

The Squire's Hobby.

FOR ten years people had been waiting for Squire Harding to marry. East and west he was known as "the catch" of Oakdale.

In the first place, he was very handsome; then he was very wealthy; and, finally, he was irreproachably connected, and as the most wary young lady of Oakdale said, there was "nothing disagreeable about him." No; the men said that Squire Harding was a "first-rate man," and the women voted that he was "nice." Yet, when pretty Gladys Ray became engaged to marry him, she nearly cried her eyes out.

This is the way it was: When the squire had come and built the handsomest house in town, what a "fluttering there was among the dove-cotes!" Blondes and brunettes successively set their caps for him, but in vain. The squire confessed to certain old ladies that he had "hoped to be able to fill his dear Matilda's place;" but, beyond a few civil attentions, no young lady of Oakdale could boast of him as a conquest.

This fact showed the man a little dull and unappreciative, for nowhere in the country is a prettier, more intelligent and domestic set of girls than in the nice agricultural village of Oakdale. But the squire had his idiosyncrasy—his hobby. "It was that of health."

He had uttered a vow never to marry a woman who was not perfectly healthy. On this point he was unchangeable. Let scarlets and purples flout, let ringlets wave and smiles brighten, the squire turned neither to the left nor right. His standard of the ideal female physique seemed never to be approached.

Most people thought Oakdale girls buxom and blooming enough, but the squire's observant eyes saw erysipelas in burning cheeks, consumption in narrow shoulders, dropsy in the plump forms. It was only when he beheld Gladys Ray that this exacting man was satisfied and enthusiastic.

She had just come from a year's stay with her grandparents in New York, and was barely sixteen. Pretty—well, that is no word for it. She was just as lovely as a new-blown rose. And she was as good as she was pretty, and as loving as she was good; and every one would have seen it was out of the question for her to marry Squire Harding, a worldly man of forty, with a shrewd eye for the main chance.

She was just as unselfish as a sunbeam, as impulsive as a kitten, as guileless as a violet, and cared nothing for the position Squire Harding could offer his wife. She never knew what to say to him when he came to Clematis Cottage, as her home was called—was afraid of his bass voice, and shy of his facetiousness; and yet he came and came, and her father encouraged his suit, and Gladys was told she must agree to marry him.

Must, because business was dull, and there was a mortgage on Clematis Cottage, and there was no sense in a girl refusing such a chance. Of course, she would never have another like it in a lifetime.

Thus her father talked common sense to her, and Gladys protested with her uncommon sense, and said she did not want to be rich, and the squire's money would not make her a bit happier, and that it would be a dreadful thing to make her miserable all the rest of her life.

She had no mother, but her brothers protested, telling her that she was a goose; and at last the poor girl was harassed into making a half promise that, "perhaps, some time, she would."

But her father at once set in motion preparations for the wedding, and sent for Aunt Phoebe.

Aunt Phoebe was an uncommonly skillful needlewoman, but what was more in Gladys' case she was a person with a heart.

Though she had known the grimmest, hardest and bitterest of experiences, her trials had not hardened her against the griefs and sorrows of youth; and the moment she saw the face of her niece she knew that something was wrong, and she determined to find out what it was.

One morning she went into Gladys' chamber and found the girl hastily putting away a letter—a letter post-marked New York, and directed to herself, in the boldest and handsomest of chirography. Having put the letter under lock and key, Gladys turned silently to be measured for a new embroidered waist.

"Are you tired, Gladys?" Aunt Phoebe asked.

"A little," replied the girl.

"Didn't you rest well last night?"

"Not very."

"Gladys, you are my dear dead sister's child! Tell me what ails you."

"Oh, auntie, my heart aches!"

And she put her face on the broad, womanly shoulder and burst into tears.

"There, there dear! I knew it was

a heart trouble. Tell auntie all about it. I don't believe you want to marry Squire Harding."

"I don't—I don't!" sobbed Gladys.

"Law, child, what makes you, then?"

"They all say I ought. But, oh, auntie, I love somebody else, and that makes it so hard!"

And Gladys, weeping, blushed to the tips of her fingers.

"Well," ejaculated Aunt Phoebe, putting the embroidered waist away; "here's a pretty state of things."

"It would be different if I didn't know of anything better," moaned Gladys.

"But Dick was so kind and gentle. He made my life just beautiful all the last six months. When I came away from grandpa's Dick said he loved me dearly, but he was poor, and could not marry now—though he would be true to me, and try to get a place in the world. He is young—only twenty-one—but grandpa says he is an excellent young man, and sure to do well. Yet it's of no use—no use at all—to say anything to father about Dick. They are determined that I shall marry Squire Harding, and I don't care for him—I don't care for him at all!"

"Then you sha'n't marry him! I'll put a stop to this work, sure as my name is Phoebe Ray! I don't know how now, but I will!"

No, Aunt Phoebe did not know how the task was to be accomplished, but, with eyes and ears alert, she soon accumulated a fund of information bearing upon the case.

One morning she presented herself at

Squire Harding's door, and was shown into his private room, where he received his clients.

"It's early, squire, but I wanted to see you alone, before the duties of the day," she observed.

"Sit down, madam—sit down," said the squire.

"The subject of my call is my niece."

"Ah!"

"Yes, I suppose you will be deeply interested in this?"

"Certainly, certainly! Anything which concerns my pretty little Gladys! Ah, that is an uncommon girl, Mrs. Ray—so gentle, so fair, so healthy—"

"Ahem!" croaked Aunt Phoebe, ominously.

"What, dear Mrs. Ray! Is not Miss Gladys well?"

"Far from it."

"You amaze me! Has some outrageous disease approached that lovely girl?"

Aunt Phoebe shook her head, and solemnly said:

"Chronic."

"What—what is it?"

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"You don't say so! Can it be? Why, I supposed—"

"She looks healthy, I know. But Gladys is like her mother's family; they all had hearts—I mean they all suffered from heart troubles. Why, I could tell you of sufferings—but I won't. I won't harass your feelings by describing what a source of dreadful misery a heart difficulty is. But I know; I've had my share of their pains."

"You—you have that tendency, madam?"

"Dreadfully! All the family has more or less, I tell you, squire; and my niece—she's a dear, good girl, and I want her to do well; but it really did seem to me as if you ought—being so strict in your notions of health—to know the truth."

"Heart disease! Why, it often proves suddenly fatal, doesn't it?"

"Oh, yes; people usually die with it. And then there's faintings, and pinings away, and fit—"

"Lord bless my soul! This is serious, my dear madam! I—I have openly declared that I will not marry a sickly person. It is strange—it is very objectionable to me—that Miss Gladys' father has not informed me."

"He doesn't know, and wouldn't believe a word of it. Gladys has never said a word to him about her heart. But I am her aunt—her mother's own

slister—and it isn't a week since my niece confessed to me how she suffered. I suspected it before she uttered a word—for, as I say, it's in her family, and I know the signs."

"Yes, yes! Well, now, my dear lady, what course ought I to pursue, under these remarkable circumstances? With my peculiar views on the subject of health—my very decided views—I really cannot be expected to proceed as if—"

"I don't know anything about that. I cannot advise you. But I feel as if I had done my duty."

"But I—can I honorably retract? Can I withdraw my proposal?"

"My brother-in-law is of a very choleric temper; I cannot say. But you might be called away."

"I am called away. I have urgent business in Liverpool, and I am the man who should be on the spot. No indirect agency will avail. I shall go abroad at once, Mrs. Ray. And Miss Gladys—she is very pretty—no doubt may supply my place, in the course of a year, with some one who—who has not the peculiar and very decided views on health that I hold. And you—since you seem a lady of uncommon sense and superior ideas of the fitness of things—will, perhaps, use your influence to—"

"Certainly, to smooth my niece's pathway, of course."

So the conversation came pacifically to an end, and two days later the squire sailed for Liverpool. The news came to the Rays like a thunderbolt, for the father and son had prospectively secured a large slice of good fortune from Gladys' wedding the rich squire. But he was gone—for a year or more, report said—and after a furious and senseless anger against Gladys the poor girl was left in peace.

When Aunt Phoebe went home to her quiet seaside dwelling at Bayport she took Gladys with her on a visit, and one day she privately wrote a letter to Dick Archer, who, she had learned through Gladys' grandfather, was a most promising young man.

The result of this letter was to bring the young gentleman also to Bayport on a visit, and the young people had plenty of time in which to plight their vows and take wise counsel with good Aunt Phoebe.

Through her influence, Archer was soon prosperously established in life, and now, in happy motherhood, happy and rosy with her own rosy babies, Gladys, the wife of a good husband, has far less heart trouble.—Waverley Magazine.

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Science AND INVENTION

It is stated that the authorities at Scotland Yard are now engaged in subjecting a police electric lamp to practical tests, to ascertain if it will stand the necessary wear and tear of the service.

Plans for the reclamation of the meadows near Newark, N. J., are being considered and thirteen plans were submitted. The plans were sent in by experts and engineers from all parts of the country.

Experiments made by French savants on Mont Blanc, last summer, showed that the ice of a great glacier will serve as a support for a telegraph-wire without insulation. A naked galvanized iron wire laid upon the ice transmitted telegraphic signals more than a mile.

Sir William MacCormac writes in the Lancet that in most cases the damage done by modern bullets, and especially the Mauser, cannot be compared with that inflicted by the projectiles of the needle-guns or the Chassepot rifle, weapons employed in the Franco-German war. A similar result is obtained when comparison is made with the work of the bullets used in our civil war.

As the result of twenty-nine years of experiments at Rothamsted, England, it is shown that in the winter months more than half of the amount of rain that falls penetrates into the soil and becomes available for the supply of springs, while in the summer only one-quarter of the rainfall is absorbed by the soil. The maximum quantity of water in the soil is at a depth of about forty inches.

The way in which the Indians made soapstone dishes is said to be as follows: With a hard implement, probably a flint, they cut a circle on the stone which was to become a dish and then chipped away and down on the circumference of this. They then fashioned the outside to the shape they desired while it was still attached to the rock itself. Finally, they split it off at the bottom and hollowed it out, and the dish was completed.

Gas liquor has been turned to a useful account at Cuzco, in France. Beet root would not grow in the fields because they had become infested with a beet-root parasite, but with one application of the gas liquor fifteen tons of beet root per acre, with 14 per cent. of sugar, four splendid crops of cereals were obtained, and in another set of trials using gas liquor only, four successful crops of more than twenty-four tons to the acre and a fifth of over sixteen tons were secured.

The ingenuity of architects is sometimes severely taxed to provide for the comfort of the dwellers in lofty apartment houses. In New York City plans have been filed for a gigantic building of this kind to stand on 5th avenue, and to be connected with a well-known restaurant across the street by a tunnel, finely fitted up and lighted, where by the occupants of the apartment house can go out to their meals in all kinds of weather without the necessity of putting on hats. The only drawback appears to be that they are limited in their choice of a restaurant.

ABOUT APPENDICITIS.

Few Persons of Middle Age Who Have Not Had the Disease.

The vermiform appendix, inflammation of which constitutes appendicitis, is a curious little offshoot from the large intestine near the point where it is joined by the small intestine. It is a hollow tube about as thick as a lead pencil, from an inch to several inches in length, which communicates with the cavity of the large intestine, but is closed at its free extremity. Nobody knows definitely what its use is, and many think it has no use at all.

It is a popular belief that inflammation of the appendix is often caused by the lodgment in it of a grape-seed or some similar little body, but as a matter of fact this very seldom occurs, and no one need deprive himself of a delicious and nourishing fruit from any such fear.

There are probably very few persons of middle age who have not had appendicitis, but fortunately they did not know it. It is only when the inflammation becomes severe and involves the parts about the appendix that violent symptoms appear, and this occurs in only a small portion of cases.

The disease is more frequent with the young man than with the middle-aged or old.

In mild cases the