you spend your time on cricket, not because you are paid for it, but because you love cricket for its own sake; and please! Mary is my huntin' and cricket, don't you see?"

"That's it, is it?" said Jack quietly.

"The only joy I ever had in my life was Mary, and the only pleasure I have now is doin' what I think Mary would wish. And when I meet my Mary again I know she'll be rarely pleased to hear how I have toiled and saved to please her, and as to how the Lawsons spent the money—why, bless you, Master Jack, do you suppose that when me and my Mary are together once more we'll be worryin' our heads about such rubbish as the spendin' o' money?"

And Jack Levett felt that he ought to take off his hat in the presence of the man that married Mary.—The Young Woman.

"Three Looks and a Hoot."

There is a peculiar pleasure in visiting a country where the people have a speech and manners of their own, where at any turn a man is liable to hear or see something new. The New York Sun describes an experience of a Northern traveler in the pine woods of North Carolina. He had started out to join some friends who were on a hunt for turkeys.

Finding no sign of them, he was glad to meet a native in an old road, and asked him if he had seen anything of the party.

"Yes, suh," he replied. "They're up this road yonduh, three looks and a hoot, suh."

The New-Yorker thought the native was geying him, and started off in a huff. He went on until he came to a bridge, where he met another play-woods denizen at work, and asked him the same question. The man looked up the road. The farthest thing in sight was a big pine-tree, nearly a mile away.

"Yes, suh, I seen 'em 's mawnin', suh," he said. "They was jes' 'bout one look an' a hoot from hyuh then, suh."

The stranger glared at the man, and went grumbling on his way. Just before he came to the big pine-tree another native came out of the woods, and the New-Yorker, with much misgiving, asked him the question he had put to the others.

"Oh, yes, suh," was the reply. "They only jes' in hyuh a hoot, suh."

The native turned toward the woods, put a hand on each side of his mouth, and shouted a lusty:

"Hoo-o-o-o-o-hoot!"

In a few seconds a similar cry came back from the woods.

"That they is, suh!" exclaimed the native. "That's them, suh."

And it was. They were three looks and a hoot from the place where the New-Yorker had first inquired for them.

The difficulty was that he did not understand the language of the country. A "look" is as far as you can see from the point where you now are. It may be a turn in the road a hundred yards away, or a point a mile or more distant. You travel to the end of that "look," and from there take another look to the farthest object in sight as your course lies, and travel on to that. If you have been told that your destination is two looks ahead, when you get to the end of the second look, there you are.

Neuralgia and Headaches in Girls.

Nothing is so terrible as severe neuralgia, and beyond a doubt girls acquire it often enough by the conditions of school life. Headaches in a school-girl usually mean exhausted nerve power through over-work, over-excitement, over-anxiety, or bad air. Rest, a good laugh, or a country walk will usually cure it readily enough to begin with. But to become subject to headaches is a very serious matter, and all such nervous diseases have a nasty tendency to recur, to become periodic, to be set up by the same causes, to become an organic habit of the body. For any woman to become liable to severe neuralgia is a most terrible thing. It means that while it lasts life is not worth having. It paralyzes the power to work, it deprives her of the power to enjoy anything, it tends toward irritability of temper, it tempts to the use of narcotics and stimulants.

You may talk about bravery as much as you please, but as a matter of fact, everybody lacks it.



Sir Isaac Newton's Scientific Journey.

In an article on the measurement of the force of the wind, recently published in the Monthly Weather Review, an interesting story is recalled of Sir Isaac Newton's scientific journey. Sir Isaac Newton undertook such measurement when a boy. It was during a great gale on the 3d of September, 1658. The fact that Newton had no apparatus, did not baffle his ingenuity. He stood out in the wind and jumped as far as he could against it, and then as far as he could with it, and a comparison of the distances of him the data for calculating the force of the gale.

How a Train Sweeps Air Along.

Interesting results of an investigation of the effect produced by a road train on the air through which it moves were presented at a recent meeting of the St. Louis Academy of Science, by Prof. F. E. Nipher. It appears that motion is communicated to the atmosphere many feet away, that a large amount of air is dragged along with the train. A peculiar danger arises near a swift-running train from the tendency of the moving air to topple a person over, and at the same time to communicate a motion of rotation to the body, which may cause to roll under the train.

A Bog Silo.

Before daylight on Dec. 28 last a most disastrous phenomenon occurred not far from Killarney, in Ireland. A great peat bog, lying on a hillside more than 700 feet high, broke loose at a lower edge, and the semi-fluid mass flowed like a stream of black lava some ten miles down the valley of the Ownacree River. A house with eight occupants was swept away, and road bridges and fields were buried, yet the strange flood advanced so silently in the night that there was no warning, and people living near were unaware of what had happened until day revealed the slimy lake spread over the neighboring fields.

The Great Moa.

New Zealand was once inhabited by a race of gigantic wingless birds, called the moa. Although now extinct, these birds are well known to men of science through their skeletons, the sands of which have been found. Fortunately, in the great majority of cases, the skeletons are not complete, and in reconstructing them for exhibition in museums it is necessary to match together the bones of different individuals. Recently, however, the British Museum has obtained a complete skeleton of a moa nearly ten feet high. Not more than three or four similarly perfect skeletons of this monster of an age long past are known to be in existence.

The Fear of High Places.

President G. Stanley Hall, of Clark University, has lately been studying the origin of the various forms of fear and terror, and he suggests that the common fear of high places, which many animals exhibit, and which is very acute with some human beings, may be "a vestigial trace, like the gill slits under the skin of our necks, ante-dating limbs and inherited from our swimming ancestors." In reply to this Prof. Wesley Mills, of McGill University, says that while the youngest mammals and birds exhibit peculiar manifestations when placed near the edge of an elevated surface, yet a turtle will walk off any elevated support again and again, and a frog "will jump almost anywhere." These exceptions, he thinks, present a difficulty to the acceptance of President Hall's theory.

Rifles that Shoot Two Miles.

Practise science is still engaged upon the problems suggested by recent changes and improvements in gun projectiles and gunpowders. The rifle adopted for use in the United States navy have bores less than one-quarter of an inch in diameter (accurately 0.236 in.), and, with smokeless powder, they send their slender projectiles over a range of about two miles, starting from the muzzle with a velocity of some 2,300 feet in a second! Similar rifles have been selected for use in the navies of several foreign countries, but the question is still under debate, in some quarters, whether the immense range and great penetrating power of these arms are not fully counterbalanced by the difficulties connected with their manufacture and use, and by the lack of "stopping power" of the projectiles.

The Brute.

Mrs. Rumpus—George, when we were courting you used to say you liked me because I was just the height of your heart.

Mr. Rumpus—But I forgot that it was in my breast pocket that I carried my pocketbook.—Pittsburg News.