LOVE IN IDLENESS

By Mary L. Pendered.

THE shadow of a great lassitude lay upon the face of society, and preparations were being made for a flight to any clime where the bonds of convention may be relaxed and cool air breathed, for the summer had been hot and dry. Archie Crompton, out of the heat and glare, was an exception to the general rule. He was not tired, he did not suffer from ennui, and the approaching rustle of silken skirts in the corridor made him all alert. He was rather young, very much alive and definitely in love—three conditions that do not make for languor.

Sylvia Mellowby, too, when she entered the large, cool room, looked like a pearl-tinted butterfly.

"Five minutes," she said, shaking hands airily; "just five minutes, Archie, and then I have to rush. Madame Desiree won't be kept waiting for a moment. She will take on the next woman if I'm not there. And I'm due at 4 to tea with Trixy Mathers; dinner at the Loddingstons and the ball tonight. Not much time to breathe in, is there? But, thank heaven, it will soon be over!"

"How lovely you look," observed the young man, as his eyes rested with profound admiration upon her attire of lavender-grey, just touched with the new pink under her hat brim and in her embroidered scarf.

"Archie, if you can't say something fresh, why do you try to talk at all? Do you know that you have said that every time we've met for the past three months, which has been pretty often, you'll admit?"

"Have I? Well, it only proves what I say."

"You say so many absurd things! Which one is that?"

"That you look lovely in anything, and that I am in love."

"A man need not be an indiscriminating idiot even when he is in love."

"Oh, yes, he need," said Archie, complacently, "for 'tis his nature to."

"Tosh! Why imagine yourself in love, you foolish boy?" (He was two years her senior.) "It's mere self-delusion, believe me. Such things don't happen in real life."

"You think so, because it has never happened to you. I wish it would."

"Impossible. I'm too level-headed. And I haven't time. It is only you idle young men who can indulge in such luxuries." She looked at her watch. "Now, I really must go, Archie."

"Not till you've recanted this most unpleasant statement. Why, an attache never has a moment to call his own! You've rattled off a few of your engagements; now listen to some of mine—duties, too; not mere amusements, like yours. I started at 9 this morning with—"

He began to tick off on his fingers the different things he had done and had to do in the coming hours, until Sylvia cried a halt.

"That'll do; that'll do! You're a marvel, and I wonder how you have time to philander here now. Whose hour have I stolen?"

"I heard you were going away tomorrow," he said for an answer. "Is it true?"

"Mercifully, yes. I have taken a cottage with Trixie Mathers, right in the heart of the country. Won't it be lovely?"

"You'll hate it. It will bore you to extinction."

Sylvia frowned.

"Entirely wrong. I love the country."

"So you think. What you really love is a new sensation. The country cottage is a novelty. Unfortunately, novelties have an unpleasant way of turning commonplace. I give your cottage a week."

"Very kind of you."

"Anybody else going—Mr. Mathers or the children?"

"Nobody. We are going to rusticate, with only an old woman and her daughter to cook and wait on us. We are not even going to take our maids; indeed, there wouldn't be room. It's only a tiny cottage. I don't quite know what Trixy will do. She's helpless as a child without her precious Wilson. But I've promised to do her hair for her. I can do my own."

"That's nothing to boast of. Anybody can do such hair. It does itself. I mean—"

"Oh, if you're going to drivel again, Archie, I've done with you! Can I drop you anywhere?"

"Certainly not. I refuse to be dropped. I mean to cling like a leech, in spite of all the country cottages in all the—"

"I shall not keep the carriage waiting one moment longer!" declared Sylvia, with much severity. "If you won't come with me—"

"To the end of the world!" he exclaimed.

Sylvia sighed emphatically.

"I seem to have heard that before," she said, wearily, as they went down stairs.

"Possibly. It is one of the eternal verities. May I come down to your country cottage?"

"Heaven forbid!" she cried. "Do you want to spoil everything? Surely even you must see that you'd be a horrible discord there?"

"I shouldn't mind that a bit," he replied cheerfully; "in fact, I should rather like it."

"If you dare to come I'll make you clean your own boots," she vowed.

"I'd rather clean yours," said the imperturbable attache calmly. "Do let me come and be 'boots' to the establishment. I've an uncanny presentiment that you're going to get into mischief. Satan finds—"

"If I can't drop you anywhere, goodbye," she interrupted, holding out her hand, with a fine show of indifference, as she prepared to enter her mother's dainty little victoria.

"I will honor you with my company as far as the park," he said, getting in after her, "and there, though I decline to be dropped, I will drop myself; for I must really admonish you and warn you further about that country Eden. I feel convinced there's a serpent in it."

"What of that if there's no Adam?"

He shook his head incredulously.

"An Eden without Adam is inconceivable."

"Even so. What could he do between two Eves?"

"'One will be taken and the other left,' he quoted oracularly, "and you know perfectly well, Sylvia, that you would never allow yourself to get left."

"Don't try to be funny, Archie. It doesn't suit your style."

"So sorry. I thought it did. By the way, you might give me one of those pansies you're wearing, 'before milk-white, now purple with love's wound.' It will be an appropriate flower for you to wear in your Eden, 'for maidens call it Love-in-idleness.' I wish you'd let me rub a little of its juice on your eyelids."

"Why?" she asked, not grasping his meaning for a moment.

He replied by spouting solemnly:

"'The juice of it, on sleeping eyelids laid,
Will make a man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.'"

"Well, I'm not asleep," said Sylvia, "and I hope I shall always be too wide awake for any love-philtre to take effect on me. But, to keep you quiet I'll give you one of my flowers, for I see you must be humored. When a man takes to quoting Shakespeare in broad daylight it's certainly time to see a brain specialist."

"And when a society beauty takes a country cottage it's time to see a heart specialist," he retorted, carefully drawing through his buttonhole the stalk of the fragrant, velvety blossom she had given him. "Believe me, Sylvia, you are far advanced in a state of dangerous sentimentality. It needs only one squeeze of the magic flower on your eyes to make you 'madly dote' upon some rustic swain with little wit and large feet. In my mind I see him already, wearing the head of an ass."

"And in my mind's eye I see an ass wearing the head of a man," she declared, with a meaning glance at his well cut face. "You are too silly for words today, Archie, and I really have no further use for you. When I turn sentimental I'll let you know; but I'm afraid you'll be very old and gray."

"It's a bargain," he replied, as he stopped the coachman and sprang out. "Let me know at once. I may yet have cause to bless the humble cot in the country. Don't be surprised if you discover me there one day in a smock frock and corduroys, hoeing turnips, or whatever they do in those parts. Au revoir! I shall exist vegetably till that longed for moment."

Sylvia leaned back in the carriage and stifled a yawn.

"He is positively too exhausting for anything!" she reflected. "What a relief it will be to exchange all this superficial smartness and fizzle for the deep repose and simplicity of the country! Sentimental, indeed! I should like to meet the man who could make me feel sentimental!"

II.

Evergreen cottage took its title from the hedge of cedar that divided its pretty front garden from the lane upon which it faced. From this lane to the rose and jasmine covered porch there was a narrow flagged pathway, bordered with mignonette and love-in-a-mist. No other house stood within a mile of it; and its quaint garden of nearly an acre, was surrounded by fields, one of which led to a fairy like wood, where birds sang all day and nearly all night during the summer. The cottage had a low roof of red tiles patched with lichen, making a good effect against two tall chestnuts that flanked it on either side; and at the bottom of the garden, near the hedge of briar, bramble and elder, stood a row of straw beehives, topped with red pancheons, as if to carry out the same scheme of color.

It was an ideal spot to please the jaded eyes of two tired New Yorkers, and both Sylvia and her friend, Mrs. Mathers, were enchanted with the first sight of it.

They took a hasty survey of the inside of their new abode with many expressions of rapture. It was all in character, small, quaint and cosy. There were drawbacks of course; no bathroom and a wall paper of rather dreadful design and color in the parlor, but on the whole the landlord who kept the cottage for letting to people of taste had not outraged the harmonies of time and atmosphere, there were few false notes.

They drank their tea out of doors, on the grass, under the biggest apple tree, and chanted a gentle duet of appreciation, verging on enthusiasm. They agreed that everything was perfect. Blackbirds and thrushes made delicious music all about them, for although late in the summer, their joy had not ceased, and a slight shower of rain that morning had caused special jubilation.

Twilight fell, and with the evening star came a chill in the air that drove the two friends indoors. There they lighted the lamp, revelling in the soft shadows it cast about the queer little room.

When the birds stopped singing there was not a sound to be heard, and it was as if, Sylvia said, the world had been wrapped in a very thick cloak. This dead silence made them both so sleepy that they were ready for bed before 10 o'clock, but when there it kept them awake and seemed to oppress them with a feeling of suffocation. However, they called it exquisite, to themselves, and felt that it would be curative when they had once grown used to it.

Next day they rose in good time and prowled about the country. They walked to the village and were delighted with the quaint drowsiness of it. Only the children seemed awake, and they stood petrified in open-mouthed silence when the smart city ladies approached them. After early dinner there was nothing to do but doze—Sylvia in a wicker chair under the apple tree, Beatrice Mathers on the old, roomy settee of the parlor. After tea they strolled in the woods and read books. At 9, after nearly yawning their heads off, they went to bed.

It was exactly the same the next day, and the next. On the fourth they began to get a little snappish with each other, and argued over everything for the sake of diversion. It must be confessed that Sylvia was the most bored. Mrs. Mathers was a much older woman, happily married, and of a more equable temperament. She had less vital energy than Sylvia, and could enjoy the freshness, sweetness, silence and vague melancholy of the country in quite a different way.

The soothed her, while they made Sylvia restless and full of strange longings. Moreover, Beatrice Mathers loved sketching in water colors, and amused herself by making little pictures of the village and garden. Sylvia had brought her camera, but her interest in it soon flagged, and it was heavy to carry about. In short, on the fourth day—which seemed to her the 40th—she began to feel that, if something did not happen soon, she must stick straws in her hair and play Ophelia to the bees and birds!

And then something did happen. It generally doesn't in real life, and people have to live through their ennui the best way they can; but Sylvia may have been a favorite of the sylian gods, and roused their pity. Anyhow, on this fourth day the unlikely thing occurred.

She had left Beatrice Mathers writing letters to her family, and had come out, with Henley's "Hawthorn and Lavender," to stroll along the meadows by the riverside, trying to imagine herself the heroine of a pastoral romance. She looked the part, in a robe of pretty flowered muslin, crowned by a large white chiffon hat, and was thinking tenderly of her lover, as all legitimate heroines do. What would it be like, she thought, to have Archie meandering with her through the buttercups by the chattering water that ran so blithely to the not far distant sea?

A sudden longing to see him followed, which she sternly repressed. Crossing a narrow footbridge, she opened a little gate into a copse, where she sat down on a mossy bank at the foot of a willow tree—just as a pastoral heroine would do—and opened her book. The stream danced joyously, and rather noisily, over its stones and a blackbird warbled above her. It was a pretty scene, and a pity there was no one to see it.

Sudden, without the slightest warning, she felt her hat being violently torn from her head. Terrified, as well as hurt, she screamed loudly, and, dropping her book, put up both hands to grasp a string that went upwards as if into the branches of the willow. Its tension relaxed, however, instantaneously upon her cry of frightened pain, and from the other side of the tree a man came forth, with a fishing rod in his hands and a face full of alarmed apology.

Adam!

He was extremely handsome, with a tanned skin and deep gray eyes. His attire was picturesquely sporting—a Norfolk jacket, knickerbockers and a loose collar, while his head of short, dark hair, which had just the little kink in it Sylvia loved to see, was guiltless of covering. She gasped at the sight of him, and her color, which had fled, came back.

He was more profuse in his apologies than she had ever known a man to be. He had not heard her approach, which was no wonder, considering the noise of the water rushing over its stones, and, besides, he had been too intent on his fly-casting to notice where he was throwing. He was greatly distressed at having given a lady such a fright. Could she ever forgive him?

Sylvia said she could, and gave him one of her bewitching smiles, which Archie always said were 40 horsepower, calculated to do an immense amount of damage to masculine hearts. In an hour she and the fisherman were fast friends, and he was teaching her to cast a fly. All this kind of thing has been done before so many times that it is not necessary to go into further details. Enough to say that she learned from him he was a passionate lover of all forms of sport, that he was staying at the Hay tavern in the village, and that his name was Roland Dawson.

"IS IT TRUE THAT YOU ARE MARRIED, MR. DAWSON?" SHE SAID.

That evening he had supper with Sylvia and Mrs. Mathers at the cottage, and the homely meal passed off felicitiously. Mr. Dawson was very agreeable, and laughed, when he was expected to do so, in a way that showed his superb teeth to great advantage. He also sang a couple of rollicking sailor songs to his own accompaniment on the tiny piano, in fine style. There was something so exceedingly virile and forceful about him that even Beatrice Mathers felt the spell of it; and when he had gone she confided to Sylvia that she was glad he had appeared on the scene.

"After all," she said, "a man does bring ozone into the mental atmosphere. There's something stirring and tonic about him. I se now, it was what we wanted. Next time I go away alone, or with another woman, I shall make George come down for week-ends and bring a friend."

She further admitted that Roland Dawson was very handsome and nice, though there was something she didn't quite care for in his manner and accent.

After that no day passed when he did not take at least one meal at the cottage. He became Sylvia's shadow. If a shadow can teach fly-fishing and sing songs and help ladies over stiles. He hired the village cart, and drove them to all the places of interest in the neighborhood, even 14 miles out, for a day at the seaside. The next fortnight went quickly. To Sylvia, the days that had crawled by and seemd about 48 hours long, now ran much too quickly. And Mrs. Mathers played gooseberry to perfection—for the first weeks.

But after a fortnight she began to grow tired of the three-cornered arrangement. She grew, moreover, exceedingly uneasy. For there developed in Sylvia symptoms that gave her great anxiety. The girl was getting frightfully restless, and never seemed happy out of Roland Dawson's company. She appeared distrait in manner, giving irrelevant answers to simple questions, and, in short, showing a side in her character that no one—least of all Beatrice Mathers—had ever suspected before.

She—Mrs. Mathers—became painfully aware that her society was not wanted when the young man appeared on the scene; and, although one may be a cheerful gooseberry when one is treated nicely, to be shelved altogether is beyond mortal woman to endure with complacency.

She was bestirred to a sense of her duties of chaperon at this point, a sense partly awakened by the meaning looks and smiles of the other occupants of the cottage, and the inward question, What ought I to do? worried her day and night.

At last the question was answered definitely in her mind. One evening, after having been completely left out in the cold for a long time by the couple in the parlor, she went up to her room and wrote letters there, feeling their company was intolerable. She had finished and was going down stairs when a murmur of voices outside told her that Sylvia and Roland Dawson had strolled into the front garden.

Without thinking she went to the window and looked out. The pair stood at the gate, looking into the lane, and the strong scent of the cedar was wafted up to her with the one word "Darling" from Dawson's lips. Then, to her horror, she saw Sylvia folded in his arms.

She went down stairs with an air of resolution on her softly rounded face.

"Sylvia," she asked when the girl came in, "are you engaged to Mr. Dawson?"

"That is my affair," was the cold answer.

"Excuse me, it is also mine. I came here with you because your mother would not let you come alone, and, therefore, I am partly responsible to her. Besides, if you still regard me as your friend, don't you think I am entitled to know if there is anything between you and this comparative stranger?"

"There is not—except friendship—a very deep and close friendship."

"What might be termed an all-embracing friendship, I suppose?"

"So you have been eavesdropping? I did not think it of you!"

Mrs. Mathers kept her temper admirably.

"Accidentally I saw what I did not wish to see," she replied quietly.

Sylvia, too, struggled with her temper for a few moments. Then she said with an effort:

"Mr. Dawson has never before gone so far. He was overcome for the moment, and he knows—well—I think we understand one another without words. Our natures are almost one, and—"

"Sylvia, you know nothing about him. You could not marry him!"

"Why not?" she blazed out suddenly. Have you anything to say against him? Is he not everything a man should be—strong, chivalrous and manly? You said so yourself when he first came. You agreed with me that he was a refreshing change after the mannered effeminacy of most men we meet. Is he not every inch a man?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Mathers; "and every inch a bore."

"A bore! He interests me more than any man I ever met."

"Because you are under a spell. Remember, Sylvia, you've seen him against no other men. He has a distinctly bourgeois manner and provincial accent. He says the same things and sings the same songs over and over again; he has no real sense of humor, no wit, no depth or subtlety of character. All his goods are in his shop windows, and they are—a handsome face, large frame and strong muscles."

"You are unjust and I hate you!" cried Sylvia passionately, losing all control of herself for the first time in her life. "He is a man, worth all the other men in the world, and I love him!"

With that she stalked out of the parlor to her bedroom, and dissolved into a flood of angry tears.

Next morning Beatrice Mathers—who had a proud spirit beneath her sweet manner—declared her intention of leaving the cottage that day, and Sylvia coldly responded: "Pray do as you think best."

They parted with the same wall of ice between them, both very miserable, for they had long been affectionate friends, and really cared for each other. Sylvia was the most miserable. She knew herself to be in the wrong, and she was alone; whereas Mrs. Mathers had a clean conscience, and was going home to her beloved babies. There was a cloudy sky, and an air of deep depression hung over the cottage. Sylvia wandered about gloomily, and longed for Roland Dawson to come. At last he did.

It was at tea time, three hours after Mrs. Mathers had gone. And he stayed till 11 o'clock. For the first time Sylvia found him wearisome, and was glad when he left. She laid this to her own state of unstrung nerves after the quarrel with her friend; but a tormenting suspicion crept through her mind that part of the fault had been his; that he had shown little tact in probing her as to the cause of her solitude, and harped too continually on his two favorite themes—his prowess in sport and his affinity with her soul.

She kept him at a distance, which made him reproachful and dull. Yes; it was impossible to dodge the fact—he had been dull, deadly dull. His songs lacked their ring and spirit, his voice monotonous, and his laugh jarred on her. She felt that he had somehow ceased to be the Adam of her Eden.

Next morning a letter came from Beatrice Mathers, and Sylvia's heart beat a trifle quickly at the sight of that familiar writing. Was Trixie going to be cold and horrid, or loving and repentant? The query was soon answered. This was the letter:

"Dear Sylvia—I have just learned from Wilson that her sister's husband is staying at the inn in your village, and that his name is Ronald Dawson. He is a job master at Browns—lets out horses on hire, you know—and has a very flourishing business. He was educated at a grammar school, and as Wilson proudly states, is 'quite the gentleman.' Of course he may not be the same person as our bone of contention, but it is as well you should know the fact I have stated.

"I do not intend to let Mrs. Mellowby know that I have left you, and trust you may return before she finds out. Your sincere friend,

"TRIXIE MATHERS."

Sylvia turned faint and sick; her hands trembled until she could scarcely hold the letter; her eyes blazed and her ears began to burn.

She clenched her hands and teeth to keep from crying out, for she was badly hurt and no one to whom she could go for relief. Indeed, in such a case, no third person could help. She swallowed her tea without feeling the cup, her lips had suddenly grown numb and dry. Then she went to her room, and wrestled with herself until she had threshed out a plan of action.

Roland Dawson was coming to take her fishing at 9:30. She bathed her fevered face and powdered it thickly for the scarlet flush was like a deep, indelible stain. Neither eau-de-Cologne nor phenacetin could resist the frantic headache that bound her brows as in a vice; but she had not long to endure the agony that was tormenting her. There came a timid knock at her door, and the girl who waited upon her thrust in a smirking face to say that Mr. Dawson was waiting for her in the parlor. Sylvia pulled herself together and went down.

He advanced to shake hands, but she put hers behind her back, and her back against the door.

"Is it true that you are married, Mr. Dawson," she said as calmly as her fluttering heart would allow, "and that your wife's name is Wilson?"

He grew white before her accusing eyes; and she was answered.

III.

"Did he make a scene?" Beatrice Mathers asked, when the two friends had shed a few tears over their reconciliation two days later.

"Well, he certainly tried to defend himself, said he had given his real name, and had not told us he was unmarried. Indeed, he reminded me that he had often spoken of being my inferior in every way, and more than hinted at insuperable barriers between us. And he had. But I thought he meant—I don't know what I thought—but it seemed the right attitude for a lover."

"A lover of romance! Of course. Go on."

"Then he became emotional. Spoke with a catch in his voice and—oh, Trixie!—I never felt so wretched in my life! From the very first there was something in his voice, his whole personality, that drew me towards him horribly, even against my will. I don't believe I shall ever again reach the heights and depths I've probed these last weeks. And I ask myself continually: Could it have been the real thing after all?"

"No," said Beatrice Mathers, firmly, "for the 'real thing' lasts, and there was nothing that could last in your—'thing.' It had no solid basis, but simply floated in midair a creation of your own fancy and the glamor of Nature."

"I don't know. He was every inch a man, and—to a woman—that is a great deal."

"A woman can't live on undiluted manliness, Sylvia. She wants something to feed her mind on, when she has one. If you could only have heard yourself prattling down to him! It was all right in Arcady, which is a holiday country, where one plays at being a shepherdess for a short time; but think of it—and nothing else—every day of the week for, say, 40 years! One might as well try to live on raw meat! No; you could never have stood him a month, under ordinary conditions. You were simply under a spell."

"'The juice of the little western flower,'" said Sylvia, dreamily. "I suppose so. But it seemed very real at the time."

"It always does," observed Trixie. "What did he say next?"

"That his conscience had reproached him frightfully, but he could not bring himself to tell me the truth because he loved me so much, and felt that he must seize every moment of happiness he could snatch before the inevitable break came. Oh, he was most eloquent; but he spoilt it at the finish."

"How was that?"

"He said he thought I had returned his affection—"

"And hadn't you?"

"Of course I had, but it was horrid of him to throw it at me. I couldn't stand it. I couldn't let him go away and triumph over me, so I simply laughed and said he had deluded himself—that I was engaged to Archibald Crompton."

"Oh, Sylvia! That was not true."

"It wasn't, but it was going to be, and it is now. I wired to Archie to meet me at Watertown and then I told him all about it."

"What! Everything?"

"Every single hideous thing. I informed him he had been right about me from start to finish, that the juice of Love-in-Idleness had been squeezed, metaphorically, upon my eyelids; that I had fallen a victim to the first rustic swain I saw, and had altogether proved myself a sentimentl idiot—just as he had prophesied."

"And what did he say?"

"He said, 'You have certainly given me a Roland for my Oliver!' And then he took out his pocketbook and showed me a dead pansy I gave him before I went away."

"Meaning—"

"That he, also, is a sentimental idiot. I suppose we shall end by marrying each other," she concluded in a tone of resignation.

PUTTING THE TRAMP OUT OF BUSINESS

Continued From the First Page *of* This Section

if they have not proved absolutely incorrigible and gone to the penitentiary—they are offered a contract to work for a couple of months at a "free labor colony" or given choice of a number of small colonies that are being instituted around Witzwyl, where $8 a month wages is paid, and conditions are precisely as though they were free farm workmen. The only limitation upon them is that sobriety is made compulsory.

Results have been remarkable. There are no tramps in Switzerland. Those who were tramps have been largely transformed into useful members of the community, and they are gradually taking up anew the family responsibilities which they had abandoned.

Deserted wives have found husbands, made new men again, sending for them and settling up households which, if more humble than those which formerly went down to ruin with the crumbling manhood of the husband, are on a far firmer foundation and contain much genuine happiness.

One old tramp, who hadn't anybody but himself to care for, and preferred to let anybody else do that, had been committed for vagrancy half a hundred times before the new system of labor colonies plucked him from his swine and acorns by the nape of the neck, and made him do some honest bread earning.

He was kept at it until he actually learned to like it. Now, having accumulated a small Swiss fortune of several hundred dollars, he prides himself upon being a capitalist, and is one of the most indefatigable old hustlers in the canton of Berne.

Mr. Kelly's expert knowledge of the tramp problem in the United States does not lead him to advocate any hard and fast transplanting of the Swiss panacea to American soil. But he does urge it as a reliable solution of our own problem, if it be adopted with adequate modification.

The two classes of labor colonies he would introduce by law. The committing magistrate should have the discretion of sentencing his tramps to the forced labor colony, or offering them a contract for two months' work in a "free" colony.

Instead of having any very large colonies, there should be a number of small ones, each surrounded by ample acreage to permit of extension of operations along agricultural lines, and also to avoid injuring farm properties by too close proximity to such an aggregation of presumably objectionable neighbors.

The indeterminate sentence, which would be the most effective means of correction, presents many drawbacks of possible injustice to the vagrant. But it is believed that, with habeas corpus proceedings put at the command of every prisoner at the end of his minimum term, and with independent committees of supervision to correct any arbitrariness of colony superintendents, the welfare of the vagrants, as well as of the communities, could be thoroughly safeguarded.

But, above everything else, the roads of the country should be cleared of all vagrants, and the means to that end is provision of places of detention, with labor, which shall make the vagrants self-supporting during the term of their detention.

Mr. Kelly points out, in connection with the proposed adoption of the Swiss colony plan in some effective form, the first, inevitable result:

The state that will be most quickly free from the tramp evil will be the state which first makes productive labor compulsory upon all vagrants, without exception.

The state which will pay the most expensive penalty for neglect of this simple means of safeguard will be the state which is the last to adopt it.

Because—it's really very obvious, as you can see—every tramp will instantly emigrate from the state where he is forced to work to the state where he is permitted to loaf. Mr. Kelly makes it altogether apparent in a few of his cogent paragraphs:

The task of providing food and shelter for $50,000 vagrants looks at first sight formidable, but it is not as formidable as it looks, when we consider that it is to be spread over the whole of the United States, and the expense distributed among 80,000,000 people.

And no state need be deterred from undertaking its share of the task by the fear that an undue share will be imposed upon it. Tramps hate all institutions, and will abandon every state that certainly and comprehensively deals with them all. It is because vagrancy laws are not executed that tramps now wander freely through the country.

"The first state that provides a system that makes it humane and just for the magistrate to sequester every vagrant that comes before him, will promptly rid its borders of the tramp, who will avoid this state and proceed to others where he can roam unmolested. All the states will be driven by this process, one after another, to adopt the labor colony plan. It is the last state to adopt it that will bear the brunt of vagabondage, not the first."

Apart from the drastic action that is possible for any state which chooses to free its citizens from the obsession of that evil genius of our roads, the tramp, there is a remedy that is at the command of every individual—one which, if employed by all citizens, would instantly, and as effectively, eliminate tramps from any state or district in which it operates.

The remedy works better with the state laws cooperating; yet it will operate summarily alone.

Prepare to gasp in horror, all you who pride yourselves on tender hearts, and see in the Samaritan, the ideal you emulate:

Let no one give a cent, a morsel of meat, a crumb of bread in charity to the beggar at his gate.

Any stretch of country 25 miles in diameter over which such a rule were to prevail for one spring and summer, would be immune from tramps. To the vast confraternity of trampdom that tiny area would become known as the one desert spot in the limitless, nourishing oasis comprising the remainder of the United States. They would shun it eternally as a stopping-off place, and would hike past it, or through it.

This appears to be a totally new and altogether brutal, view to take of that charity which, from the dawn of Christianity has been deemed among the first obligations of civilized man. Under present conditions in the United States, Mr. Kelly premises that it would be plainly wicked in practical, unadulterated application.

But reports, which he cites, of very thorough investigations of the problem of vagrancy, point out that vagrancy flourishes upon almsgiving. If, the calmly observant investigators remark, there were no compassionate neighbors, no shelters, no soup kitchens to depend on, the tramps would all be driven to seek work.

Switzerland, consistent, perfectly logical in applying the principles of forcing chronic loafers to work for the food they consume, has several cantons that carry the scheme of forcing all tramps into productiveness of some kind, to its last limit, by turning the machinery of the law not only upon him who receives but upon him who gives. It is a penal offense to give any beggar alms. And Switzerland has solved the tramp problem in a merciful way.

STONE CARRIERS.

Laborers of Powerful Physique With Whom Machinery Can't Compete.

From the Scientific American.

Recently an interesting water impounding scheme has been carried to successful completion in southern India at the Mari-Kanave gorge upon the Vedarati river in Mysore state.

When constructional work was in full swing more than 5,000 natives were employed and the undertaking offered a novel and interesting example of the cheapness of manual labor as compared with the mechanical appliances.

In India there exists a class of laborers generically described as "nowgunnies," or professional stone carriers, who, owing to their capacity for hard work, are in great demand for such enterprises as this. They are of powerful physique and possess considerable stamina. They will work for 10 hours a day and transport from 70 to 150 pounds of stone a man. They form gangs according to the character of the work in hand, ranging from two, four, eight 12 to 16 men a unit.

Although such transportation seems somewhat slow in comparison with the possibilities of handling plants, yet they prosecute their task very energetically and the scale of pay ringing from 10 to 16 cents a man a day, is so low as to render such labor far cheaper than mechanical transport. Indeed, a complete installation of the latter was laid down, a cable being stretched across the gorge over the site, bringing the stone direct from the quarries on the hillsides to the site ready for setting, but this had to be abandoned owing to its being far more expensive than the "nowgunny" labor.

These men carried the masonry from the end of the railroad track connecting the site of the barrage with the quarries to its destination and placed it in position.

TARDY JUSTICE

By Mrs. John A. Logan

WITH all our boasted civilization, there is still an unchanging disposition in the minds of a majority of people to blame women in all cases of domestic infelicity.

To obtain vindication, women must pay liberally for their defense, especially if they are fatherless and brotherless. If they make appeals to those in authority, whose duty it is to investigate the conditions and administer justice, they find they are in the hands of men whose sympathies are invariably with their kind and that their chances for receiving justice are unequal with that of their recreant husbands, who can always depend upon being favored in every way possible.

If their derelict husbands happen to belong to any military or civil organization they know that their most atrocious and public acts of infidelity and unfaithfulness, in every domestic relation of life will be condoned and excused by their brother associates. It seems in these latter days, one of the cardinal principles of all organizations of men to stand by each other at all hazards, not infrequently at the expense of every principle of honor and truth. Yea! even to the commission of perjury, if then can save the accused and aid in the humiliation of innocent defenseless wives.

There was a time when men were more honorable and had a keener sense of their duty to the weaker sex. A man who deliberately traduced his wife, the mother of his children, and deserted his family because he was enamored of some siren, was looked upon with contempt. He was shunned by all honorable persons and was lucky if some man did not call him to account by giving him a flogging.

Masonic and other societies of which he chanced to be a member dropped him. Civil and military authorities, if he happened to be under the latter, disciplined him according to the extent of his misdemeanors.

Not so now, men occupying high positions have coolly abandoned their families; associated themselves with inferior designing women; traveled about the country with them; lived in the best hotels with them; embarked together in all kinds of pleasure-seeking. Giving theatre parties, midnight suppers at the best restaurants and appearing everywhere together among respectable people, who knew perfectly well that the wives and families of these men had been abandoned. And still they are received even by their kindred who might profit financially by recognizing their questionable companions, these same kindreds pose as moralists and important members of society.

Sons have appeared in defense of their degenerate fathers. Sisters have apologized for their profligate brothers and have associated with their brother's mormanatic companions as if there was nothing wrong in such defiant illicit conduct. Ministers have shut their eyes to such flagrant irregularities and have exchanged courtesies with the members of their flock, recognizing both the man and the woman as if they were worthy of recognition. Quietly and confidentially, many individuals will express their disapproval of such "blameworthy and indiscreet conduct," but not a single man or woman speaks out in condemnation of the man who thus dared to outrage decency.

Some of the offenders against morality and the sacredness of the marriage relations have actually appeared as moralists—suggesting the "true road to happiness."

How long this state of things will be tolerated in this country is a grave question. There is a continuous hue and cry about divorces; the breaking up of homes and many other evils that are rapidly destroying the very foundations of society. Why should it not be more profitable to look into the causes of domestic unhappiness? Why not put the blame where it belongs—on the martial infidelity of men, who when great financial success has attended their business ability—plunge into dissipation of all kinds, at home and abroad; become infatuated with women as reckless as themselves and then begin systematic efforts to get rid of the wives of their youth, usually women greatly their superiors, intellectually and in all other respects. They irritate their lawful wives beyond endurance, bully and insult them in every conceivable way; ignoring their existence and appearing everywhere with the women by whom they have been captivated—in order to force their wives into obtaining a divorce so they can go through the mockery of marriage to the women who have been their undoing.

The world knows little of the humiliation and mental torture to which many lovely women have been subjected by their disloyal husbands to force them to resort to the divorce courts to be relieved of such persecution by husbands who have sworn to love and cherish them till death should part. Some have finally broken down and allowed their husbands to carry out their diabolical plans and the world points the finger of scorn at these wives and representative people talk about ostracising the unfortunate divorced woman from polite society, while the men marry the women with whom they go about as if they were guiltless, especially if they have money with which to pay their way to the very front seats in exclusive society.

My advice to unfortunate women who, through no fault of theirs, have been the victims of perfidious husbands, is to refuse to give their husbands the freedom they desire. No matter how strongly they are advised, by any authority whatsoever to seek redress in the divorce courts. Let death alone sever the bonds of matrimony, maintain an unswerving determination to endure whatever of ignominy, brutality and disgrace such husbands can inflict, but never get a divorce.

Live apart when all hope of reclamation has vanished, but refuse to be a party to divorce demanded by depraved husbands. Time will vindicate all good women, no matter how much injustice has been heaped upon them. Hold fast to your marriage certificate and in the end you will be mistress of the situation and will reap your reward for your long suffering.

When society holds men responsible for loyalty to their families and ceases to recognize those who are known to be unfaithful and dissolute, you will have fewer cases of wife abandonment.

Who Was Jack Robinson?

From the Gentlewoman.

Jack Robinson has long been a favorite synonym for rapidity of speech or action, but possibly few people who use the phrase are aware that Jack Robinson was a real, live person.

"As a politician," says Lady Dorothy Nevill in her "Reminiscences," John Robinson was a great favorite with George III. His political career was long, for he was a member for Harwich during 36 years, being on one occasion bitterly attacked by Sheridan, who, denouncing bribery and its instigators, replied to the cries of 'Name! Name!' by pointing to Robinson on the treasury bench, exclaiming at the same time, 'Yes, I could name him as soon as I could say Jack Robinson,' and thus originated the saying still current at the present day."