



THE LATCH KEY.

"No!" It was a peremptory "no," such as mother seldom used, for she was gentle in disposition.

"No, Freddy, don't think any more about it."

"Can't you make an exception just this once?" begged Fred, my brother, looking like a persecuted slaver.

"No! You might lose it; somebody might find it; we might be exposed to all sorts of calamities; someone might get into the house—"

"Stop, mother, you are picturing improbabilities to yourself."

"Secondly," continued our mother, "you are too young to carry a latchkey. I don't wish you to be out late at night; you are the only male protector we have, and I want you to be at home with us."

Under any other circumstances Fred might have been proud to be called our "only male protector," but this distinction made no impression upon him now. When mother had taken the latchkey from the keyboard and assigned it to her pocket, Fred wasn't in the kindest frame of mind.

Two months ago we had moved from the little town where we were born to a large city—mother, Fred and I. We were still upset and confused by the sudden radical change from country quiet to the bustle of a metropolis. Mother certainly came much against her inclination, but Freddy exhibited an unusual musical talent, and I, too, was modestly gifted with a propensity for drawing, and we felt the needs of instructive advantages which we could not obtain in our native town. Our maternal parent was unwilling that we should go forth into the world alone, and so the little home was sacrificed, and we set up an abode elsewhere.

Our mother, who had been the most confiding soul in the world, was suspicious of everything and everybody in her new surroundings and insisted that the house should be locked and bolted at 10 o'clock every night. At that time we bolted the door to our apartments. At half past 10 the front door was locked by the janitor, and everybody was supposed to be safely tucked away in bed.

"Ridiculous," growled Fred, after mother had left the room with the key in her pocket, "to expect a grown man to be at home every night at 10."

Fred was invited to a little supper after the concert at which his music teacher was to render the star numbers.

"She will let you stay out till 11 if I ask her, and I will sit up for you."

"You know mother goes to bed at 10, so if I should be a little behind time, don't mind, Milly, don't mind; that's a good girl."

"Very well, brother mine!"

"Or half an hour, or an hour! She'll be asleep, anyway, and I'll just cough gently under your window, and then you'll come down and let me in."

"See that you watch is not too far behind time, Freddy," I laughed, "and I'll see what can be done."

"I'll go down now and try it out! If you hear me cough, let me know."

Freddy went out. A moment afterward I heard him cough immediately under my window. I looked out and nodded to him. "All right, old fellow, I can hear the signal."

Mother finally was prevailed upon to give her permission for Fred to stay out until 11, and after supper made herself comfortable in the big arm chair with the evident intention to wait for the "male protector" of the family.

At 10 o'clock she looked pretty sleepy, and the strike of the next half hour awoke her from her first nap. She gathered up her knitting.

"He will soon be here now, Milly; it's really not worth while for both of us to sit up. I'm going to bed but not to sleep until he is safely at home."

I bade mother good-night. In less than five minutes, I knew, she would be sound asleep. An interesting book would help me over the next hour. Before I knew I was deeply involved in the love affair of a young couple, and when I turned the last page of the book it was twenty minutes past midnight.

A sudden thought struck terror to my heart. Fred may have been here and, absorbed as I was in my story, I might not have heard the signal. I rushed to the window, but nobody was to be seen. The minutes dragged with leaden slowness. A quarter of 11! Where could he be? At 1 o'clock I began to divest myself of my dress and slipped into my gown. Then I arranged my hair for the night and had just finished putting one side of my head into curl papers, when the signal came.

I went to the window, opened it just a bit and said softly:

"Is that you, Freddy?"

"Yes!" "Here is the key!" I threw it down into the street.

"Yes!" "Don't leave it in the keyhole; bring it up with you!"

"Quite right!" "And take off your boots; don't let mother hear you."

"Very good!"

I seized the lamp and hastened out on the stairs to light my beated brother on his way. The key was turned in the lock below. Then there was a pause. Freddy was evidently taking off his shoes before coming up the stairs.

"You are a —" I was on the point of whispering, when I heard the bootless step quite near me, but I suddenly checked myself. From out of the shadow of the chairs emerged a shining helmet with waving plumes, and beneath it the strange face of a young man, with a dark brown mustache and black eyes, the whole figure arrayed in knightly armor—evidently in masquerade suit.

I had just presence of mind enough left not to cry out aloud. A few steps sufficed to bring me within the shelter of our hall, and as I closed the door I saw the tall stranger bow profoundly, then all was dark. I was terribly frightened at first, but when soon after I came to my senses I realized that the stranger had my key, perhaps he had left it in the lock. I rekindled the lamp, arranged my toilet and descended to the front door.

No; it was not there. In my excitement I had forgotten to note whether the knight had gone down or up the stairs, after admitting himself with my key. There was nothing left for me to do but to go from one floor to the other and find the culprit. I rang the bell of the lower flat timidly enough. It brought to the door an old man.

"Have you a young man lodger who has just come home? He has my—"

"No!" growled a voice, and the door was slammed in my face.

I went to the next floor and repeated the experiment. A young servant maid came to the door.

"No," she said, when I inquired after a young man in a masquerade suit; no young man lived on their premises.

Past our own door I now stumbled and went to the floor above. My knock brought to the door a roly-poly little old woman in dressing sack and night cap.

"What is it, child?" she asked, anxiously, for she knew me. "Is your mother ill? Can we help you?"

"No," I whispered, "but I have just by mistake given our latchkey to a strange young man in a masquerade suit because I took him for my brother. Does he live with you?"

"No, my dear young lady."

Tears came to my eyes. I was at my wit's ends.

"But a young artist has just moved into the garret room. Perhaps he is the man you seek."

Yes, it must be he! But how could I, a young woman, go to a young man's quarters in the middle of the night to demand the return of my latch key?

My old friend came to my rescue, called her husband, and sent him upstairs to ask for my key. We could hear their voices, first unintelligible, and then the voice of the stranger rang out in the tone of injured innocence.

"What; not returned the key? I laid it at the feet of the young lady?"

And so it was. When we three came down to our door and held the lamp close to the floor, we found it lying where he had said. I thanked my



THE WHOLE FIGURE ARRAYED IN KNIGHTLY ARMOR.

neighbors for their kindly assistance and hastened to the window to look out for Fred.

There he stood, shivering in the cold, anxiously waiting for admittance. He had not much to say, but grabbed the lamp and disappeared in his room. I

did not blame him, though he was woefully late in coming home.

Next morning we found that our mother was unaware of the adventure of the night. She had slept the sleep of the just, for which I was profoundly thankful.

Just as we were ready to sit down to dinner the bell rang. My mother opened the door and bowed a young man into the parlor.

"I came to beg your pardon for the disturbance I caused last night," I heard the voice of a young man say. "Disturbance! I know nothing of it, Milly!"

I came in, red as a peony, and ready to slink into the floor. Mother handed me his card. "Mr. Charles Bowman, Artist," it said.

"You must tell me all about it, Mr. Bowman," continued my mother, "for I don't know what you mean, really."

And he told her just what had happened. Mother's face grew longer and longer as he proceeded with his narrative.

"Stupid men!" I thought. Just at the end he showed a grain of sense.

"When did all this happen?" asked my mother, excitedly. "I went to bed



MOTHER HANDED ME HIS CARD.

at 10 o'clock. I hope that Fred came home at the proper time, Milly."

The young man's dark eyes turned upon me.

"I don't know just to the minute, but it must have been about 11 o'clock or thereabout."

I blessed him for that answer. Mr. Bowman's first unfortunate visit was followed by many more. He became my brother's friend, then my sweetheart, and now he is my betrothed. Late in the spring we are to be married.

YOUNG PHIL SHERIDAN.

Not Brilliant, but Studious and Industrious at West Point.

Up at West Point there is a slender, smooth-faced young man who is working day and night to emulate the glorious record of his father.

It is "young Phil Sheridan." He is already a soldier by instinct. In a few years he will be a soldier in reality.

So far he has taken but little interest in the athletic sports of his classmates. He is not a foot-ball player. He is a bad hand at baseball. He plays tennis and enjoys it. Most of all, however, he is a thorough student.

While not exactly a brilliant youth, young Sheridan is persistent and industrious, and it would not be surprising if at the end of four years' study he should be graduate at the head of his class.

It was not only his own but his mother's desire that he should become a soldier, and by the time he receives his lieutenantcy it is possible that we may indulge in a war with a foreign power that will enable him to show his mettle.

Like poets, however, great soldiers seem to be a question of birth and instinct. In this connection a prominent West Point officer recently said:

"It is almost a certainty that if we were to go to war now the successes that we might achieve would not depend upon the sons of our dead military heroes. I do not know of one who has been graduated at this college who has shown any especial brilliancy."

"Sheridan is as brilliant as any of them. Military genius does not shine in times of peace, however. It takes war to bring out a soldier's qualities, and it is likely that in case of an armed conflict new generals would spring up from humble lieutenants who have barely managed to scratch through their examination."—New York Journal.

Seals Love Music.

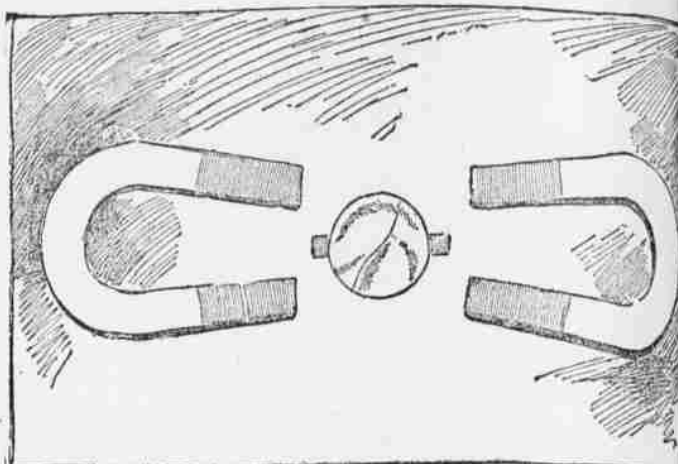
The well-known love of seals for musical sounds often leads to their destruction. When the Eskimo hunter sees none of his prey about he begins whistling, and sooner or later is sure to attract an appreciative seal within reach of his harpoon. Lying at full length at the edge of the ice he continues whistling low, plaintive, calling notes, and presently a few of the animals will draw near to the spot, lifting themselves as high as they can out of the water, and slowly moving their heads to and fro, as if keeping time to the music. By and by one seal, more daring than its fellows, will come very close to the hunter, who then jumps to his feet and slays the creature, while its mates make off as quickly as possible.—Pearson's Weekly.

Germany's Many Suicides.

Germany's proportion of suicides is larger than that of any other European country.

There is a lie going around about an old-fashioned child that was not noisy.

HOW THE EARTH IS HELD IN SPACE.



Mr. Clarence Alva of St. Louis, according to the Post-Dispatch, has thought a little scheme which gives a very good idea of the manner in which the earth is held in space. Mr. Alva says a person may get the right idea if he secures a pair of magnets and place them directly opposite each other so that the currents shall flow in opposite directions. As shown in the cut, they should be an inch or so apart each other. The magnets should be rather strong and should be of the same size and strength. Then the experimenter should make a little sphere of paper or light substance, and fasten two pieces of steel or similar metal to the ball, the metal being almost exactly opposite. Then comes the work of so placing the sphere the exact center of the space between the magnets. If the experimenter can do this he will have the sphere remaining in the air without any visible means of support. It is quite a trick to get the thing in correct operation, but Mr. Alva says it can be done.

COL. GEO. M. RANDALL.

Soldier Who Will Command Uncle Sam's Troops in Alaska.

Lieut. Col. George M. Randall, who is to command the United States troops in Alaska, has had an eventful career in the army of the United States.

He enlisted in the civil war as a private in the Fourth United States Infantry in April, 1861. In October, 1861, he was made a second lieutenant. He served with the Fourth until he reached the rank of major, when he was placed in command of the Fourteenth New York artillery. At the close of the civil war he was made first lieutenant of the Fourth United States Infantry, and in the army reorganization was transferred to the Twenty-third Infantry as captain. He served as captain and major of the Twenty-third during all of the important Indian campaigns of the West and was made lieutenant colonel of the Eighth Infantry in 1894. Col. Randall has been five times brevetted by Congress for gallant and meritorious conduct in battle, as follows: Sept. 17, 1862, brevetted captain for service at Antietam, Va.; April 2, 1865, brevetted major for gallant services at Petersburg, Va.; April 23, 1865, brevetted lieutenant colonel and colonel for gallant services at Fort Steedman, Va.; Feb. 27, 1890, brevetted lieutenant colonel for gallantry in actions against the Apache Indians at Turret; 1890, brevetted colonel for gallant services against the Apache Indians at Pino, Arizona, and for distinguished services in Indian campaigns. During the campaign of Gen. Crook against the Sioux Indians Col. Randall, then major of the Twenty-third, was his right-hand man, serving as one of his staff officers and commanding his Indian scouts. Randall's fight against the Apache Indians at Turret Mountain in 1873 served to close the Apache war, which had been in progress several years. The Indians had taken refuge on the summit of Turret Mountain, where they were certain no enemy could follow. Randall surrounded the stronghold at night. He made his men crawl up the face of the mountain on their hands and knees. They reached the summit at midnight, and at dawn Col. Randall led a fierce

and should be glad to have you part in the competition. Twelve bottles of each kind should be sent for examination, and all whisky that is adjudged worthy of the prize will remain the property of the undersigned. It is also required that the carriage paid by the sender.

This letter ended the correspondence.

DON'T KISS THE DOG.

A Very Bad Habit Which Often Leads to Malignant Diseases.

Don't kiss your dog, no matter how dear he or she may be to you! And from the fact that it is a nasty habit



IT'S A DANGEROUS HABIT.

there is grave danger to the human being from all sorts of microbes and germs, which are fonder of the human being than of the dog. This has been amply proven by scientists, and the Board of Health, says the New York World. As a matter of fact, the latter body has several well authenticated cases of diphtheria contracted from dogs on its records. Diseases all kinds lurk upon the lips and nose of the dog. A dog will wander about even though of high pedigree, and the course of his journeys will be the acquaintance of dogs of lesser grade. From them he will gather crores as well as fleas. Then he returns home to his fond mistress to tribute his collection indiscriminately. Then his mistress will pick him up by her arms and will hug and kiss him. Typhoid, diphtheria, cancer and eases too horrible to mention may result from the caress.

Physicians have repeatedly warned against the habit of kissing dogs, seemingly to little purpose. Every the papers chronicle cases where a disease has mysteriously appeared where the source of contagion is known. In nine out of every ten cases, dog kissing is to blame. But, being aside the possibility of danger from disease entirely, the habit should be stopped by all self-respecting women for what man would care to kiss a dog knowing that they had previously filed their lips kissing a dog? No matter how clean a dog may be; no matter how great a favorite, it should be no matter what the temptation, not kissed.

Around the World on a Wheel. Miss Annie Londonderry, the American woman who has made a tour of the world on her bicycle, is now giving an account of her experiences. It was unattended, and it required years and two months for her to complete the trip.

Sun at Sea.

Smith—Did many of the passengers go to hear Dr. Fourthly preach in the main cabin this morning?

Brown—Yes, but most of them when he announced his text.

"What was it?"

"Cast thy bread upon the water, Life."

It is a rare man who commends like to tell how it should have been done.



LIEUT. COL. RANDALL.

charge against the surprised Apaches, many of whom, in their efforts to escape, dashed over the precipitous sides of the mountain to death. The defeat broke the spirit of the tribes and peace was soon made with them. Col. Randall is a man of fine physique and is a magnificent looking soldier. He is extremely affable and has thousands of friends throughout the West. He has indomitable will power, combined with extremely good judgment, and no better officer could have been selected by the Government to protect American interests on the Alaska-British Columbia frontier.

Tit for Tat.

A well-known artist received a circular from a whisky firm, inviting him to join in a competition for a poster. Only one prize was to be given, and the unsuccessful drawings were to become the property of the firm.

He replied as follows: "Gentlemen: I am offering a prize of \$2 for the best specimens of whisky.