

TWO ELOPEMENTS.

In a large, square, old-fashioned house—such as our fathers used to build when solidity was more sought after than utility—lived Philip Manson and his sister Esther. Philip had reached the mature age of 40, and Esther was close to him. Still, each had pursued a solitary path through life, seeking no companionship save that of the other till there was reason to believe that they would continue to follow the same course till in the fullness of time they were gathered into the family tomb—the receptacle of many generations of the Manson family. There was more reason to think so, since they took care to commend an unmarried life, not only by example, but by precept.

"No," said Philip, when assailed on this subject by a match-making lady; "marrying may be very good for some people, but I could not bear to have my habits broken in upon, and my whole house turned topsy-turvy by the introduction of a wife."

"But by-and-by, when you grow older, you will feel the need of a wife more than at present."

"No," said Philip, conclusively, "I have a sister who is devoted to me, and whilst she lives I shall need no other." As for Miss Esther, she often declared that she would never make a slave of herself for any man living. If other women were foolish enough to give up their independence, and tie themselves to a man, for no other earthly purpose than to burden themselves with cares and toils from morning till night, she had no objection. Her brother and she had always lived together peaceably and happily, and she did not think she could not make any change for the better.

Of course, it was insinuated by those whose opinions differed widely from Miss Esther's, that in adopting this opinion she was only making a virtue of necessity, and that it was best to be contented with one's lot, provided there was no chance of improving it. But Esther did not hear these remarks, and so was not disturbed by them. She continued to live in the old house with her brother. They kept no domestic, since Esther rather plumed herself on her housekeeping qualities, and there was really but little to do. So, as her brother was usually absent during the day, she was left for the most part to the companionship of her own thoughts, unless some neighbor chanced to call in—a thing, by the way, of rather rare occurrence, since most of the neighbors had large families of their own, which necessarily confined them at home.

Early one afternoon just after Esther Manson had completed her task of clearing away the dinner dishes, and storing them away in the cupboard after a thorough washing, she was startled by a rap at the door.

Somewhat surprised by a caller at this unusual hour she answered the summons. She was a little apprehensive that it was a neighbor who had of late proved very troublesome from her habit of borrowing articles, and owing, it is to be presumed, to a habitual forgetfulness, neglecting to return them.

"I hope," she mused, "that if it is Mrs. Bailey, she will be wanting to borrow something that I have not got."

She opened the door; but no Mrs. Bailey presented herself to her expecting gaze—a gentleman of 45, carefully, nay elegantly dressed, stood before her.

"I beg your pardon for intruding, madame," said he, as he noticed Esther's look of surprise; "but can you direct me to the house of the late Mr. Wellfleet? I have heard it was for sale, and from the description I have heard of it, judge it will suit me."

"It is the next house on the left, sir," answered Esther, who had had time, while the gentleman was speaking, to examine his appearance, which did not fail to impress her favorably.

"Thank you for the information. I trust you will pardon me for the trouble I have occasioned you," replied the gentleman, bowing.

"Not the least trouble in the world," replied Esther, a little fluttered by a deference to which she had not been accustomed.

Two days after, Esther heard that Mr. Wellfleet's estate had been purchased by a stranger named Bigelow. She at once conjectured, and rightly, that this was the same with her visitor. A few days elapsed, and Esther Manson received another visit from the gentleman.

"I have a favor to ask of you, Miss Manson," he began (it seems that he had ascertained her name). "I am aware that our slight acquaintance will hardly justify it, but I trust time will remove this objection. You must know," he added, smiling, "that I am a bachelor, dependent in many respects upon my housekeeper, who, though a good woman in her way, I am afraid is not reliable in matters of taste. As my furniture has arrived, but has not yet been arranged, I would esteem it a great service if you would give me your opinion in some little matters respecting its proper disposition. My carriage is at the door ready to carry you over."

"But," said Esther, a little hesitatingly, "I do not claim to have much taste. I fear I shall prove no more reliable in that respect than your housekeeper."

"I have but to look around me," said Mr. Bigelow, politely, "to be fully satisfied upon that point."

Esther's cheek flushed with pleasure at this compliment, and she made preparations to comply with her new visitor's request.

It was not without a little consciousness of the singularity of her position that Esther found herself riding by the side of a gentleman with whom she had scarcely exchanged half a dozen words in the course of her life. The distance,

however, was but short, and she had little time for reflection. On arriving at her place of destination, she found the chief part of the business accomplished. The furniture, which, by the way, was new and handsome, had been arranged in the rooms after a fashion, but Esther was able to point out several changes for the better, with all of which Mr. Bigelow professed himself delighted; he, moreover, asked her advice in regard to hanging several fine pictures that he had picked up in the course of his European travels.

Mr. Bigelow would not be satisfied without showing his new found acquaintance all over the house, from kitchen to garret. When all was completed he overpowered her with protestations of gratitude for her kind service, and landed her at her own door just five minutes before her brother came in. Esther was rather glad of this, as she was a little suspicious that her brother would consider her adventure rather rather a Quixotic one.

To avoid comment, she did not even inform Philip that she had ever met Mr. Bigelow. He took frequent opportunities to call upon her, on some slight pretext or another, but it always chanced to be when her brother was absent.

"I wonder," said Philip, carelessly as he sat by the fire one evening "whether Mr. Bigelow will not be looking out for a wife before long?"

"I don't know," said Esther, and in her embarrassment dropping half a dozen stitches from the stocking she held in her hand.

"Not that I approve of marriage—at least in my own case," said Philip, not noticing this demonstration, "but it may be different with Mr. Bigelow. He has no sister to superintend his establishment. I don't know, however, whether there is anybody likely to suit him in this village. Let me see—there is Miss Preston; she might do."

"No, I don't think she would suit him at all," said Esther, with a spirit which considerably surprised her brother. "She knows very little about housekeeping."

"Why, I thought you and Miss Preston were friends," said Philip, a little puzzled.

"Well, so we are," returned Esther, in her usual tone; "but I—I hardly think she would suit Mr. Bigelow."

"Perhaps not," he rejoined, and so the conversation ended.

From the conversation which we have recorded above, the reader will obtain some insight into the character of Esther's feelings toward Mr. Bigelow. She would hardly confess it to herself; but, as a matter of fact, her ideas of marriage had suffered a material change within a brief period.

Meanwhile the gentleman continued his visits. Oftentimes he would ask to see the bed of flowers, on which Esther rather prided herself, and sometimes he would petition for seeds, being very fond of flowers, as he said, and very anxious to introduce them in his own garden.

On one of these occasions Mr. Bigelow, after a little visible embarrassment, said, hesitatingly:

"I would like to ask your advice, Miss Esther, on rather a delicate subject and one of great importance to myself. There is one thing I wish to secure to make my establishment complete; but I hardly know in what manner to ask for it."

"What is it you refer to?" asked Esther, unsuspectingly.

"A wife," was the significant reply. Instantly a deep crimson flushed Esther's cheeks. She did not trust herself to speak.

"Need I say that you are the one whom, of all others, I would seek to place in that position?"

He took her unresisting hand and kissed it with all the gallantry of a young lover.

"But what will my brother say?" inquired Esther, when she had found voice to speak.

"What should he say. You are your own mistress, surely."

"Yes, but he is always ridiculing the idea of marriage, and I couldn't venture to tell him."

"No need of it. Let's run away to New York and get married. You know," he added gaily, "we are both young and romantic, and it would be quite in character."

Esther at first objected, but when she came to consider that in this way she would be relieved of a great portion of the embarrassment which such a step would naturally bring with it, she consented, and that day week was appointed for the departure. She required this time to make preparations.

Meanwhile, if Esther had not been so exclusively occupied with her own affairs, she might have noticed that a change had come over Philip. He was often absent evenings, and when at home was more silent and abstracted than his wont. The former she readily attributed to the cause which he assigned, namely, a pressure of business. The latter she did not observe, her mind being preoccupied. We, who are in the secret, may take the liberty of following him on one of his business calls. It was at a neat cottage, from whose front door dangled an immense knocker, that Philip Manson knocked. The door was opened by the same Miss Preston, who, some months before, he thought "might do" for Mr. Bigelow.

"Good evening, Maria," was his salutation as he entered. After a brief conversation about the weather, the crops, and other standard topics, which, however trivial they may seem, could hardly be dispensed with, he began to show signs of embarrassment, and finally ejaculated:

"Maria—Miss Preston—I mean Maria, what are your opinions about marriage?"

"Why," said she, "I hardly know. I don't think I have given much consideration to the subject."

"Because," continued Philip, "I find my opinions have suffered a great change on this point. There was a time when I thought it unwise; but, now, if I could get a good wife, such as you, for example, I should be inclined to try it."

"O Lor," Mr. Manson, said Miss Preston, in some perturbation, "how you talk!"

Five minutes afterward Miss Preston had accepted the proposal of Philip, and the two were, to all intents and purposes, engaged.

"The only thing I think of," said the gentleman, after a brief pause, "is that my sister Esther is a decided enemy to marriage, and I hardly dare to tell her I am about to marry. If we could only get away and have the ceremony performed, it would be pleasant."

"Suppose we go to New York," suggested the bride-elect.

"A good idea. We'll go. When can you be ready?"

"Next Monday morning."

So next Monday morning was agreed upon. It so happened that Esther was to start on Monday afternoon for the same purpose in view—but of this coincidence neither party were aware.

The reader will please go forward a week. By this time the respective parties have reached New York, been united in the holy bonds of matrimony, and are now legally husband and wife. They were located at hotels situated on the same side of the way, but were far from being aware of the propinquity. On the morning succeeding the two marriages, for by a singular chance they happened on the same day, Mr. Bigelow and Esther started out for a walk down street. It so happened that Philip and his wife were at the same moment walking up street. The natural consequence was that the two parties met.

"Good heavens! my sister!" exclaimed Philip.

"Merciful goodness! my brother!" returned Esther.

"What brings you here with Mr. Bigelow?"

"Nay, how happens it that you are here with Miss Preston?"

"Miss Preston is now my wife!"

"And Mr. Bigelow is now my husband!"

"But I thought you were opposed to matrimony."

"And I supposed you were equally so."

"My friends," interposed Mr. Bigelow, "this is a day of surprise—but I trust of such a nature that we shall all be made the happier thereby. My regret, Mr. Manson, at robbing you of your housekeeper is quite dissipated by the knowledge that you have so soon supplied her place."

The sensation excited in the village by the return of the two brides with their respective husbands may be better imagined than described. It gives us pleasure to state that neither Philip nor his sister ever had occasion to regret the double elopement.

One of Dumas' Stories.

Dumas pere once made over a play of a certain M. Gaillardet for Harel, the great theatrical manager. A quarrel ensued, culminating in a duel between Dumas and Gaillardet which Dumas relates in his best manner. One or two touches in the narration are intensely characteristic. He begins by saying that as he started for the place of combat, Bonnaire, a friend of his, came up to him with an album in his hand. "Ah!" he said, "you are going out. Are you in a hurry?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because, if you are not, I should like you so much to write something in this album."

"Well, leave it in my room, and when I come back I will write something in it."

"You can't now?"

"No, I am in a hurry to keep an appointment, and would not be late for any consideration."

"Where are you going?"

"To fight a duel with Gaillardet."

"Oh, then please write something now. Think how delightful it would be for my wife to possess the last lines you ever wrote."

"Ah!" said Dumas, "you are right. I will not deny Mme. Bonnaire that pleasure, and so saying he went back and wrote a few lines in the album."

Then, when they were on the ground, Bixio, a friend of Dumas, who was a doctor, said to him: "Shall you hit him?"

"I don't know," said Dumas.

"Try to."

"I shall certainly try; but do you dislike him?"

"Not at all, I don't know him."

"Then, why so anxious?"

"Well, have you read Merimee's 'Etruscan Vase'?"

"Yes."

"Then don't you remember that he says every man killed by a bullet turns round before he drops? I want to see if it's true?"

He had no opportunity of seeing on this occasion, for the duel was fortunately harmless; but the pendant of this story is that Bixio himself was shot some years afterwards at a Paris barricade—shot to death—and as he fell, turned, he cried, "Ah, one does turn then!"

Mr. Arnold divides society into three classes—the Philistines (or middle class), Barbarians (or aristocracy), and Populace. In each class "there are a certain number of aliens, if we may call them so—persons who are mainly led, not by their class spirit, but by a general humane spirit, by the love of human perfection."

Our Northern Possessions.

Alaska, which has heretofore received but little attention from either explorers or government, promises in the near future to develop into a rich and thickly populated country. Two argonauts who spent the summer navigating that largest and most majestic river on earth, the Yukon, and exploring the country along its banks from its mouth to several hundred miles up stream. The explorers have returned, and tell wonderful stories of what they saw. Sweeping back from the banks of the river for miles and miles were beautiful rolling prairies like those of Eastern Oregon, whose waving grasses had never been disturbed by the foot of man; stately forests whose branches sang requiem to the dead silence of nature never broken by the hand of industry; clear, sparkling streams leaping from rock to rock just as merrily as do those within the bounds of civilization. In fact, they discovered

A WONDERFUL COUNTRY.

Which, when further explored, reveal much more that will be of interest and of future value. Dr. Dall, of the United States Coast Survey, together with Dr. Bean, visited that country for the purpose of making collections in natural history, especially of fishes. In a paper recently read they set forth their observations as follows: In a general way the fishes were similar on the Asiatic and American sides; but there were some species only found on one shore. They found quite a number of Oregon fish that attained a high latitude, several found commonly in the market here, especially red cod, which was found a considerable distance north of Sitka, in large quantities, and of a very good quality.

ALASKAN SALMON.

They secured salmon, not only for specimens, but they formed a large portion of their food during the season. There are a great variety of salmon recognized on the coast of Alaska, and the question arises in Oregon and California, how many of these are distinct species, and how many are to be referred to the very extraordinary changes which have taken place in the salmon from the time of leaving the sea till death? Very few of them ever return to the sea. In California and Alaska he believed the salmon, almost without exception, die after depositing their spawn. They found the Columbia river salmon extending through a large part of Alaska, when they came across a peculiar fish called the "king" salmon, which attains an enormous size, reaching one hundred pounds.

TROUT, CODFISH AND HALIBUT.

Then there are quite a number of trout, and near Sitka a very large trout is caught, the size of salmon. On the Asiatic side common brook trout were found in the salt water. They paid particular attention to the codfish and halibut, and Dr. Bean became confident that the Pacific Coast codfish is the same as the Atlantic, and in the course of time would become as valuable and important on this coast as the Newfoundland fishes are upon the Atlantic. They found some very interesting specimens, and some thought to belong to a new family.

ARCTIC BIRDS.

Dr. Bean collected a large number of specimens of birds, many of which were secured in a more northern region than the expedition had reached previously, as this year they went nearly to the latitude of Point Barrow. While examining the collection of birds at Oxford, several years ago, he came across a peculiar bird, which belonged to Sir John Barrow's collection, which was marked from Behring Strait. It was a small snipe about six inches long; but the bill was extended in a remarkable manner, resembling the beak of the spoon-bill, and the bird presented a very peculiar appearance. This year they looked very sharp for specimens of that bird, and one of the natives succeeded in killing a specimen. Afterward they heard from Captain Barrow, the master of the steam whaler Maria Helet, that he had observed the birds among others brought aboard for food while at Point Barrow some years ago.

CHANGES IN ALASKA ABORIGINES.

In Alaska a considerable change has taken place. When he first visited the country, sixteen years ago, the natives were attired in clothes made by themselves, and they used articles of their own manufacture. Now it is quite different, for they nearly all wear articles of civilized make, such as shirts, caps and trousers. Their old implements are becoming scarcer and scarcer. Much damage has been done by foreign traders and smugglers furnishing the Indians with alcohol. Intoxicating liquor is exceedingly injurious to them, as, when supplied with it, they neglect to provide themselves in summer with a store of food for the winter. In the interior, the natives seem to have decreased and deteriorated, partly on account of liquor, and partly on account of being furnished with fire-arms. Winchester rifles are more common there than here, and produce many deaths. Their Territory seems, however, to be improving, for now gardens are a prominent part of the establishment, and furnish potatoes of excellent quality and size.

A REMARKABLE SEASON.

Last season was a remarkable one in a meteorological sense. It was the most severe season ever known. The thermometer during the past forty-five years only upon one occasion had marked four degrees below zero, but last winter it went down to twelve degrees below zero. The spring was quite late, but very fine and clear. At Seal Island the month of

July is usually the worst of the rainy months, but this year not a single drop of rain fell. Until their vessel approached the floating ice, they saw nothing like an Arctic climate, as the weather was so fine. There was no snow on shore except here and there a little remained in a cleft in the mountains, while the land was covered with grass and flowers, which did not convey an Arctic appearance.

WHALING.

This season has been a remarkably favorable one to the whalers. The whales have been very accommodating, coming out from their usual hiding places in the ice, and allowing themselves to be killed. Not only did the whalers secure a full load, but they got out of the Arctic Ocean before October, an event which has not happened during twenty years. The presence of the cutter up there had a beneficial effect in preventing the usual trading of liquor on the coast, and as a natural consequence, the natives have supplied themselves with food; in fact, every body seemed to be happy up there.

The Betrothal of a Prince.

His Highness the Gaekwar of Baroda was, as is well known, married last January, and the *Times* of India says: "The story of his courtship is as thoroughly Eastern as anything in the 'Arabian Nights.' The young Maharajah himself loyally felt or feigned that he had no right whatever to meddle in such a matter as the selection of a consort for himself, a matter which exclusively belonged to his affectionate mother. And Her Highness the Maharani Jumnabai Sahib, as the head of the Gaekwar family, had to desire the Dewan himself to lend 'his utmost assistance' in this delicate business. 'Match-making,' says Sir Madava Row, in his account of the progress of the State of Baroda, 'is fraught with pleasant anxieties for any mother, and in the present instance the mother is one of the highest ladies of the land. Trusted emissaries started from Baroda and went to divers countries, some traveling in disguise, and others with pomp and circumstance. In a short time descriptive letters, illustrative photographs and complete horoscopes wonderfully showing all the planets on their best behavior, poured in upon the Maharani in almost embarrassing abundance. The blessing of the tutelary deities was devoutly invoked, the good-will of the priests was propitiated, and astrologers in solemn conclave were bidden to unerringly interpret the mystic influences of the zodiac. But the Maharani was also desirous of fulfilling more prosaic conditions, and she had to satisfy in her choice such worldly persons as the Governor General's agent and the Dewan of the State."

"Marathi girls are, however, almost always married young, and as the Gaekwar's marriage had been deferred until he was 17 years old, it was not only necessary that his bride should be a young lady of high family, of health and beauty, education and accomplishments, but that she must be of adolescent age. It was almost impossible to find a girl approaching to the required ideal who was still unmarried or still unengaged. Even when the poorest parents were approached they were proud enough not to send their daughters to Baroda, as if on inspection, even on the chance of being married to the first Maratha Prince in India. Things came to a dead-lock, and the Queen-Mother had to press the Dewan to relinquish high politics for a time, and set out for the Deccan in search of an eligible lady. Accompanied by a band of the Maharani's relatives and dependents, he started for Poona on this curious quest. 'It had been arranged,' he says, 'that just at that time several girls reported eligible should happen by pure accident to be present at Poona; we saw them; but we could not decidedly approve of any.'

The rest of the story must still be told in the words of the same high authority: "This result perplexed her Highness not a little. The quarters supposed available had been exhausted. The marriage of the Maharajah could not be postponed beyond the next season; and yet the most plastic Shastrees of the palace could not cite authority to perform the marriage without a bride. Her Highness, therefore directed the Dewan to extend the politico-aesthetic exploration beyond the Bombay Presidency. This was, of course, done; and the predestined sharer of the young Gaekwar's fortunes was at last found on the banks of the Canvery. The Tanjore family, to which the bride belongs, had long been intimately connected with Sir Madava Row, and the marriage, so far as those who were present at Baroda during the marriage festivities could possibly judge, was decided popular among the Sirdars and Maratha people generally, while the English residents of Baroda were pleased to find in the orphaned niece of the Princess of Tanjore a young lady who had enjoyed all the great advantages of a thorough English education."

In 1949, when gold was discovered in California, there was not between the Misosuri or the Pacific Ocean, or from Manitoba to Sonora, over 25,000 persons of Caucasian stock, and not 3000, all told, speaking in English as the tongue of their nativity. Now there are 3,000,000 persons in the same area; there are 10,000 miles of railroad and nearly twice that of telegraph, there is a property value of at least \$3,000,000, six prosperous States and nine Territories, growing in wealth and population, now producing in the precious metals at least \$85,000,000 annually, and also embracing the three largest wheat-growing States in the Union.