



—Cincinnati Post.

**SUDDEN SHOWERS.**

Disappointed boys scud up the street,  
Or hurry under sheltering sheds;  
And school-girl faces, pale and sweet,  
Glean from the show about their heads.

Thunder bang and mother voices call  
From alien homes; and rusty gates  
Are slammed; and high above it all  
The thunder grim reverberates.

And then abrupt, the rain, the rain!  
The earth lies gasping, and the eye  
Behind the steaming window-panes  
Smile at the trouble of the skies.

The highway smokes, sharp echoes ring;  
The cattle bawl and cow-bells clank;  
And into town comes galloping  
The farmer's horse, with steaming flank.

The swallow dips beneath the eaves,  
And flits his plumes and folds his wings;  
And under the catana leaves  
The caterpillar curls and clings.

The humble bee is pecked down,  
The wet stem of the hollyhock;  
And suddenly, in scattered brown,  
The cricket leaps the garden walk.

Within the baby claps his hands  
And crows with rapture strange and vague;  
Without, beneath the rose-bush stands  
A dripping rooster on one leg.

—James Whitcomb Riley.

**The Little Old Maid**

They called her "the Little Old Maid."

But the words were never spoken in the tone so often adopted when an unmarried woman of uncertain age is referred to as an "old maid." Rather, the way they were said implied a feeling of affection—in a measure, of pity. The phrase was generally uttered with the inflection of voice that we unconsciously adopt when we speak of one afflicted, or of one for whose condition we are sorry and with whom we sympathize, or of some exceptionally delightful child. The Little Old Maid attracted everybody who came in contact with her.

She was nearly 50; yet her features, and the profusion of the silvery hair coiled about the well-shaped head, showed how beautiful, she must have been. Her eyes were lovely still, and quite magnetic when she smiled. But it was the strangely sweet expression that lighted up her countenance when she spoke which made her seem so irresistible, and caused people of all classes to feel instinctively that they must come to love her. It was said that old men in her own rank of life, and some of much higher rank—she was the younger daughter of an English baronet, whose forefathers had come unscathed through the Wars of the Roses—often proposed marriage to her still; while other young decadents, who through dread of ridicule would in the ordinary course have denied that a woman no longer youthful could cast a spell about them, admitted almost enthusiastically that the Little Old Maid was "quite exceptionally fascinating."

Often people wondered why she had never married. Her contemporaries could recall to mind the days when, half London had, as they truly said, "raved about her." There were some who sighted her when they tried to guess approximately the number of proposals of marriage she must have received in those brilliant days—those days "when all the world was young." Yet, though partial to men's society, and with an exceptionally keen sense of humor that perhaps rendered her company additionally attractive to men, the Little Old Maid had never, even in the memory of her oldest and closest friends, met any man who would have wished to wed. It seemed remarkable, more especially as every woman, the plainest that depicted, is said to meet once in her lifetime her true affluor, and that, falling to marry him, she ends by regretting her love upon some worthy object. The Little Old Maid, however, had no pet dog and no

pet cat and no pet bird. It is true that she loved all children with an intensity that in some unmarried women might have seemed unnatural. And children, almost at first sight, reciprocated her affection.

The Little Old Maid pushed back the chair from the antique escritoire at which she had been writing letters. Then she rose, crossed the room, and touched the electric bell. It was an afternoon in late autumn. Outside, in Onslow square, the fog seemed to be thickening, she noticed as she passed the window.

"John, what time is it?" she asked, as the footman entered.

He said it was half-past 3.

"Please wind the clock and then post these letters."

When he had closed the door she went back to her writing-table. An addressed envelope lay upon the blotter. Unlocking a little drawer, she took from it two crisp banknotes, folded them in a sheet of paper, slipped them into the envelope, and then re-locked the drawer. Next she lit a small red candle that stood in a silver socket, and carefully sealed the envelope. Later she walked slowly to the corner of Onslow Square, and posted the letter in the pillar-box there.

Punctually once a month, for nearly twenty years, she had gone through this little pantomime. But always she had done it when none was near to see.

Some friends came in at tea-time, and soon after tea they left. The fog, they had told her, was growing denser still. Later, as she sat alone in her cosy boudoir, a strange feeling began to steal over her. She felt uneasy in her mind. An odd sensation of rest-



SOMETHING SEEMED TO GRIP HER THROAT.

lessness took hold of her. She had never before been like this, she reflected, and the thought was disconcerting. Twice she rose from her armchair, and walked swiftly across the room to peer out into the darkness. The square was completely shrouded. She gave a little shiver and drew the curtains more closely. And then she switched on more lights. A newsboy with raucous voice passed shouting along the pavement, then passed away into the distance. For a moment she wondered what he had been shouting, though probably, she reflected, the news would not have interested her.

The footman entered with her evening paper. She opened it almost listlessly, and began to glance at the headlines. The strange sensation possessed her still, and her thoughts wandered and were confused. Suddenly she started, then sat up. Something seemed to grip her throat. Her palate grew dry and sticky. Quickly her bosom rose and fell. A livid palor spread over her face, but she did not faint.

"Tragic death of the Hon. Auberon Fitz-Tempest," were the words she had read in the newspaper.

"We regret to announce," the para-

graph ran, "that the Hon. Auberon Fitz-Tempest met with an accident this afternoon which proved fatal."

"A little boy, aged 8, the son of a grocer in Euston Road, while attempting to cross Great Portland street shortly after 3 o'clock, in the thick fog which still prevails, was upon the point of being knocked down by a motor car when a gentleman who has since been identified as the Hon. Auberon Fitz-Tempest, and who was standing on the kerb, seeing the peril the child was in, sprang out into the roadway to try to save him. This he succeeded in doing, but at the cost of his own life, for, slipping upon the further side of the car, he fell upon his back and was struck on the head by the hoof of a horse attached to an omnibus which was coming from the opposite direction, and which, owing to the fog, he had probably not noticed. The blow fractured the base of the skull, and the unfortunate gentleman died while being conveyed to the hospital."

"Born in 1854, the Hon. Auberon Fitz-Tempest was the third son of the late Baron Waterfield, of Tatham Towers, Derbyshire, and Febury Hall, Northumberland."

In dispassionate language the writer went on to touch briefly upon an incident which a quarter of a century before had created a colossal scandal and had led to the man now dead being sentenced to serve a term of penal servitude. It had been an affair of a peculiarly distressing nature, and from that time onward the name of Auberon Fitz-Tempest had been but rarely mentioned. How ostracized by society and by all his former friends, and known to be almost destitute, he had, since his release, succeeded in obtaining the necessary means of support, none knew, and probably few cared.

The latter part of the report, however, the Little Old Maid had left unread. The paper, tightly clutched in both her hands, lay across her lap. Her face had turned slowly ashen. Her eyes, strained and tearless, stared unseeing into vacancy.

The doctor attributed death to heart failure, for the Little Old Maid had been known to be suffering from a weak heart.

There was nothing, he said, to lead him to conjecture that death could have been brought on or hastened by any sort of shock.

At the inquest held on the body of the Hon. Auberon Fitz-Tempest it was mentioned incidentally that on the evening of the day of the accident an envelope addressed to him and containing two Bank of England notes had been sent through the post and delivered at his rooms after his death. Subsequently the numbers of the notes were published. But the notes were never claimed by any one.

It was not until some months had elapsed that a stranger who had become the possessor of the Little Old Maid's escritoire accidentally discovered in it a secret drawer. The drawer contained some photographs and letters. They were more or less faded and discolored.

But the finder was a woman, and she destroyed them.—Philadelphia Telegraph.

**Two Sources of Hope.**

It is said that the people along the Newfoundland coast are expert wreckers—not in that they wreck vessels to rob them, but in that they know how to avail themselves legitimately of the opportunities afforded. In this connection Sir Wilfrid Laurier used to tell of a meeting between a priest in charge of a parish near Cape Race and the bishop of his diocese.

"How will your people do this winter?" asked the bishop.

"Very well, I think, your reverence," replied the priest cheerfully, "with the help of God—and a few wrecks."—Lippincott's.

No one can properly enjoy eating corns off the cob unless he can stretch an octave with his mouth.

**WORLD'S LARGEST SHIP.**

NEW Great Big Ship Which Will Cross the Atlantic in Five Days.

The giant turbine Lusitania of the Cunard line will be the first five-day sea-crossing the Atlantic. Twenty-five and a half knots an hour was her test trial record under full steam, and in weather not entirely suited to racing. With ideal wind and water, her quadruple screws will be able to push her at a twenty-six knot pace.

This doesn't mean so much until the Lusitania's huge bulk has been realized. She is as long as the Auditorium hotel and Annex at Chicago, and she would line up with three blocks in the business section of New York. In her engine is the power of 8,000 horses. There are three promenade decks, the top one covering one and one-half acres, and three and one-half times around is a mile. There are twenty-nine miles of framing and beams and 4,000,000 rivets in the ship.

But even this gives no adequate idea of the size of the vessel. It is in the huge drawing room or the dining room that the proportions of the Lusitania are adequately realized. There are no long tables in the dining room. The whole space is filled with small tables that can accommodate 620 persons. That number of diners would crowd the largest restaurant in America. A ball room the size of the Lusitania

lowaine. In Italy the military authorities recognize the weed as one of the comforts essential to the troops and cigars are served out to them with their daily rations.

In France there are 6,000,000 smokers, and of every fifteen there are eight who smoke a pipe, five who smoke cigars and only two who are cigar smokers. Still the French consume more than 800,000,000 cigars a year, or enough to go around the world 500 times if they were placed end to end in a line.

In the total quantity of tobacco grown the United States rivals Cuba and the Philippine Islands combined; British India is not very far behind the States. It takes 6,500,000 acres to grow the world's tobacco. Louisville is the largest tobacco market in the world.

The best cigars manufactured come from Cuba, the tobacco for which is cultivated in the famous Vuelta-de-Abafo district, west of Havana. This favored spot is located on the banks of a river, the nature of the soil being such that in no other part of the world can leaves of such excellence be produced. The most expensive cigars cost about \$7.50 each. The largest cigars come from the Philippine Islands, some of them being eighteen inches in length. Italy has the reputation of manufacturing some of the strongest smokes in the world.

A good cigar will burn slowly and

**DROP IN CUSTOMS ON STONES.**

Government's Noticing Fall-Off. Steps to Discover the Cause for It.

Treasury department officials who have made an inquiry into the subject are at a loss to account for the unprecedented falling off in the importation of diamonds, pearls and other gems for personal adornment. Government records show that although there were \$4,021,465 worth of precious stones imported during May, 1906, the total importation for the corresponding month of this year was only \$2,381,455, says the New York World.

It is claimed that unless there be a sudden increase in the volume of the jewel consignment between now and July 1, the month of June, 1907, will show even a more marked decrease in the appraised value of precious stones as compared with June, 1906.

One of the explanations furnished by the customs officials to the Washington authorities was that while times are unusually prosperous for the middle classes and workers, there is a stint of ready money among the wealthy, and that as a result the thousands of dollars usually paid out for the purchase of diamonds and the like are being hoarded by the former gem-buying classes. This explanation was made by an official of the appraisers stores. The official has been handling diamond importations for the government many years.

An official formerly connected with the special agents department of the custom house, while not impeaching the accuracy of the above belief, gave a Washington official an entirely different reason for the marked falling off. The former agent called the official's attention to the fact that some time since the government decided to abolish the payment to employes of the government of moiety money as a reward for seizing dutiable goods which had not been declared formally.

Moiety is a technical word meaning that the officer seizing the property in question received as a reward part of the money which the government derived from the seizures. The abolition of the moiety rule does not affect anybody outside the service who may give what is technically called "information" resulting in the recovery of customs dues. Only employes are barred under the new rule.

When the department official heard that perhaps the absence of a reward to certain officers for unearthing attempts at fraud was responsible for the decrease in the receipts of appraised diamonds, he said:

"Why, that is a criminal charge. These men are sworn to do their duty irrespective of any reward other than their regular pay. It cannot be possible that they would connive at any attempt to defraud the government."

The former special agent said: "I do not make the charge that they knowingly permit any returning traveler to bring in jewels which they fail to declare, but I do say and insist on it too that this government cannot expect men to work fifteen hours a day for an ordinary day's pay and go through all the tactful work of discovering smugglers without some extra compensation. I would be willing to wager my last penny that if the moiety rule were resumed there would be a bigger importation of diamonds because more gems would be declared."

The treasury officials heard many other reasons for the decrease in the importations of jewels, but none capable of clearing up the mystery.

**Poor Value.**

Dr. J. Allen Smith, of Seattle, advises the young not to marry until the present era of high prices is somewhat bettered. Discussing high prices the other day, Dr. Smith said:

"One gets for his money now the same value that the man got from the druggist."

"Give me, sir," said the man bitterly, "10 pounds of your fly poison."

"Ten pounds?" said the druggist.

"That is rather a large order, isn't it?"

"Yes, I know it is," said the man; "but you see, I liked that half-pound I bought here extremely well. I gave it to a fly and it seemed to relish it at first, but toward evening it made him quite ill. I propose to keep up the treatment for a week, for I think that in the end I may manage to kill him."

**Good Idea.**

First Beggar—How is it that you always manage to get something from both of those women on the ground floor of that apartment house?

Second Beggar—Dend easy. I ring both bells at the same time. Both women come to the doors at the same time and each one wants to outdo the other.—Flegende Blatter.

**The Truth About Gossip.**

"Brer Jenkins, he say dat we ought not to gossip an' dat we ought not to remark on each odder's frailties; but, my lan', dat's what keeps de world straight. Hit's de fear of our neighbors' tongue dat keeps most of us in de stockade. Hit's gossip dat's de real perlice of de world."—Dorothy Dix in New York American.

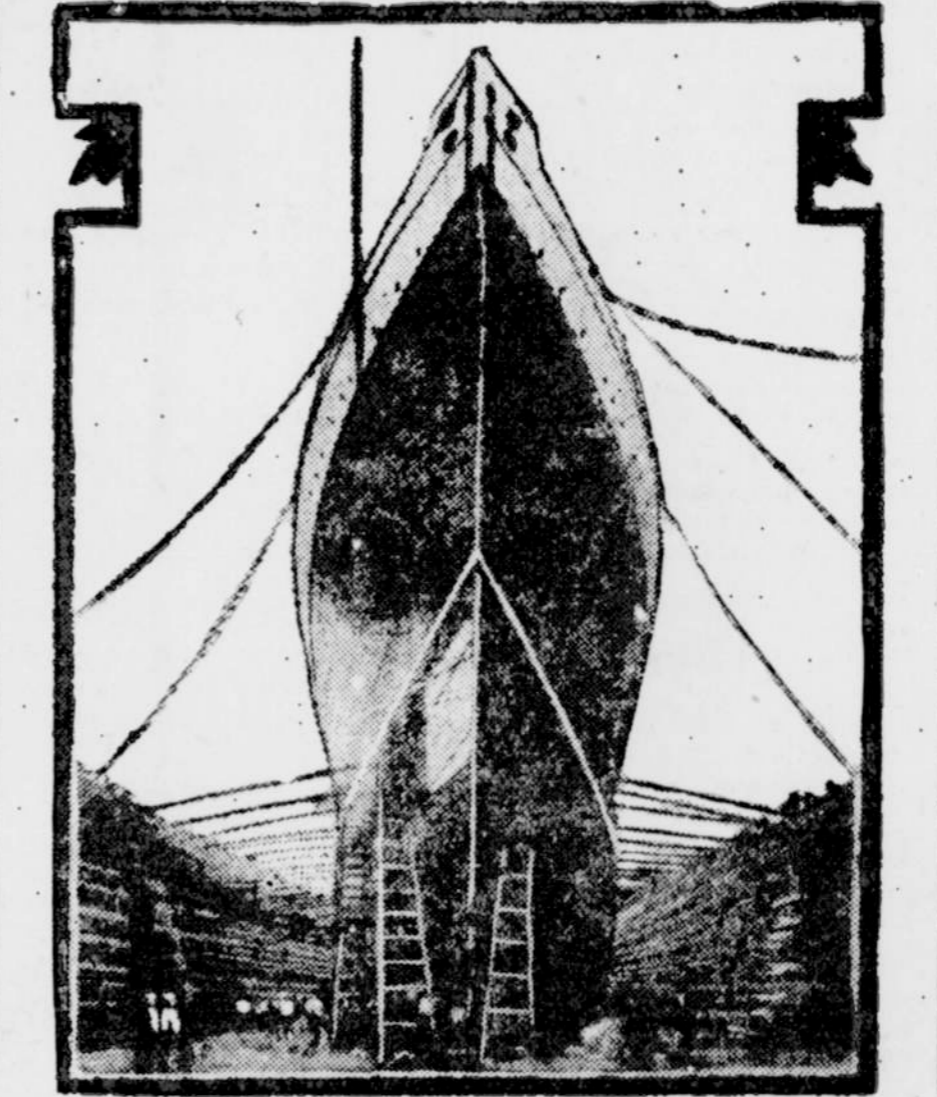
**But Not the Dough.**

"Is Shouters really very strong in his convictions?"

"Well, no. If there's a bet up of dollars to doughnuts, he's the kind that would be betting the doughnuts."—Detroit Free Press.

**No Sale for It.**

He's kept a diary all year 'round. He's fussy, you infer? You will not think so when you've found. He's just a stationer.—Philadelphia Post.



This photograph of the bow of the Lusitania, taken a moment before she was launched, gives an idea of her enormous proportions. Her beam, or width, is 88 feet.

drawing room would be a feature of a king's palace. The cabins on the boat are almost as large as hotel bedrooms. Brass bedsteads, silk tapestry-lined walls and silk curtains are common. Two regal suites are the Lusitania's pride. They could not be bettered by a spendthrift millionaire on land. Each contains two bedrooms, a dining room, a drawing room and bath.

The dining room is paneled with fine Italian walnut, enriched with carved ornaments and moldings of burnished gold. The buffet writing table, dining table and revolving chairs are also in Italian walnut and gold. The chimney piece is a particularly fine specimen of Fleur-de-Peche marble, with marble hearth to match, and a log fire.

The paneled ceiling in white and gold, the green silk curtains, portiere and carpet complete a very artistic portion of the suite. A sliding glass screen separates this room from the drawing room, which is paneled in white with carved gilt moldings, enriched with beautifully painted panels of flowers.

On the promenade deck there is a series of en suite rooms, furnished by different firms who were given carte blanche each decorator trying to out- rival the others. The result is a set of rooms of such magnificence that probably no hotel in the world could afford to support. Electric lights are scattered everywhere, and there are fifty clocks, all electrically regulated from the bridge chronometer.

The second class accommodation is better than the first class on the Cunard liners Etruria and Umbria. There is the same generous space as in first class, and three large public rooms, larger than on a private yacht of a millionaire.

The steerage passengers have a deck running almost the length of the ship for themselves, and of the 302 third class rooms, forty are two-berth and 237 four-berth, the others accommodating six and eight people each.

**ABOUT TOBACCO.**

They Serve Out Cigars to the Soldiers in Italy.

Physicians, chemists and physiologists (many of them smokers themselves) agree that smoking before maturity is reached always leads to a waste of nerve power and brain force and thus squanders life by weakening the very center of strength.

In all Lord Wolseley's campaigns he made it a rule where possible to allow each soldier one pound of tobacco per month, which he considered a fair al-

equally; the weed that smolders up one side is of inferior quality.

**The South Triumphs.**

"I like to sit in the lobbies of some of these big, brass buttoned hotels and see my friends the Southerners come swarming in and selecting their suites of rooms," said the Southern woman.

"Do I know them personally? Certainly not; but that's no reason why I shouldn't delight in their affluence. It wasn't so long ago, you know, that the South was poor as Job's turkey, and now I wish you could see them come in these big hotels—whole families of them—talking their Southern dialects that is so pretty; father, mother, the grown girls with their little negro maid, the grown son with his negro valet, the father standing at the desk making arrangements for a suite of rooms for the party that I know will cost a small fortune and that he couldn't begin to order unless he had a whole lot of money back of it to spend."

"It does me a lot of good, I tell you," she finished with a smile.

**The Disappointed Huckster.**

Miss May Sutton, the tennis player, was talking one day about an early defeat. "I had been so sure of winning," she said, "and that made my disappointment all the greater when I failed. I was as disappointed as a huckster who used to live in Los Angeles."

"This huckster, coming out of a patron's house one day, saw a little boy feeding apples to his horse. Pleas'd to see the animal getting an excellent meal at no cost to himself, the man patted the boy on the head and said:

"That's right; always be good to animals. And where did you buy those nice apples?"

"I didn't buy them," the boy answered. "I took them out of your eggon."

**Noncommittal.**

"Guilty or not guilty?"

"Yes," responded the man at the bar.

"What's that?" queried the court sharply.

"You asked whether I was guilty or not guilty and of course I am. Of the two conditions I could not well escape both."

"But which are you?"

"Aw go on Judge! What's the jury for?"—Philadelphia Ledger.

**Corrected.**

"That man who lives in your house is a nonentity, isn't he?"

"No, he's a methodist an' the meekest critter you ever saw when his wife's around."—Houston Post.