A CORNER IN A GARDEN

By Maude Estelle Smith Hymera.

SUCH a queer little corner it was, and such a peculiar idea to have left it like that—a tiny desert in a paradise of bloom!

It was a typical southern garden, eloquent of the loving care bestowed upon it. There were roses in wonderful profusion, forests of japonicas, tangles of jessamine, batallions of hyacinths, and little lakes of violets. At first glance every foot of space seemed filled with riotous beauty, until one's eyes fell on the little bare spot in the corner, when a sudden wonder grew.

The beds around this had all been neatly laid out, and this bit of ground, something over two feet long and a foot wide, was marked off from the rest and enclosed separately with bricks. It was slightly raised and rounded, and there was not a flower or blade of grass allowed to grow inside it. I had noticed it first from my window, which overlooked my neighbor's yard, but my attention had been attracted to it more particularly during a call from my neighbors themselves.

There were three maiden sisters living alone with their father, one of the old families beloved of southern aristocracy. Miss Mary was the eldest, a pale, plain woman, with the pathetic look one sees in the eyes of the partially deaf. Miss Minnie, a wholesome looking woman, past her first youth but still plump and pretty, was the youngest of the trio and did the talking for the family; but it was at Miss Sallie I looked longest.

Tall and dark, with a figure at once graceful and stately, she must have been a beautiful woman in her youth. She was a handsome woman now, but I think she had the saddest face I ever saw. There was a look of unrest, of burden bearing, in the great, dark eyes, that wakened my sympathies at once.

We had been speaking of their garden, ever a fruitful theme of conversation with them, when I blundered.

"I suppose you have a choice variety of seeds or bulbs planted in that enclosed space in the corner," I said interrogatively, and was confused to meet at first silence, then equal confusion. Miss Sallie gasped slightly, and her face went red, then white. It was Miss Minnie's blessed chatter that came to my rescue and filled the pause, eloquent of discomfort. Miss Sallie's eyes still retained their look of shock when Miss Mary led the way homeward.

It was a little thing to disturb anyone, I thought, but I could not but feel that Miss Sallie was distured by my innocent allusion to that corner in their garden.

"Pshaw!" I exclaimed, in scorn of the fancy that came to me. "I am growing imaginative," but each time I looked into my neighbor's garden the fancy returned.

I saw a great deal of the Dixons that summer, and grew warmly attached to them. Miss Mary soothed, Miss Sallie interested, and Miss Minnie cheered me.

I was following them about one day in the garden, while Miss Mary cut some flowers for a sick friend. The little girl who was to carry them had a dog with her, and the frisky animal was trotting about among the shrubbery after the manner of dogs. At a startled cry from Miss Sallie I turned to see that the dog had begun sniffing and pawing around that plot in the corner. Miss Sallie had gone white as death, and started to drive him away, but suddenly leaned against the fence, half fainting. Miss Mary seemed almost as startled as she, and, driving the dog away, shut the gate and led Miss Sallie to a seat on the porch.

"Sister dislikes dogs very much," remarked Miss Minnie, handing me a long stemmed Marechal Neil. "She was bitten by a dog when a child and has never overcome her dread of them."

The explanation should have been sufficient, but as I recalled the expression of Miss Sallie's face it was not so clear as it might have been. It was not fear for self it showed, but dread of what? She had paid no attention to the dog when he was almost under her feet, but the moment he approached that empty corner she was distressed. It was very strange! And after that my wonder grew. I used to see her come out alone and stand beside that plot of earth, gazing as she did not gaze at her beloved flower beds, stooping at times to remove a bit of grass or weeds that dared desecrate it.

One night shortly after, I could not sleep, and decided after hours of tossing to get up and read. Before lighting the lamp, however, I stopped before the window and looked out. The moon was old, but stars were out, large-eyed and wonderful, and a slight breeze flung the perfume of the flowers on the night with a prodigal hand. From somewhere in the distance came the twang of a banjo, and a musical negro voice singing a sprightly serenade. Nearer, softer sound prevailed. A bird stirred suddenly in his sleep, rustling the leafy curtains of his couch softly, and a huge magnolia blossom loosed its hold and fell with a little plash to the ground.

Charmed with the beauty and peace of the scene I sat there, when suddenly I became conscious of a little stifled sound in my neighbor's garden, and turning my eyes that way I saw a figure gliding in and out among the shrubbery. Straight down the path it came, a tall, slight figure which I knew instinctively was Miss Sallie's. Pausing beside that tiny mound, with a little low moan she threw herself on her knees beside it. She knelt on the damp earth, she laid her cheek on the bare mound with moans and sobs that were pitiful to hear. Pained and bewildered, I was wondering what to do, when the door opposite opened and Miss Mary came out. Never a moment she paused, but with the unerring instinct of the deaf came straight to the spot where Miss Sallie knelt, hidden by the shrubbery, and drew her up beside her.

"There, there, dear," she murmured soothingly. "Don't cry so—it's better as it is, you know!" and she half led, half carried her sister away.

"What does it mean?" I thought. "What is that little mound of earth unless—"

The next day as Miss Minnie was swaying idly in my rocker I purposely led the conversation again to their garden. I had heretofore avoided mentioning that empty corner, but tonight I had a thirst for knowledge that would not down.

"There is nothing there," said Miss Minnie slowly. Nothing has been planted there for years." And then in answer to the invitation in my face she became communicative.

"That corner plot is Sister Sallie's. She had a bed of violets there once, but she tore them out and has never let anyone touch the place since. That was 15 years ago. You see, Sister Sallie was very beautiful once and had a great many sweethearts, but she seemed to care most for Paul Thurston, a young physician whose family lived in the next town. Papa objected to her marrying him, because he was poor and of no account, he said, and sister felt very bitterly about it. She let Paul come to the house one or twice, after papa had forbidden it, and papa was very angry. I was quite young then, but I can remember yet how frightened I was to hear him speak so sternly. He told sister that he would rather see her dead than married to that man, and that if Paul Thurston ever come to the house again he would throw him out. That was the only time I ever saw sister speak defiantly to papa. She was white as death, but she was not afraid, and looked him straight in the eyes, as she said: 'Papa, I love Paul Thurston, and if I know he had not a penny, I should marry him in spite of everything and everybody.' I don't know what papa said then, for I was so frightened I ran away, but Paul never came to the house after that. I think sister met him once or twice, but papa never knew it, and shortly after that I went away to school.

"TOGETHER THEY KNELT IN SILENT PRAYER."

"I was away two years, and when I came back I found sister pale and thin from a long illness. There had been months she had been unable to leave her room or see anyone, they told me, and Sister Mary nursed her alone through it all. No one mentioned Paul until I begged of Mary to tell me where he was, and she said she could not; he had gone wrong and nearly broken Sister Sallie's heart, and I must never mention him to her again. I noticed then that the bed of violets Paul and sister had planted together were torn out, and the place fixed as you see it now; and poor sister has never been the same girl since."

"Poor girl!" I sighed. "It is so hard to find that one we loved goes wrong."

"Yes," said Miss Minnie, softly, "it is the bitterest grief of all. I, too, have had my sorrow, but to me is given the joy of kneeling beside a grave and begging the father to let me meet my sweetheart when he wills, but poor Sallie's is a bitterness worse than death."

I had no words with which to answer, but I leaned and kissed her softly, and we clasped hands in the twilight.

And after that I looked with more of reverence than curiosity at the little bare mound in the corner, and my sympathy and love for Miss Sallie grew with the waning of the summer days.

One evening I lay in my hammock dreamily listening to Miss Minnie's singing. Miss Mary was pottering about among her flowers, and Miss Sallie sat on the porch reading the evening paper. Suddenly a sharp cry rang out, and I started up to see Miss Sallie fall back in her chair unconscious, and Miss Minnie bending over her in great alarm. In a moment I was flying up the path; Miss Mary was ahead of me, however, and lifting her sister in her arms carried her to a couch while Miss Minnie flew for restoratives. As I started to follow, hoping to be of some assistance, my foot brushed against something that rattled crisply. It was the paper Miss Sallie had been reading. Half unconsciously I picked it up, and cast my eyes over the page. One name caught my gaze and held it, the familiar name of Paul Thurston. For the life of me I could not have resisted reading then, and I followed the column to its close.

"Paul Thurston pardoned," were the startling headlines. "Paul Thurston, who 15 years ago was sentenced to imprisonment for forgery, was today released, fully exonerated from the crime. The confession of a dying man comes 15 years too late! His friends will be surprised to learn that he has a wife and child in Abbotsford, to whom he will at once return." Then followed the details of his alleged crime, the trial and his final exoneration.

Crushing the paper in my hand, I fled half guiltily to the chamber where Miss Sallie lay. Just at that moment she opened her eyes with a start and struggled to a sitting posture. "Where, where—" she gasped, and instinctively I handed her the paper, which she took eagerly and thrust under her pillow.

I returned to my room with my brain in a whirl. Paul Thurston a criminal! Ah, poor woman, how she must have suffered! Paul Thurston married—how will she bear it? Or, if she has known this in the past, how much greater has been her suffering than we have dreamed; for, though in her heart a woman may forgive a man for crime if he loves her, the sin of unfaithfulness can never be overlooked.

Once more that night I was roused by a woman's cry, and presently Miss Minnie calling beneath my window.

"Papa is ill," she said, as she met me in the hall. "We sent the servant for a doctor long ago, but he does not come, and papa grows worse every minute."

Miss Mary was working over her father almost as calmly as over her sister a short time ago, but with no improvement. He was subject to these attacks, they said, but this seemed more severe than usual. Miss Sallie was kneeling beside the bed in a pitiful state of nervous excitement, beseeching him brokenly to listen to something she had to say.

"I must tell you, papa," she wailed. "It has been with me so long—the disobedience and the shame of it. Oh, I cannot let you go until you tell me you forgive me!"

But the old man was past hearing or heeding now, and Miss Mary led her sister away, leaving him with the doctor.

Mr. Dixon died that night, and a day or two later we went with him to the city of the dead and came back alone. In their new, strange loneliness they clung to me more than ever, and at their solicitation I promised to stay with them a few days. Miss Mary's usual calm had quite deserted her, and Miss Sallie's nerves were in a very sad state. She started at every sound, grew pale and cried out at the sound of the doorbell, while in her eyes was a look no one had seen there before—a look of hungry longing, of anticipated freedom.

We had just arisen from the breakfast table one morning when there came the sound of wheels stopping at the gate, followed by a ring at the doorbell.

Miss Sallie stood there, statue-still, her eyes glued on the door, her hands clutching a chair-back for support. The train of her rich morning gown swept over the floor, and I thought I had never seen her look so really beautiful. She scarcely breathed, as slowly a man came toward her—a tall, fair man with the stamp of a living sorrow in his face. Instinctively I stepped back, for I knew that this was Paul Thurston.

He stood before her a moment with bowed head, as one who prays, then held out his arms to her mutely. One moment, and she glided into their blessed circle, and with a little gasp of utter peace dropped her head on his shoulder.

"She is my wife!" he said, in answer to Miss Minnie's puzzled look, and then with one arm about his treasure and one hand clasping Mary's he told the story of their folly.

Hot-headed and determined in their youth, Mr. Dixon's opposition had only strengthened their determination to marry, and stealing away one night they went to another town and were married, with only Miss Mary as witness. She was to stay at home a while, and he was to claim her when he had won a fortune in the west, but somehow misfortune had found him first. The forgery was a bold one, and his need of money well known. Everything was against him; he was adjudged guilty and paid the penalty of another's crime for 15 dreary years, and but for the intervening hand of death might have gone on for years longer.

"I do not wonder that my friends believed me a criminal, in the face of such evidence, but, oh, my wife, had I deserved it from you?"

"Forgive!" she pleaded blindly. "I wronged you, but the thought that love for me had led you into sin should be ample atonement in its suffering." And for answer he covered her face with kisses.

"But the child! Where——" he asked suddenly. "You told me——" And mutely she led him out down the garden walk to the little bare mound in the corner, and together they knelt beside it in silent prayer.

"It shall be covered with violets now, dear," she said, and then I understood.

STORIES *of* WELL-KNOWN PEOPLE

WILLIAM J. BRYAN was asked recently if he recalled the first speech he ever delivered from a public rostrum. The distinguished Nebraska statesman laughed heartily, and said:

"Indeed, I do, and I am not likely to forget it if I live to be 100 or more. It wasg't the speech," Mr. Bryan added hastily, in response to his questioner's puzzled expression, "but an incident in connection with it that fixed the event indelibly in my memory. I do not recall the year exactly, but the place was a small town about 20 miles from Lincoln. I was very young; had in fact just hung out my shingle as an attorney at law when I received an invitation to address a mass meeting in the town in question. Of course I accepted promptly. The chairman of the meeting met me at the railway station and piloted me to my room, and as soon as the door was closed he produced a flask of whiskey and holding it out toward me said:

"Old man, join me in a little drink?"

"I shook my head and explained that I never indulged. He looked extremely disgusted, but it did not prevent his taking a pretty strong pull at the bottle himself. After a little more talk the invitation to imbibe was repeated and again declined. Again the chairman helped himself to a copious draw. He kept on renewing the invitation and then helping himself until the flask was empty.

"On our way to the hall I noticed that my escort was a little unsteady on his pins, but I did not realize that he was drunk. Just before we entered the building I said to the man: 'I would like to get a little advertising out of this thing if possible. Would you mind introducing me as "William Jennings Bryan, the rising young attorney of Lincoln?"'

"'All right, old man,' he replied, clutching my arm rather unsteadily. 'Trust me, I'll give you a good send-off!'

"The warm air of the hall and the repeated pulls at the flask completely befuddled the chairman. When he arose to introduce me, this is what he said:

"'Ladies and gemmens: Mr. William Henry O'Brien of Ireland will now spoke.'"

Notwithstanding his untoward introduction, Mr. Bryan says that he did succeed in making a fairly satisfactory speech.

Just before the adjournment of congress Senator Julius Caesar Burrows of Michigan, who was temporary chairman of the Chicago convention last month, and William J. Bryan, the probable nominee of the Denver convention for president, met in the marble room of the senate at the capitol. They stopped and indulged in a little repartee.

"Let me see, senator," said the man from Nebraska, with a grin, "I believe that you are in favor of the election of senators by the direct vote of the people."

"Yes," said the statesman from the Wolverine state, "I have been in favor of it for a number of years."

"Well, senator," said Mr. Bryan, "it is not often that I find myself in accord with a Republican but I certainly agree with you on that proposition."

"Your approval, Mr. Bryan," said Mr. Burrows, quickly, "almost makes me doubt the wisdom of my course. I guess I'll have to look into the matter further!"

Whereupon both men smiled genially, shook hands and separated.

The vigilant eye of Senator Eugene Hale of Maine, the veteran chairman of the naval affairs committee of the senate, caught a very serious error in the naval appropriation bill when it came back from the house. Through a mixing up of the types at the big government printery, a paragraph in the bill provided for the retirement of all "pretty" officers, when "petty" officers was intended. Senator Hale got busy with the telephone immediately, and had the mistake corrected forthwith.

"Gracious, what a calamity it would have been," he said, with a grim smile, in commenting on the incident to a fellow senator, "if the provision had remained in the bill retiring all the pretty officers in the naval service! What a howl would have been raised by the feminine portion of the community! Think that I would have resigned my place as chairman of the naval committee and joined Frye on a fishing expedition to the north woods of Maine!"

Not long since Wu Ting-Fang, the Chinese minister at Washington, was the guest of honor at a little dinner given by Secretary of State Elihu Root. Minister Wu is a graduate of Yale university and speaks English perfectly. His long residence in this country when he was minister here before has made him thoroughly familiar with things American, including the slang of the country.

Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson sat next to Mr. Wu and launched off in a discourse about agricultural matters.

"Did you know, Mr. Minister," said Mr. Wilson, "that the peach, the most delicious of all our fruits, came originally from China?"

"Indeed," said Mr. Wu, with some surprise, "I was not aware of it. I will have to make a note of it."

"Everybody realizes it," said Mr. Root, who had been listening quietly to the conversation, "as soon as they meet his excellency, Minister Wu."

"You are very kind, Mr. Secretary," said Mr. Wu laughing, "but I understand that Senator Chauncey M. Depew of your state holds the title of the American peach. I would not like to make him jealous; that might cause international complications."

Mr. Root suggested that the matter might be submitted to The Hague tribunal for arbitration.

Speaker Joseph G. Cannon, the alleged czar of the house of representatives, began his political career nearly half a century ago by running for state's attorney out in Illinois. His opponent was a young man, like himself, and as they were good friends personally they arranged to stump the county together. Each made large promises as to what he would do if elected.

One day as they were going down the street together they met the judge of the court, a venerable, white-haired jurist.

"What are you boys making all this fuss about?" said the judge, quizzically after stopping them.

"We want to be state's attorney," each responded in almost the same breath.

The venerable judge roared with laughter. "That is a good joke," he said, wiping his eyes. "No matter which one of you is elected," he added, "there will be mighty few criminals sent to jail hereabouts, during your term."

"I was elected," said Uncle Joe, in relating the incident. "But I never could figure out how it happened, whether the voters thought me the best or poorest lawyer of the two. However, I did succeed in making the county hot for the criminal classes, notwithstanding the judge's prediction to the contrary."

Representative Gray of Virginia is sponsor for the following story. Among his constituents in the Old Dominion was a couple who had an only child, a son. They were well to do, and had taken great pains with his education and training. As the young man approached manhood the fond parents were much concerned about his choice of a future profession.

As he did not seem to give any indication of any particular bent one way or the other, said Mr. Otey, "they decided to resort to the old device of placing a Bible, a bottle of whisky, a pack of cards and a silver dollar on a table in a room and then invite the boy to make his selection. I suppose you know the old tradition or superstition that has been handed down in this connection? If he selects the Bible, educate him for the church; if the dollar, for business; but if he takes the cards and whisky, he is destined to become a drunkard and a gambler.

"Well, the boy in question entered the room, threw the Bible on the floor, took a drink out of the bottle, and pocketed the cards and money.

"'Too bad,' sighed the mother, wiping away a tear; 'our dear boy is destined for a bad end, I am afraid.'

"'No such thing,' said the old man, biting off a big 'chaw' of tobacco. 'He's only going into training to run for congress.'"

475 TROUT IN TWO DAYS.

The Catch of a Party of Six—A Sample of Nova Scotia Fishing.

Maine and Quebec have been celebrated for many years as a paradise for anglers. Maine's neighbor on the east, New Brunswick, has shared of late in the glory. Nova Scotia has been overlooked, but the fishing there is as good as the best.

There are many fine salmon streams and trout fishing is excellent all over the province. Fishing in all the rivers and lakes is practically free and unrestricted.

Nova Scotia has few large rivers, but there are thousands of streams which are filled with trout. There are many estates in the province through which three or more good fishing brooks run. Some of these streams you can step across, yet fish abound in them.

Take for example, a stream which has just settled into some sort of steadiness after a hurried, tumultuous descent down the mountain. As it cuts its way through the level upland it digs out holes here and there, and from these holes the angler may take a dozen or more one pounders in an hour's sport.

A party of six made an expedition early last summer to Canaan lake in the southeastern part of the province. Fishing from canoes they caught 275 trout in one day. The trout ran from one half to one and a half pounds each, with a few larger.

The next day the six anglers added 200 more to the catch. These ran about the same size, except one beauty which weighed almost two and one half pounds.

The sportsman will shudder when it is recorded that some of the party fished in the good old fashioned way—with angleworms. But flies were used, too, the silver doctor, May fly and barnyard fly. The barnyard fly took the best, as is proper in a farming community.

It isn't expensive to go fishing in Nova Scotia. This party of six were out five days three being spent in going and coming. The total cost was $34, less than $6 each, and at that they had a guide, not a Maine guide whose prices are sometimes a matter of high finance, but an Indian and an Indian boy, too, who were glad to get $11 for four days' work.

The trout fishing is good all summer long, and after September 15 the angler can take a gun along and shoot partridges, rabbits and moose while waiting for bites. As for the trout they are the salmon variety, "speckled beauties," so called, the flesh a delicate pink and far better eating than any brook trout that the gilded Broadway restaurant lists at $1.50 on the bill of fare.

King Frederick's Free and Easy Way

From the Bystander.

King Frederick and Queen Louise are both very much loved in Denmark, although at times the king, it is thought, goes too much out of his way to win popularity.

At the beginning of his reign he used to bend for people whom he saw from the castle windows passing through the castle yard to come and have a chat with him. Then, in the evening, he would take a stroll with the princess to a crowded place near his summer residence, called the "Danish Trouville," which is frequented mostly by shop people, and speak to everybody at random. At the castle all sorts and conditions of men are received.

Prevents Seasickness.

Red glasses are said to prevent seasickness, the color having a stimulating effect upon the nerves, which increases the circulation.

More than 1,000 tons of steel is used every day in the manufacture of pressed steel cars for the railroads of this country.

The German navy is experimenting with a boat propelled by a jet of water.

WHEN THE CRADLE IS EMPTY NATIONS FEAR--Continued From the First Page *of* This Section

acquiring a great fortune hastened to economize in the number of children who, under the law, must divide the little they had.

The short-sighted law of Napoleon still stands, crushing the population with the dread of children left to starve, while the dowry system lends it an ever-present handicap.

But that is not all. French taxes fall heaviest on the parents of large families, from the house tax, which makes it immediately for a man to have a numerous progeny, to all the indirect taxes which France has been so astute in contriving.

Under laws such as these it is not necessarily French nature that abstains from the luxury of the well-filled cradle. It is simply human nature that cannot see safely in numbers.

And the children who are born—how they die off in France! Throughout the land, the government, science and philanthropy are uniting now in the desperate endeavor to preserve to the nation the babies that have the luck to get born at all.

In Paris, throughout the provinces, the "Gouttes de Nourrissons" are engaged in furnishing sterilized milk to poor mothers and more than that, striving by expert medical advice, to teach mothers how essential it is that their babies must have their mother's own milk, as nature planned when Cain and Abel came into the world.

Wonderful results have been obtained. Ten years ago in Paris the infant death rate from stomach trouble ran as high as 245 a week. Now, at the Clinic Tarnier, out of a varying attendance of babies ranging from 50 to 140, not one has died of that common ailment.

The general rate of infant mortality throughout France is being marvelously changed through these "consultations," as they are called. At Avallon, prior to their establishment, 100 babies out of 1,000 perished; now the deaths are only 53 per 1,000.

At Roguy it has dropped from 70 per 1,000 to 17; at Pont-sur-Yonne, from 126 to 93; at Hercy, from 40 to none; at Bleneau, from 61 to none; at Monsteau, from 75 to none; at St. Bris, from 103 to none, and at Auxy, from 180 to none. This is, indeed, saving the children, for the mothers, properly helped and instructed, are only too eager to preserve them. Once born, the good, old, unfailing maternal instinct defies all the laws of race destruction that even a Napoleon could graft upon the body social.

But it is not enough. Although the whole 80,000 babies be saved that can be saved, according to recent estimates, the cure for the French decadence must operate with parenthood, not with infancy.

Deputy Messimy has just risen in the chamber of deputies to propose "that the French people may not die out," these measures:

1. Freedom from all direct taxation for families having more than three children.

2. State aid in every possible way in the prevention of infant mortality wherever the mortality is due to the poverty or the ignorance of parents.

3. Imitation of the United States in making it easy for foreigners to acquire the full advantages of citizenship.

But there is no word yet of abolishing the laws of testamentary division of property; and if there were, who shall say that a nation already legalized, pauperized and devitalized into abdication of the highest privilege and the highest duty of humanity possesses the power to regenerate itself?

In England, the other great nation now most poignantly anxious over the cradles that do not hold their accustomed burdens, the growth of Germany, adding millions unto millions, is regarded with an uneasiness only less acute than that of France. Great Britain's new-found friend and ally.

For months recently a parliamentary committee sat in London, taking testimony on the subject of infant insurance, while the registrar general reported for London what has been characterized as "an appalling list of child mortality for infants under 12 months during the past year."

London coroners and many persons holding no official position found in the widely practiced plan of insuring babies an incentive to neglect worse than cruelty and an instigation to infanticide too tempting for many poor parents to withstand.

The testimony before the parliamentary committee has not borne out the charges of deliberate infanticide, but it did demonstrate afresh the shocking conditions of privation under which a large proportion of the infant population are brought into the world and allowed to struggle onward toward a sickly maturity. And the registrar general's figures for 1907 showed that weakness in propogation, characteristic of France, is showing itself to an alarming extent in England. There and in Wales the birth rate is the lowest that has been recorded—actually less than three quarters of the rate maintained 80 years ago.

It is the greatest in the cities, but it exists in the country districts to an extent sufficiently notable to be alarming.

The estimated population of England and Wales is 34,945,800. The births numbered 917,636, or 26.8 a thousand, which is 0.8 a thousand below the rate of 1906 and the lowest rate of any year on record. Births in London were 25.8 a thousand for the year, the lowest rate since civil registration was established. Calculated on the total population, the fall in the London birth rate during the last 37 years amounts to 27 per cent.

Agriculture, withering like a blighted field of grain, has dwindled until the stout yoemanry of England, with their rising families of rosy, muscular children, have passed away. In the country, instead of the yoeman's fertile acres, stretch the great hunting parks of the landlords. In the city lounge the starving descendants of the farmers who had to flee their fields to escape starvation in their day.

They saved themselves in some half-hungry fashion. But their children's children—puny, pallid, anemic and vicious of morals and manners—are starving in their miserable turn.

Already the children of these children are refraining from being born, or consenting to the harsh misfortune, pay the penalty of their imprudence in early, useless death.

What, the French statesmen ask themselves, is to become of France with none to defend her?

What, the English ask themselves, is to become of the empire with none to hold it?

And Germany looks, smiling, at her overflowing cradles.

SECOND SIGHT By Anatole France

"I ADMIT," Dr. Labouille, with whom I was spending this evening, said to me, "that all these cases have not been sufficiently explained. Subjects at a distance, the so-called second sight, is something which science at the present knows very little about. I once had the good fortune to witness one of these cases, and you may believe me, when I say that I did not forget to look into it in the most methodical and scientific manner."

"Really you make me curious."

"Well, listen—— I suppose you still remember our friend Buguet?"

"I do. He was a big fellow with a large, long beard reaching almost to the center of his chest, wasn't he? His wife was a brunette with large, gray-blue eyes."

"Yes, and very nervous, a thing not to be wondered at in a woman who has never left Paris. Paul had worked for five years in the laboratory of Jacon Brothers, on Boulevard Magenta, dealers in photographic supplies. Hewas certain of becoming a partner in the firm in a few years, and even as it was he had a good position. Besides, Adrienne meant no more expense for him. As a true Parisienne, she understood how to dress tastefully on almost nothing, and to find the places where she could get everything cheaper than anybody else. She found dress goods, underwear, laces and jewelry at prices which continually surprised her husband, who always heard from his friends that nobody was more chic and elegant than his wife. But all these things are details which cannot interest you."

"Oh, on the contrary. I was, as you remember, an old chum of Paul Buguet. Our friendship didn't suffer when Paul fell in love with Adrienne and married her on the spot, although she brought him no dowry. The young woman seemed to like me, and I continued to associate with Paul after he was married. Very often I took dinner with him, and as I happened to be a physician of the Actor Larouche, and have many acquaintances among theatrical people, I very often received free tickets. Adrienne and her husband were exceedingly fond of the theatre. Whenever I had a box I always went to dine with them and took them to Comedie Francaise. Nearly every time I found Marcel Geraud with them."

"Geraud!" I exclaimed. "Marcel Gerhud—— wasn't he the bank officer who always wore such expensive neckties?"

"That was he. Being a bachelor and a jolly good fellow, he comes to Buguet's very often. He contributed his part of the dinner, and almost daily sent delicacies, such as lobster and pattles and things of that kind to the house. He was amiable and tactful, not giving to gossip, and after a while Buguet simply couldn't get along without him with us in our box."

"How old was he?"

"Between 35 and 40, I should judge. One day when Larouche had given me a box, I went as usual to Buguet's. They were living in Rue de Grenelle, near the fountain. I was rather late, and the table was set when I entered. Paul was complaining of being hungry, but his wife couldn't make up her mind to sit down to the table because Geraud was missing.

"Now, my friends," I said, "I have a box for the Comedie for tonight. They are playing 'Denise.'"

"Then let us hurry," Paul said; "let us eat our supper that we may not be late for the first act."

Dinner was served. Adrienne seemed preoccupied, while Paul ate with good appetite.

"Women are indeed strange creatures," he said; "now imagine that Adrienne is worried because Marcel hasn't come today. She thinks something must have happened to him. Isn't that absurd? Marcel is a bachelor, and entitled to go wherever he pleases, without asking or informing anybody. What surprises me is that he spends nearly all his evenings with us. It is really touching. But, after all, we must allow him some freedom. It has always been my principle not to bother my head about the doings of my friends. But women are always unreasonable."

Adrienne replied in a voice which she tried to make firm: "I am worried because I am afraid that something has happened to Geraud."

Paul hurried the dinner along without listening to his wife. I noticed that Adrienne didn't eat anything.

"Hurry now, dear," Paul said to her, "a play by Dumas is not like an operette, where there is enough to catch a song here and there. Please get your things on."

Adrienne stood up and slowly went into her dressing-room.

While we were taking our coffee Paul said: "Really, it is absolutely immaterial to me, or I should rather say that I am rather glad Geraud didn't come. I know he would not enjoy 'Denise.' But did you notice how nervous and excited my wife is? I have told her that Marcel has a love affair somewhere, but she wouldn't believe me. Please pass me the cigarettes."

At this moment we heard a terrible cry from the dressing-room followed by the thud of a falling body.

"Adrienne," Paul cried, rushing into the other room. I followed him. We found Adrienne on the floor motionless, her face white, her eyes half open. I saw immediately that it was no epileptic fit, for she was not foaming at the lips, nor were her limbs stiff, while her pulse was irregular and fast. We placed her on a couch, and almost immediately the color returned to her cheeks.

"Over there," she whispered, pointing to the large mirror. "Over there—— I saw him as I was buttoning my waist. I turned around, believing that he must be in the room. And as I saw nobody, I understood, and then I fainted."

While I examined her to convince myself that she had not been hurt by her fall, Paul went out for a glass of brandy.

"Here, darling, take this, and then tell me whom did you see?"

She turned pale again. "Him—Marcel."

"She has seen Geraud! Isn't that strange?" Paul exclaimed.

"Yes, I did see him," she said with a shudder. "And he stared at me so."

Paul looked at me.

"Don't feel uneasy," I said, "things like that happen quite often, and in most cases it is because of some stomach trouble. I remember a patient of mine who was suffering from gastritis, who imagined he saw mice everywhere."

Adrienne stood up slowly and said to her husband: "Perhaps we might go by Geraud's house. I am more worried than I can tell you."

"Really, this is too foolish," Paul cried angrily. "It is too silly for anything. What should have happened to Marcel? Didn't we see him yesterday, and he was all right?"

Adrienne looked at me with an expression in her eyes which touched me against my will. I advised Buguet to give in to the wishes of his wife.

"It isn't very much farther," I said, "and we will be in time for the first act, anyway."

Mumbling something to himself, Paul started to go downstirs. I called to the coachman: "Rue de Louvre, No. 5. But hurry, please." Geraud didn't live far from the bank where he was working, and had a modest apartment of two rooms. As soon as we had reached the door Paul jumped out of the carriage and asked the Concierge: "What is M. Geraud doing?"

The woman looked at him rather surprised and said: "M. Geraud came home about 4 o'clock, asked me for his mail and went up to his rooms. He hasn't come out since that time. Buguet, however, was already back at the carriage and said: "There, you see how silly you are. Marcel is at home. Driver, take us to Comedie Francaise."

"Paul, I beg you to go upstairs. There must be something the matter. I feel it."

"Well, I suppose I have to," Paul growled; "a man must always give in when a woman wants something."

I remained with Adrienne in the carriage, and I noticed how feeble she looked. Paul stayed away a long time. At last he came and said: "I rang the bell three times, but nobody opened the door. Probably he's not alone."

Adrienne's eyes expressed so much suffering that I myself began to feel worried now.

It seemed rather strange to me that Marcel, who never dined at home, should lock himself in his room for four hours, and stlu be there at 8 o'clock.

"Wait a minute, I will speak with the Concierge."

The woman also thought it strange that M. Geraud hadn't left his apartments to go to dinner as usual. As she took care of his apartments, she went for her key and we went upstairs. Having opened the door, we stopped in the hall, and the Concierge called Geraud's name. Receiving no answer, we went into the next room. It was pitch dark.

"M. Geraud," she called again. Not a sound was heard.

"There are matches on the little table next to the bed," she whispered to me, trembling with fear. I felt for the table, and suddenly put my fingers into something sticky.

"That is blood," I thought.

When I had lit the gas we saw Marcel lying on his bed, his head crushed. His right arm was hanging down, and on the floor was a letter almost covered with blood spots.

It was addressed to M. and Mme. Buguet, and began:

"My dear friends—I owe to you my joy and happiness in life." He informed them that he intended to end his life, but said nothing about the reasons, although you could read between the lines that lack of money had driven him into death. Death must have come about an hour earlier, or just when Adrienne saw his image in the mirror.

The doctor was silent for a moment; then he said: "Isn't this an exact example of the same psychicsynochrism which science is trying to fathom at the present time?"

"Perhaps it is different from what I think," I remarked. "Are you quite sure that there was no love between Marcel and Mme. Buguet?"

"I cannot be sure of that, but I had never noticed anything. And even if that were so, it would make no difference in this case."

Cooling.

The Esquimau is cold, is cold,
Up by the frozen pole;
His house is worth its weight in gold—
Or would be if 'twere here—and sold—
But he don't know, poor soul!

He shivers in his icy bed—
His spine is never still—
A furry cap is on his head—
Worth plunks and plunks, or so 'tis said,
And yet he has a chill!

Fresh Iceland breezes fan his brow—
Cracked ice is free as air;
He wears the selfsame collar now
He wore a decade since, I vow!
How blissful to be there!

—L. S. WATERHOUSE.

A Wife Ready.

Little Dorothy could not have paid her father a higher compliment, or better expressed her love for him when she said, "Papa, I would like to tell you something if you won't tell mama."

"Why don't you want mama to know it, daughter?"

"Well, you tell her things I say, and she laughs at them, and I don't want her to know this."

"Let papa hear what you have to say, anyhow."

"Well, I have often thought that if mama were to die I would like to marry you."

What Killed the Adjutant?

From the Allahabad Pioneer.

A good story from the regimental journal of the "Fighting Fifth" concerns Colonel, then Captain FitzRoy and dates back to 1860. FitzRoy was possessed of an air gun, and one afternoon he took a shot at an adjutant, a bird which, being an excellent scavenger, is protected from injury by a fine of 100 rupees. Several people saw the bird fall, of course, a hubbub and a court of inquiry was ordered to investigate the bird's death.

As luck would have it, FitzRoy was appointed president of the court, the finding of which was duly recorded as follows: "The court, having carefully investigated all the evidence brought before it, have come to the conclusion that the bird died of sunstroke.—(Signed) Phil FitzRoy, captain and president.

Wireless Telegraphy.

The Russian army is being equipped with wireless telegraphy, each instrument being built upon a cart which is drawn by a single horse.