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FARMER JOHN.

"If I'd nothing to do," said Farmer John,
"To fret or bother me—
Were I rid of this mountain of work,
What a good man I could be!

"The pigs get out, and the cows get in,
Where they have no right to be;
And the weeds in the garden and the corn—
Why, they fairly frighten me.

"It worries me out of temper quite,
And well nigh out of my head.
What a curse it is that a man must toil
Like this for his daily bread!"

But farmer John he broke his leg,
And was kept for many a week
A helpless man and an idle man—
Was he therefore mild and meek?

Nay; what with the pain, and what with the fret
Of sitting with nothing to do—
And the farmwork botched by a shiftless hand,
He got very cross and blue.

He scolded the children and cuffed the dog
That fawned about his knee;
And snarled at his wife, though she was kind
And patient as wife could be.

He grumbled and whined, and fretted and fumed
The whole of the long day through;
"'Twill ruin me quite," cried Farmer John,
"To sit here with nothing to do!"

His hurt got well and he went to work,
And a busier man than he,
A happier man, or a pleasanter man,
You never would wish to see.

The pigs got out and he drove them back,
Whistling right merrily;
He mended the fence and kept the cows
Just where they ought to be.

Weeding the garden was jolly fun,
And ditto hoeing the corn,
"I'm happier far," said Farmer John,
"Than I've been since I was born."

He learned a lesson that lasts him well—
'Twill last him his whole life through.
He frets but seldom, and never because
He has plenty of work to do.

"I tell you what," says Farmer John,
"They are either knaves or fools
Who long to be idle—for idle hands
Are the Devil's chosen tools."

—*Chicago Tribune.*

LODGINGS TO LET.

An Episode of the French Exhibition.

During the Exposition, Paris was visited by mania for lodge-letting. From the middle of April, hanging up at the doors of the houses, in the fashionable and central neighborhoods of the French capital might be seen bills with "Joli apartement meuble a louer presentment"—"Handsome furnished apartments to let;" and many a family, many a widow, many a bachelor or widower emigrated to some distant outskirt, giving up their apartments to strangers or foreigners, in consideration of receiving some thousand francs, while they themselves nestled down, during the great influx, in some humble locality, within or without the walls. In letting, there was no distinction of nation made; the terms were the same for one and all—for the native compatriot, as well as the Milord Anglais—for the German Baron, as well as the Russian Boyard, the Polish Count, the dollar-laden American—for everybody, in short, who could pay; that was the one condition.

Madame de Y——, a young and handsome widow of 25, who, on the first of April in that memorable year, had thrown off her weeds, resigned herself, among the rest, to the reigning epidemic. One morning she ran for the lodge-keeper of the house in which she resided in the Chaussee d'Antin, and ordered him to nail up at the portecochere the universal bill.

"Bless my soul! what running up and down I shall have of it!" exclaimed, in petto voce, with a piteous shrug, the seemingly-disconsolate porter, but who inwardly rejoced at the circumstance; for he, also, hoped to reap a golden harvest from the new-comers.

"N'importe, Andre," continued the charming young widow—"N'importe; let my apartment for 3,000 francs, and you shall have your commission of—let me see—5 per cent., if to a bachelor or widower; 4 per cent., if to a married couple without any infantile encumbrances; and 3 per cent., if to a family—and there are 5 francs to drink my health."

"Alas! alas!" groaned the portecochere Cerberus, as he pocketed the silver piece and promised, in a tone of melancholy devotedness, to do his best. That evening the widow, accompanied by her femme de chambre, took up her quarters in a small cottage near the village of Fontenay-aux Roses, outside the Barriere d'Enfer, and contiguous to the pretty Bois de Meudon, where she rusticated in the full enjoyment of her independent widowhood till the expiration of the term.

On the 2d of August following, Madame de Y—— returned to Paris, and drove to her residence, believing that her apartment, which had been let by the concierge, was vacated and ready for her.

"Madame," said Andre, "the gentleman has not yet gone."

"What gentleman, Andre?"

"The lodger, madame, Monsieur de R——, a provincial gentleman, very comme il faut. Yet it is not my fault, for I informed him, three days ago, that his time was up, and that he must go; but he said to me that it was all right; it was his affair, and he would square all matters with madame."

"Go and inform him, Andre, that I have returned, and want my apartments immediately."

"Useless, madame—completely useless. He was headstrong as a donkey; he wouldn't listen to me; it is with you alone he wishes to confer."

"Be it so, Andre. Go before and announce me."

Madame de Y—— was received most graciously and politely by the provincial tenant, who thus addressed her:

"You cannot conceive, madame, how comfortable I find myself in this your pretty apartment, and how much I desire to spend in it the remaining time I have to stay in your charming capital; and I fondly hope you will have the goodness to allow me so to do. Whatever be your terms, I accept them beforehand."

To this the widow replied, somewhat surprised, that she had no terms to propose; that she wanted her apartment, and must have it. But greater still was her surprise when she heard the provincial declare his determination to keep it, even if it was necessary to stand a regular siege. Madame de Y—— endeavored, as gently as possible, to make him understand the impropriety of his conduct; but all to no avail, for the tenant pleaded his cause with grace, eloquence and wit. The debate became warmer and warmer, the gentleman losing, and the lady gaining no ground, while Andre slipped away to his lodge, informing his better-half that the storm was gathering above. At last, after much speechifying on both sides, the gentleman, breaking a pause of apparently deep reflection, spoke again:

"Well, madame," said he, "there remains but one way to arrange our little dispute, so as to enable you to resume possession of your delightful residence, without ousting me from it."

"What is your meaning, sir?" demanded the bewildered young widow, looking still more charming in her amazement.

"My meaning is this, madame; my name is Arthur—Baron Arthur de B——. I belong to an old and honorable family—am a bachelor, and 32 years of age. My estates are worth 50,000 francs a year—but this I mention out of respect to the laws of business; and despite the originality and queerness of my conduct, which may perhaps have offended you, I am considered a very good-natured person; and, upon the whole, I flatter myself I am a man fully capable of making a lady happy. Will you, therefore, do me the honor of accepting my heart, my hand, and my fortune?"

To this sudden proposal Madame de Y— replied with dignity: "Your jest is not in very good taste, sir, and all I can do is to laugh at it."

"Serious, most serious, madame, I am indeed—and, on the faith of a gentleman, I beg you to believe it."

"What, sir! you propose marriage merely that you may not have to give up my apartments!"

"A little upon that account, madame, but still more because of a more overpowering reason; for among the many considerations I have had the honor of laying before you, there is one I dare not mention, but allow me now to confess it—I love you."

At this avowal, Madame de Y—blushed to the eyes. What lady, young or old, would not have done so, particularly when the avowal came from a young, handsome and wealthy man? However, she took it in good part, and laughed outright at her interlocutor?

"You are laughing, madame, and however—"

"Your folly provokes my laughter, Monsieur le Baron. I really cannot help it."

"Nevertheless, madame, I can assure you I am fully master of my reason, or at least as much of it as remains, subdued as it is by intense passion."

"What, sir! intense passion at first sight!"

"You forget, madame, that I have been living three long months in your apartments, and that your portrait, which I now see is an adorable likeness, is hanging up there in the next room. It was the first object that caught my attention on entering, and I have looked at and admired it every day since. Nor was I captivated by the charms of your beauty alone, for I am well acquainted with your merit in every way, your many superior qualities and your irreproachable character. A man, however so little he may be versed in womanly affairs, cannot spend three months in a lady's apartment without noticing and studying many things disclosing her habits, her tastes, her feelings. I have been an acute, and, perhaps, an indiscreet, observer, madame; and what I have discovered has captivated my heart forever. That heart I offer you again, and humbly wait your answer to know my fate."

There was no bombast, no fanfaronade in the Baron's language, it was the resolve of a man who had made up his mind, and was determined to succeed. But the more he urged his suit, the less he advanced in it; till at last the widow signified to him, in due form and unmistakable phraseology, that he must instantly shift his quarters—thus giving him his leave, and intimating to him at the same time that he must never think of setting foot in her residence again.

"Very well, madame—I withdraw, and will not return till you invite me to do so;" the answer to which parting words was a saucy smile, and a toss of the head which evidently meant, "You have long to wait, Monsieur le Baron before receiving such an invitation."

However, at the end of a few days, the invitation was sent, and the Baron arrived just as the widow had completed making herself more charming than ever.

"What have I been apprised of, sir?" said Madame de Y—— to him, as he seated himself in an arm chair a la Voltaire right opposite to her. "During my absence, you brought my long pending lawsuit to an amicable arrangement."

"Why, yes, madame; but you must be neither pleased nor displeased with me on that account, as I acted only in my own interest."

"How so, if you please, Baron?"

"The fact is, the lawyers' clerks were calling here with their papers every day and, owing to a heavy and protracted suit I once had myself, I have an utter aversion to every 'limb of the law,' and our allies, Messieurs les Anglais, have it. Being acquainted with your plaintiff, who is a debtor of mine, I made use of my influence over him, and soon got him to forego his unfounded claim, and he made over to me what he called his rights. It is therefore an affair between him and me. But rest assured, madame, that your delicacy and susceptibility shall never have to complain of my proceedings. Your lawsuit is forever quashed, and that is all!" Whereon the Baron looked the widow steadfastly but respectfully in the face, and gave no further explanation.

Madame de Y—— was somewhat confused; but, in spite of herself, she was continually forced to think of her ex-tenant. In every room of her apartment he had left some souvenir of his sojourn—poetry, pencilling, songs, music composed by himself, thoughts and maxims, etc., written in her albums and scrap book. All these gallant attentions seemed most charming to her, while they piqued her curiosity; and when that important part of the female constitution is awakened other sentiments soon come forth and blossom.

Now it happened that, the day after the Baron's invited visit, a poor woman, the mother of a family to whom Madame de Y—— was in the habit of giving stated pecuniary relief, called to thank her for her last munificent donation, which, she said, would keep her and hers forever.

"You were absent, my too-generous benefactress, but I had the honor of meeting here with your husband."

"My husband?" ejaculated the widow.

"Ah, madame, what an excellent, what a kind-hearted gentleman! Ah! how well you are mated, for you suit each other admirably. Yes, madame, I told him everything and how kind, how Providence-like you were to me. It seems to love you very much, and how could that be otherwise? 'Good woman,' says your husband to me, madame—'your benefactress is absent for the time being; but, before she went, she left this with me for you, and thereon I put in my hands a pocket-book containing bank notes—a fortune, madame. I was loth to accept it at first, but he would have me take it, although God knows you have already done much for me and my poor fatherless children. Ah, dear madame, how happy you must be with such a husband! But it is only the just reward of your excellent heart and Christian virtues. May Heaven bless and preserve you both for years and years to come."

"Strange, strange, passing strange!" thought the widow. "Settle my tedious lawsuit—provide for my poor widow and her children—leave some trace of himself everywhere around me! But men are such queer characters, such originals nowadays." She resolved, however, not to speak to the Baron of his generous conduct toward her proteges, fearful lest she might betray her *sensibilite* at so noble an action. But another circumstance soon came to light, and caused the Baron to be invited, suddenly and nervously, to call a second time. This circumstance was as follows: A young coxcomb, Leopold de R——, imagining he had fallen in love with Madame de Y——, because, living in the house opposite to hers, he had chanced now and then to see her at the balcony before missing her all on a sudden at her departure from her apartment. After many days' anxiety he determined upon writing her a *billet doux*, informing her of his love, and stating that he would call that evening for an answer. Having written his note, he wrapped it up in a small paper parcel and jerked it over the balcony into the window. It happened that the Baron had just finished the second breakfast he had taken in the house, and was poring over the newspaper when the parcel dropped into the room. He took it up, and, finding no superscription, he opened it and read the following:

Charming neighbor, for weeks and weeks have I admired you from my window-seat opposite. O how superlatively happy should I be were you to do me the honor of admitting me to your presence, and allowing me to declare myself and crave pardon for my presumption. At 8 this evening, I will call, as for admission and learn my fate. Till then minutes will glide away like years from my impatient heart. Farewell till then, goddess of my adoration. LEOPOLD.

He came, and the door was opened to him by the Baron in *propria persona*.

"Is Madame de Y—— at home?"

"She is not at home for you."

"And pray, by what right do you refuse me admission?"

"Methinks that right is very evident."

"And you are here in her apartment?"

"True; but for the time being it is my own."

The dialogue went rapidly on from cross words to a challenge; and on the morrow a duel took place in one of the coppice-woods of the Bois de Boulogne.

This time, Madame de Y—— had every reason, she thought, for blaming the Baron's conduct; so another invitation was sent to him, which he duly attended to.

"How is this, Monsieur le Baron?" said the widow in tremulous and reproachful accents—"expose your life with such a puppy—a life so useful, so precious! O, truly, I cannot but think you more foolish than wise."

"I confess, madame, that I was wrong; but I merely wanted to put the young puppy, as you justly call him, in his right place, and save you forever from his importunities. He scratched me, but I gave him a gentle sword-thrust which will prevent him from annoying you for some time to come. Was that not a service worth having, my charming landlady?"

"Yes; but at such a price—the risk of your life and my reputation! Gracious! Baron, what will my friends think of me after such an affair? You have compromised me terribly by your generous, your noble, your magnanimous conduct."

"'Tis true, very true, dear lady, and I now begin to see I acted too rashly upon the impulse of the moment; and that, in fact, I owe you a reparation."

Madame de Y—— thought so like wise. "Well, my dear Baron," said she, proffering her hand, "since it was to be, it must be, so let it be—we are friends."

"And betrothed ones, my charmer," cried the enamored Baron, fondly pressing to his lips the widow's ripe, red lips. "And the marriage-day? When?"

"Oh, dear me! Mon Dieu, what a man! In a month hence." And the compact was sealed.

☞M. JAVEL says that the fatigue experienced by the eyes from reading with artificial light is due more to the want of light than to its excess. Even in a very brightly-illuminated room the pupils are much more dilated than by daylight, and this dilation produces fatigue.

Agrarian State of Italy.

The agrarian state of Italy is such as to cause the gravest anxiety to Italian statesmen. The corn trade, once so prosperous, has come to an end. The ships which enter the Italian harbors can get no return freight. The misery of the people is terrible and in consequence the average length of human life is 8 years less than in France, and 16 less than in Norway. The pellagra, a horrible disease which causes insanity and death, and is produced by the habitual consumption of damaged corn, has increased of late years to an appalling extent. In the year 1830 there were 20,000 peasants suffering from it in Lombardy, and there were double that number in 1878. Jacini gives an account of the life, food, and habitation of the peasants of Northern Italy, which could not be surpassed by the most sensational description of a cabin in the West of Ireland. Villari tells a similar tale. Heavy taxation is also contributing to ruin the agriculturist. In the Commune of the Grotto S. Stefano, in the District of Viterbo, there were 19 little properties sold upon the 13th of October last, and I have been assured that in the course of last year there have been as many as 2,000 in the Province of Rome alone. Under these circumstances it is not wonderful that emigration from Italy should have assumed considerable proportions. In the year 1867 there were 12,000 emigrants; 1868, 30,000; 1870, 40,000; 1873, 76,000; 1876, 108,771; 1877, and during first half of 1878, 160,008.—*The Fortnightly Review.*

ONE of the advantages of keeping sheep is that qualities of lands and crops can be utilized by them, which otherwise would be comparatively profitless. While they are among the most profitable stock, they actually improve the soil, so that more grass and more money are realized with less labor. A writer remarks, a pound of mutton can be raised as cheap as a pound of beef or pork, and is worth equally as much in the market, and the wool is extra profit. Use thoroughbred males of any of the popular breeds, and in a few years your sheep will be a source of pride as well as profit.—*Texas Wool.*