

What Became of Mary Ellen

...By SAMUEL MINTURN PECK

Did the unaccustomed warmth bring back lumpy memories of lush jungles and Africa's sunny frontiers, or did the cramped quarters irritate the snake into an effort for freedom? Tom had deemed the box secure, but with one twist of her little body Mary Ellen popped off two slats and slid half her flexible length into the room.

The colonel heard the noise, but did not turn around to look. Let the opossum escape if it could, it was nothing to him. If it got away perhaps Tom would be blamed, and he did not like Tom. So he took another drink and continued to read.

At first from his prison, the reptile pined. She seemed thirsty, as well as hungry, for she hesitated between the man and the pair of drinking water which stood on a splat-bottomed chair by the door. Thirst conquered, and she glided noiselessly to the water pan and drank half its contents.

Meanwhile the colonel read on, unconscious of his peril. Absorbed by a well-written editorial, he bent the sheet as he reached the middle of the column. The rustle of the paper drew the attention of the reptile, and, turning from the water pan with a greedy glimmer in her eyes, she started toward him.

CHAPTER II
HAD the old politician been young and active his situation would have been a perilous one. But, old, weary and half-indebted, he was well-nigh desperate.

The advancing snake was between him and the door, the two rear windows were both closed, and he had no weapon. It appeared as if the amanita would soon crush him and crush him in her coils he was aware of his danger. But fate seemed resolved that he should not perish by violence nor fill any but a drunkard's grave, for by a strange dispensation of Providence the appetite for drink that had wrecked his health and ruined his life came to his aid.

It had been several minutes since the colonel had taken a nip, and when the snake had glided within a few feet of him the old man reached for the bottle. At the sound the snake hissed, and the mortal snail lifted him to his feet slinking like one possessed. He turned.

Was it a real snake or only a phantom of drink?
A second hiss brought a shriek of terror from the old man, and rushing to the rear of the room, upsetting and happily extinguishing the lamp in his fright, he plunged headlong through the glass window sash into the snow.

At the moment of the colonel's precipitate exit there were no eyes to witness the flying leap, for excessive cold had driven the good people of Oakville to their heartstones, and it was only by chance that his terrified shriek reached the ears of a human being.

Two blocks distant Jim Evans was on his way to his wedding. There had been some delay in obtaining his marriage license. In his bachelor ignorance the young editor had thought it would be as simple a matter as buying a postage stamp. It was more like filling a bill in law.

Finally, extricating himself from the snarl of red tape, he hurried away from the printer's office with the indispensable document to dress. Amoy, who pursued him. It had been arranged that Dick Hamlin, Jennie's brother, should come to him at 7:40. At 7:40 it occurred to him that he had forgotten to tell Dick of his change of quarters. He discovered a knocking for his house. He had moved his belongings only a week ago, and his former room was three-quarters of a mile distant on the other end of the street. If Dick went there for him and was disappointed by his new abode there would be truly ten minutes' delay, perhaps more, and if he were early at his wedding the result would be disastrous. He would not keep his bride waiting for her night in gold. He must meet Dick half way.

It was straight. Through the wide road passed the benches of the trees by the sidewalk the stars flashed fitfully like a storm of fireflies. Another time he would have blessed their ominous illumination, but tonight, haste drove him to heed for the more effective darkness. Short lights which Oakville did not boast. And the wind got into his water-soaked hat in the snow which he had slipped on. He had to see and sent their bustling down the road.

Turning a corner he saw his sanctum brilliantly illuminated. It was the colonel, of course, and he hoped the old man would keep sober enough not to forget the place after. Following this thought came the colonel's yell.

"Jim! Jim!" exclaimed the young man, and ran toward the place at full speed.

the negro. "He gwine marry Miss Jiny Hamlin, de belle 'o de town."
The colonel had again forgotten the wedding.

It seems a simple thing to put on a wreath of orange blossoms and a veil of tulle. That is what a man would suppose a poor ignorant man. That is what Tom Wilson thought till he saw it done.

Tom had the freedom of the house by right of co-sponsorship and reporter for the Chronicle, and he had come early that he might not miss anything. He watched the white cloud as it descended on Jennie's dimpled face and shoulders and settled like a silver mist over her lissom form and thought that was the end. It was hardly the beginning.

"A little more to the right, Hattie," said Mrs. Hamlin. "There, that's better."
"No, Aunt Hattie, it's too far," said the bride, twisting her head and gazing in a hand mirror. "Just see how that stiff bow sticks out; it makes me look like a scarecrow."
"You do look like it this way?" asked Aunt Hattie, moving the wreath again.

Mrs. Hamlin viewed Jennie doubtfully.
"I think it looked better at first."
Then the whole act was repeated.
"By George, Jennie, you look as pretty as a picture however it's fixed," said Tom, with admiring eyes. "And what will Jim care? He thinks you are perfect anyway."

"That's what he ought to think, Mr. Thomas," said the bride sullenly.
At last the wreath and veil were adjusted to suit all, and Tom walked around his pretty cousin, who resembled a plump little fairy arrayed in moonlight gossamer.
"You'll never be able to sit down in all that rigging, Jennie."
"I don't intend to; Jennie Hamlin will never occupy another chair. When next she takes a seat she'll be Mrs. James Monroe Evans."
[TO BE CONTINUED.]

BRILLIANT SWORDPLAY.
Italy Is the Home of Fencing as a Blooded Art.
Although the Germans were always preeminent at the rougher games of swordsmanship, it is in Italy that we find the first development of that number, more regulated, more cunning, better controlled play which we have learned to associate with the term fencing. It is from Italy that fencing as a refined art first spread over Europe, not from Spain, as it has been asserted by many writers.

It is in the Italian rapier play of the late sixteenth century that we find the foundations of fencing in the modern sense of the word. The Italians, if we take their early books as evidence and the fact that their philosophy of fence was adopted by all Europe, were the first to perceive, as soon as the problem of armor breaking ceased to be the most important one in a fight, the superior capabilities for elegant slaughter possessed by the point as compared with the edge. They accordingly reduced the breadth of their sword, modified the hilt portion thereof to admit of a readier thrust action and relegated the cut to quite a secondary position in their system. With this change they developed a new code of fence, that brilliant, cunning, catlike play known as rapier fence.

The rapier was ultimately adopted everywhere by men of courtly habit, but in England at least it was not accepted without murmur and vituperation from the older fighting class of swordsmen. Cornhill.

MEASURE HIS FINGER.
If It Is Longer Than Yours, He Will Rule You When You're Wed.
It is rather late in the day for this bit of advice, but the girl who thinks of marriage should take the precaution of first measuring the forefinger of her lover with her own before she commits herself irrevocably. If his forefinger happens to be longer than her own she would best reject him, for she will never rule her own household, the rule being that whichever has the longer forefinger becomes the ruling power in this home. One on the ground girl, upon being told of this test, carefully measured fingers at once, and upon finding that her fiancé's finger was much longer than her own, stoutly declared that she didn't care. "She didn't want to rule the house anyway." The man breathes freely once more. It was this very same girl, however, who was observed to make special and strenuous efforts to set her own right foot upon the church step before the groom, and to place this same foot upon the carpet beforehand. It is a sure sign that whichever sets foot first upon the church step and upon the carpet at the altar will rule the house.

Which offers a solution of the "longest forefinger" problem? Avoid as you would the pestilence the tying of your shoe in a carriage upon your wedding day. It is "unlucky." Exchange.

London Doctors' Fees.
Discussion by London newspapers of doctors' fees has brought to light some curious information. "I know a man," one doctor is quoted as saying, "who has a guinea practice in Harley street, a five shilling practice in Kensington and a sixpenny practice in Seven Dials."

In Clapton, a poor quarter of London, fees of twopenny (4 cents) are said to be not unknown. One newspaper remarks: "Of the twopenny fee it might be said that it brings sickness within the reach of all. In Clapton, at its farthest, there is no excuse or justification for any one being well."

This same newspaper says, "Now that flats are so fashionable the doctor's difficulty in guessing the paying ability of his patient is enormously increased, flats being alike the refuge of the wealthy and the indigent."

Compensation.
Head of Family—I want to leave my property to my two sons—one tenth to my older son, John Butts, and nine tenths to my younger son, Royal Chesterfield Montgomery de Peyster Butts. Family Lawyer—H'm! Do you think that's quite fair? Head of Family—Yes, I want to make some kind of reparation to Royal for allowing his mother to give him such a name.—London Mail.

WOMAN AND FASHION

A Simple House.
Embroidery worked on to the material makes the smartest of all trimmings and has a certain inherent elegance that nothing else quite equals. This charming yet simple blouse is made of white linen lawn, with yoke and cuffs embroidered and the plait



WHITE LAWN, EMBROIDERED YOKE.

Secrets That Are Unwarily Left in Library Volumes.
Stories of Love as Well as of Crime Bred Between the Leaves by Absent-minded Readers—The Way One Murder Mystery Was Solved.

The letter began, "My Sweet Anne." Surely a stranger need be pardoned for reading it through, for it was found hidden singly away between the leaves of a dusty and ancient volume of poems drawn from a great library. The finder took it carefully to the librarian.

"Another one!" said the librarian inquiringly. "Out of the old edition of Moore, eh? Well, I guess we won't send it back. I generally return personal letters if they are of enough interest and nobody calls for them, but if I sent everything back that we find the directors would be about my ears for wasting postage stamps." The afternoon was a quiet one, and the librarian continued:

"We shake every book that is returning, and almost always something falls out. It may be a letter like the one you have just found or a visiting card or a hairpin. Almost invariably the treasures that we unfold here are the earnings of feminine possession. I am not charging women with carelessness. I am simply stating a fact.

"Generally the things we find are documentary in their nature. Last week I shook out of a book on home life a signed and indorsed check for \$75 made payable to the dressmaker whose statement of account was pinned to it. On another occasion a fifty dollar bank note fluttered out. Both were called for within a short time. Occasionally one gives us a glimpse of a love secret or a tragedy. Not so long ago a letter was taken from a book which was of such an unusual nature that I remembered the names concerned long enough to recognize them in the newspaper reports of a court case which divided a family.

The letter was addressed to a woman and filled with the frank and open avowal of a man's forbidden love. The woman was the wife of another. I carefully secreted the missive and a few hours later was confronted by a heavily veiled lady, who asked if a letter had been found in a book which happened to be a morbid problem novel of great popularity at the time, the work of a well-known Englishman. The question was asked in a voice which tried hard not to shake. I handed the letter over, and the woman hastily took herself off. Somebody a month later I ran across her name in the newspapers as defendant in a divorce court.

"Yet the writings we find in books are not always so intimate. Sometimes they follow the development of a habit, such as the habit of domesticity, and the details of the kitchen. Indeed I have enough recipes for desserts and sweetmeats to publish the collection as a cookbook. Now and then a book is a veritable mine. I have found in them gold, silver and precious stones. Embroidery silk by the yard and of various hues may be fished out from some novels, and, alas, an occasional cigarette paper.

"The evidences of masculine forgery, fullness and rarer, I have forgotten all but that brilliant, cunning, catlike play known as rapier fence.

Soft Edge For Parasols.
A soft finish is given to the edge of a plain white silk parasol by a brand of white velvet set on. This takes an edge about an inch wide.

For a Young Girl.
There is a certain inherent charm about the blouse costume worn by young girls which makes it a well deserved favorite, and each season sees it in slightly varied forms. This very pretty model is adapted to all the materials used for frocks of the sort, but



BOUSE COSTUME.

as illustrated, is made of blue linen figured with white and trimmed with white bands piped with blue. The skirt is box plaited and joined to a body lining the two closing together at the center back. The blouse is separated and is finished with a box plait at the center front, beneath which the closing is made. At the lower edge is a hem in which elastic is inserted to regulate the size. To make the costume for a girl of ten years will be required seven and a half yards of material twenty-seven, six and a quarter yards thirty-two or four and a quarter yards forty-four inches wide.

An Eventful Day.
"Well, well," exclaimed the editor, "if that wasn't a queer experience!" "What was that?" said the foreman. "There was a man in here just now who didn't seem to know any more about how a newspaper should be run than I do."

Fond of Children.
"The dog you sold me yesterday would have eaten my little girl up this morning if she had not been rescued." "But you insisted on having a dog that was fond of children."

She's Just Practicing.
"I understand that Mr. Binx and his fiancée have had a quarrel."
"Yes," answered Miss Cayenne. "But it is nothing serious. She is a prudent girl and wants to make sure she can manage him when he is angry."—Washington Star.

Not Her Fault.
"Eva—I thought you were never going to speak to Harold again as long as you lived?—Ciss—I know I said so, but it wasn't my fault that I broke the resolution. Eva—How did it happen?—Ciss—He called me up over the telephone.—Woman's Journal.

When something is very difficult to understand," said the distinguished professor of biology, "it is called science; when it is impossible, it is called philosophy."

A SNOW EXPERIMENT.

Frozen Vapor From the Action of Sulphide of Carbon.
Two solid bodies, one yellow, sulphur, the other black, carbon, unite under certain circumstances to form a colorless liquid called sulphide of carbon, which must be handled with much precaution on account of its great explosive property. The soluble property of sulphide of carbon renders it valuable to take spots off garments. If its odor is more disagreeable than that of benzine or turpentine, it has at least the advantage of being dispelled quickly in consequence of the prompt evaporation of the liquid. There is nothing equal to it to take off spots of paint or clothes. It does not do it, however, without creating great fear in persons who use it for the first time, for they see on the very place where, to their great pleasure, the paint had disappeared a large white spot, the nature of which is hard for them to define, and the more they brush the more unsightly and the larger that white spot grows. Is then the garment lost? No, for fortunately after a few moments the spot melts away never to show again. It was snow and nothing more. The sulphide of carbon in evaporating takes heat from the cloth and surrounding air, and the result of that is a sudden lowering of temperature sufficient to freeze the vapor of the atmosphere.

Without operating on your clothes you may make the experiment in the following way: Fill a small can with sulphide of carbon, taking great care to do it far from all flame or heated stove. Then close the bottle with a cork stopper through which you have previously bored a small hole. In this hole place a piece of blotting paper made up into a little roll. The paper must reach to the bottom of the bottle and about an inch above the cork. Within fifteen minutes you will see the outside of this paper covered with snow, the quantity of which gradually increases. The liquid has risen through the pores of the paper as the oil of a lamp through the wick. When it gets to the open air it evaporates, and water contained in the surrounding atmosphere, being brought to a temperature below 32 degrees, has been frozen. If you divide the paper outside of the bottle into several pieces you obtain flowers and most charming effects. You may make the experiment in summer and in the full rays of the sun. The result will be obtained then more promptly, evaporation being more abundant.

First Stages Made in Pennsylvania.
"The first stage was made by hand in the wilds of Pennsylvania," said a tobacco man of Allegheny City.

"The story which they tell once in awhile in West Virginia and which must be true is that the long cheroots derived their name from the town of Conestoga, Pa. An emigrant train of wagons was finding its way across the state, and a supply of tobacco was found at Conestoga.

"The emigrants got a lot of it, but failed to get any pipes and so could not smoke unless they made pipes themselves. Necessity is the mother of invention. You may have heard that remark before. Anyhow one of the men rolled a leaf of the tobacco in his hand and wrapped it with another leaf. That was the first stage. Others followed his example, and they all called the article that they made a 'stage' in honor of the town at which the tobacco was secured. That is said to be the true story of how the name 'stage' originated."—Louisville Courier Journal.

Reason For Marrying.
They were talking about a friend of hers who had married a bishop stationed in Kamchatka or Timbuktu or some other heathen land.

"I never could understand why she married him," said the young woman. "She seemed the last girl on earth to marry a bishop. She cared so much more for having a good time than she did for church work and sewing circles."

"Girls are pretty wise nowadays," said the young man, "and they generally have a good reason for marrying the way they do. A girl friend of mine married a doctor so she could always get married. The bishop she could get married to for nothing, and maybe this girl married the bishop so she could be good for nothing."—New York Tribune.

The Traitor's Stone.
A curious specimen of the famous Traitor's stone of Rome is still preserved in England. It is a large round piece of sandstone, much of the appearance of a millstone, with a few apertures which make it bear a faint resemblance to the human face. At one period in Roman history it was the custom to have all persons suspected of traitorous conduct place their hands in the mouthlike opening. If the stone bit their fingers the prisoners were deemed guilty.

A Bit of a Blow.
"I suppose you have encountered worse gales than this?" asked an inquisitive passenger of the sailor man during a very moderate bit of a blow.

"This yer ain't a gale," responded the salt. "Why, I was one in the bay of Biscay when the wind blew all the point off the bulwarks. It took four on us to hold the captain's hat on 'is 'ent, and even then all the unkers was blown off 'is buttons. That was a blow for yer. Why, even?"

But by this time the curious passenger realized that he was being gazed, and he did not give the imaginative tar the chance of finishing his interesting narrative.

Relaxation.
Mrs. Saltontall—I feel tired to death this morning. I've been out till midnight the last four nights running. Mrs. Walsingham—So do I. I have had company for two weeks now, and I'm all worn out. Let's go shopping.—Somerville Journal.

American Partridges.
In the north, where the ruffed grouse is known as the partridge, the belovite is called the quail. In the south, where the ruffed grouse is known as the pheasant, the quail is called the partridge.—Country Life in America.

Charm strikes the sight, but merit wins the soul.—Pope.

THE HEAD ON THE FLOOR.
Startling Incident Accompanying the Death of a Slave Trader.
In a small court in Edinburgh many years ago a man who had been notorious for his cruelties as a slave trader lay dying. Mental terror made gross his end appealing to witness. According to Scotch custom, the family opened the door to let the spirit pass. To their infinite horror, the bloody head of a black man suddenly rolled into the room. The family shrieked with fright. The man on the bed gave a yell of terror. They turned to his bedside, but he expired as they watched him. When they looked toward the door again, the head had disappeared. There was a splash of fresh blood upon the floor to mark the spot where it had been, but nothing else to certify that the horrid sight had not been a creation of morbid imaginations.

Appearance of a negro's head in the room of a man dying after he had committed innumerable barbarities upon black slaves was a strange coincidence and nothing more. Professor Owen, the famous anatomist, had been attending an anatomical lecture where the body of a negro had been dissected. He was taking the head home with him to examine it more carefully. The streets were wet and slippery. Just as he was passing the open door of the house in which the man lay dying he tripped, and the head slipping from the cloth in which he had it rolled into the little room. The cry of the dying man diverted the attention of those who were in the room, so that Owen was able to secure his treasure and depart unnoticed.

A MODERN HAMLET.
Wherein Hawthorne Was Akin to the Melancholy Dane.
Certain characteristics of Hawthorne are, of course, indisputable, and it is not fantastic to add that some of these qualities bear a curious resemblance to those of that very Prince of Denmark who seems more real to us than do most living men. Hawthorne was a gentleman; in body the mold of form, and graced with a noble mind. Like Hamlet, he loved to discourse with unlettered people, with wandering artists, with local humorists, although without ever losing his own dignity and inviolable reserve. He had irony for the pretentious, kindness for the simple hearted, merciless wit for the fools. He liked to speculate about men and women, about temptation and sin and punishment, but he remained, like Hamlet, clear sighted enough to distinguish between the thing in itself and the thing as it appeared to him in his solitude and melancholy. His closest friends, like Horatio Bridge and William D. Ticknor, were men of marked justice and sanity of mind—of the true Horatio type. Hawthorne was capable, if need be, of passionate and swift action, for all his gentleness and exquisite courtesy of demeanor. Toward the last he had, like Hamlet, his forebodings—"such a kind of gain giving as would perhaps trouble a woman"—and he died, like Hamlet, in silence, conscious of an unfinished task.—Bliss Perry in Atlantic.

THE BARN DOOR SKATE.
A Landlubber's Description of This Peculiar Fish.
The barn door skate began his description. I never could tell whether he was looking at me with his eyes or his breathe holes. He is a bottom fish and flat like a flounder. He has a triangular body, the apex of which forms the snout; opposite his snout are his tail and a few extra pieces of his overcoat which kind nature has tacked on to him in case he gets torn and has to be mended. His tail is embellished with a few spines—this I know for a fact.