

AN ODD WEDDING.

By ROCKFORD KING.

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One day as I was about to leave my study a young couple came hurrying in and asked me to marry them. I dislike very much to marry persons thus hurriedly about whom I know nothing, and in this case I especially hesitated. The man, though refined looking, was dressed in clothes more befitting a workman than a gentleman. He was pale faced either from ill health or because he had not been accustomed to the sunlight; otherwise he seemed to be in good health. However, since there seemed to be no objection to my uniting them, both being of age, I told them to come into my study and I would accommodate them. We had barely got inside and the couple taken position before me when quick footsteps were heard without.

The man lost what color he had before.

"Go on," said the lady to me impatiently.

But before I could do so two men rushed in. One of them, glancing at the groom expectant, said, "All right; we've got him." Then to the man to whom he referred he said, "You come along with me."

"What's all this about?" I asked.

"He's an escaped convict," said the man who had been speaking.

"Is that a fact?" I asked of the man I had expected to marry.

"Yes," he said; "I am."

He spoke without the slightest appearance of shame or regret. The lady went up to the men, who were prison officials, and begged them to permit the ceremony to proceed before taking her lover back to prison.

"But you don't wish to marry a jail bird, do you?" he replied.

"I wish to marry this man. It will delay you only a few moments. Come; let the clergyman proceed."

"What do you say, Tom?" he asked of his companion.

"It's a rum go," said the other, "but if the young lady insists on throwing herself away on a convict I don't see as its any business of our'n. We've got him safe enough, and two or three minutes won't make any difference."

"All right," said the other. "Go ahead, parson."

It was my turn to demur, not liking the business of uniting a lady to any man under such circumstances.

"I reckon she's with him," said the official called Tom. "Some one sent him a saw in a cake, and I expect she's the one that did it."

"Do go on," said the girl pleadingly.

I felt constrained to take the same view about the matter the men did—that it was none of my business, so I yielded and married them. The girl took out a portemonnaie and gave me a twenty dollar bill. Then she threw her arms about her felon husband's neck and said cheerily: "I'll be all right now, dearie, we're married. I can now tell the whole story. I would have done it before only you wouldn't let me. It won't be long now, I assure you. I won't say goodbye, but only adieu." And with several more kisses she released him, and he went away between his captors, each holding on to a handcuff the prisoner wore about his wrists. After they had gone I gave the lady a certificate of marriage. She was going away without it, but I detained her.

"Would you mind explaining this to me?" I asked as she was about to leave me.

"Not yet," she replied. "Thank you ever so much. You don't know how far you have been instrumental in uniting a knot by tying one. Couldn't you date the certificate back a year?"

"I couldn't do that," I said.

"Well, I don't know that it is necessary, though it might make the rest of it easier. Goodbye. Some day you'll hear from us."

With that she went away, looking far happier than when she had entered.

Six months passed, during which I heard nothing from either of the couple I had married. Then one day a gentleman called on me whom I failed to recognize.

"You don't remember me," he said.

"I confess I do not," I replied.

"That's not remarkable. The last and only time I saw you I was an escaped convict in borrowed, or, rather, stolen, clothes. You married me before I was returned to the penitentiary."

"And may I ask how you have secured your freedom?"

"By a pardon from the governor. You see, it was a case of conviction under a misunderstanding."

"Please be seated," I said to him, "and make your explanation."

"The matter which has puzzled you is very simple when you get the facts. I courted my wife clandestinely, she being engaged at the time to her father's partner in business. I persuaded her to elope with me. The night we were to make the elopement I went to her house and met her at a rear door. At the moment our egress was cut off she admitted me to the house and closed the door. To escape detection we went upstairs and into a bedroom. We heard some one coming, and the girl told me to go into an adjoining room. Her father came into the room I had entered and, supposing me to be a burglar, called the police.

"I must either be content to confess myself a thief or the girl's reputation would be ruined. I chose the former course. Since my marriage my wife has confessed the whole story to her father, and I have been pardoned both by him and the governor."

Before leaving me he presented me with a check for \$3,000 for a European trip from himself and wife.

CHILD LABOR EVIL.

Pennsylvania's New Law Expected to Improve Conditions.

Fred S. Hall, secretary of the Pennsylvania Child Labor association, gives the new child labor law, which went into effect Jan. 1, high praise. The changes this law is expected to cause, he declared, should raise Pennsylvania from its rank with the southern states in child labor matters to a position alongside of the other great manufacturing states.

"The great mass of our manufacturers and coal operators," Mr. Hall declared, "are sincerely opposed to the under age work of children, but a 'residuum' among employees cling tenaciously to the evil thing, and in their efforts to evade the law they are met more than halfway by that large class of parents who lie before some notary public as to their children's ages."

"The old law assumed that parents of working children would tell the truth about their children's ages. The new law assumes that a large proportion of them will lie about this if they get a chance. Every child who claims to be of working age must produce a copy of some record of his age, either the record of birth kept by the city or the record kept by the priest who baptized him in infancy or the record of age kept by his teacher at school. Nineteen states have exactly this requirement.

"Fortunately the new law has been interpreted by the attorney general as in a sense retroactive. All the 30,000 factory affidavits and the 10,000 additional mine affidavits became so much waste paper on Jan. 1. The children must apply to the school officials for the new certificates. If it appears that they are still under age or that they are not able to read and write the English language intelligently they will have to leave work and re-enter the schools, remaining there until they are really qualified for certificates. The school authorities will hereafter issue these certificates instead of the magistrates, aldermen and justices of the peace, and we are confident that children who are still under age or who are illiterate will be refused. The chief factory inspector and the chief mine inspector have both announced that they will insist that children be discharged at once who are found at work without the new certificates. If this is done we may expect a purging of our state's employment rolls which will raise Pennsylvania to its proper rank with our great industrial communities."

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JOY THAT BRINGS WOE

Shock of Sudden Glad Tidings at Times Turns the Brain.

IT HAS DRIVEN PEOPLE MAD.

Some of the Saddest Cases of Lunacy Are Those Where the Mind Is Unable to Stand the Strain of News of Unexpected Good Fortune.

It is no exaggeration to assert, said an asylum doctor of long and varied experience, that there are scores of men and women in insane asylums who have literally been sent there through excess of joy. Many of these cases which are, in my opinion, the saddest of all have come under my own observation.

I remember in the very first asylum with which I was connected one of the patients was a strikingly handsome and very well educated man, who was as sane as you or I except on one point. He was really a man of considerable wealth, but his delusion was that he was a pauper, and he would tell the most pitiful tales of his destitution, begging, with tears in his eyes, for a few coppers with which to buy bread.

According to the story told me, he was the only son of a wealthy merchant. In his youth he had fallen among evil companions and had led such a dissolute life that his father not only threatened to disinherit him, but forbade him ever to enter his house again. After that he seems to have sunk into the lowest depths of poverty until he was glad to earn a few coppers by selling papers or matches in the streets.

It was at this last and lowest stage that news came to him that his father had died intestate and that he was heir to all his vast fortune. The sudden news completely turned the man's brain and brought on such a condition of excitement that he had to be sent to an asylum, and when he calmed down again he had lost all recollection of his good fortune, and nothing could shake his delusion that he was on the verge of starvation.

Another patient in the same asylum was a young and in his lucid moments a most intelligent fellow, whose "brain was turned," as the saying is, on learning that he had passed an examination. He had sat for the matriculation examination at the University of London, on passing which he had set his heart and had asked a friend in London to wire the result as soon as the names were screened at Burlington House.

About three weeks later came a fatal telegram, "Failed—sorry," which sent the young man into the lowest depths of despair, for he was too old to sit again. Not many hours later, however, came another telegram, "Passed honors—very sorry crush so great did not see name this morning." The revulsion of feeling was so great that the student's reason gave way, and he became so violent in his excitement that he had to be confined. Fortunately he was not with us long and is now, I am glad to know, doing very well as a solicitor.

Disappointed love sends many people to asylums, but it is very seldom that success in wooing drives a man mad. It had this strange effect, however, on one of my late patients. The girl he loved had gone out to India to keep house for her brother before he had screwed up his courage to the point of proposing to her, but an offer followed by mail very quickly after her.

Weeks and months passed and no answer came to the impatient lover until, after waiting two years in despair, he became engaged to a girl who had nothing but her money bags to recommend her and for whom he had not a particle of love. Scarcely, however, was his fate sealed than he received the long despaired of letter from India, accepting his offer and explaining that the girl's brother had received and mislaid the letter, which had only just been found and had come into his hands.

Within an hour of the receipt of this letter the man was a raving maniac, and, although his condition is improved, I doubt whether he will ever recover his reason.

In another remarkable case it was the joy at seeing her husband again that robbed a lady patient of her reason. Her husband was the captain of a merchant ship which was reported to have gone down with all hands. The widow had deeply mourned her husband for nearly a year when one day on returning from a walk she found him sitting in the drawing room as hale and robust as ever.

With a shriek she fell unconscious on the floor, and when she recovered her reason was gone. It seems that her husband, after floating for some time, had been picked up by a passing "tramp" and had been landed on the west coast of Africa, from which he had returned home by the first available vessel.—London Spectator.

Charitable. It is said of the author of a volume of biography that his verdict on the great of his chosen period is much that of the New Hampshire parson at the highly approved funeral of a parishioner: "Brethren, we must agree that our deceased friend was mean in some things, but let us in Christian charity allow that he was meaner in others."

Both Sides. Doctor's Little Girl—Your papa owes my papa money. Lawyer's Little Girl—That's nothing. Papa said he was glad to get off with his life.—Baltimore American.

LUXURIOUS BAGS.

A Collapsible New Dressing and Hand Bag.

The fitted traveling bag is supposed to be the height of luxury—at least to judge by its cost. The furnishings are silver, ivory or even gold, combined with cut glass bottles of all sizes. The bags themselves are of the finest Russia leather or calf, and the outside usually carries the monogram of the owner in small gold or silver letters.

All this is very handsome and very heavy. The weight of the bag before anything is packed into it is enough to daunt a woman with a weak back, though her bag may be one of the smaller sizes.

Since the convenience of having all one's toilet belongings neatly packed in readiness for a hurried trip is evident most women will welcome one of the new bags, which are so built and furnished as to be three times as light as those ordinarily sold.

The bag is a collapsible affair of fine smooth leather, black or colors, that closes up like an accordion. It



SILVER BAG WITH WATCH.

lets out according to the amount of packing necessary. This extension is regulated by leather straps on the outside, which add rather than detract from its smart appearance.

On the inside are mirror, comb, brush, tooth and nail brushes, shoe horn, buttoner, nail file, flask, a bottle or two and a soap box. They are arranged to take up the least possible space and, being made of white celluloid, weigh almost nothing.

The effect of this celluloid, with its black monogram on each piece, is good, and the weight is less than half as much as ivory. It wears well, and the only precaution necessary is to keep it away from a flame, as it may explode. A novelty in the bag line is a new silver mesh model with a watch set on one side of the heavy silver mounting.

HELPFUL HINTS.

A damp room or cupboard may be dried by keeping in it a jar containing quicklime. The lime will absorb the damp and keep the air dry and pure. It must be frequently renewed, as it loses its power.

Eggs are muscle building food and are digested principally in the stomach. They are most easily digested when raw, somewhat less readily when slightly cooked, but difficult of digestion when hard boiled.

The weary woman who wishes to woo successfully should try a scented slumber cushion. Cased in a dainty cover of washing silk, the contents vary from vegetable down scented with lavender to the aromatic pop.

An old proverb says, "Spare the dinner, spare the doctor." Like many other homely sayings, it is to the point. Some of the foremost physicians shake their heads gravely and say, "People eat too much." They have grown into the habit of unquestioningly eating all that is set before them, and then, rather surprised, they resent any reference to this as "overeating."

Few Men in Washington Society.

While the cause of militant woman is advancing so strongly in every direction, it comes almost as a surprise to find mere man still has a value of his own, but signs are not lacking that "the man question" is proving one of the most difficult that Washington society has to face this winter. There is a scarcity of eligible young men, and the dearth is felt nowhere so severely as in that youthful circle which is increased each year by a fresh crop of debutantes. This season's crop has been larger than usual, between seventy-five and a hundred young girls having stepped from the schoolroom to the reception and the ball room in the last two or three months. The situation obviously is serious when, having taken the step, they find no men to talk and dance with. Philadelphia and Baltimore can lend Washington no assistance, for these cities are in an equally bad way. There is a general disposition to blame the departments of war and the navy, for, in obedience to the policy outlined by the secretaries, a sharp check has been placed on wholesale excursions of cadets from West Point and Annapolis, who formerly could be counted on to save any occasion by their presence. The administration, in fact, is at pains to keep its young soldier and sailor officers out of matrimonial temptations, and the Washington girls, therefore, are threatened with rather a dull season.

A GEISHA GIRL.

By SADIE OLCOTT.

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"By the spirits of your ancestors I beseech you to hide me!"

The words were spoken by a young Japanese who rushed into a tea house where stood a startled geisha girl. It was more than forty years ago, when the followers of the mikado and the shogun were struggling for the supremacy in Japan.

"What is it, Herobumi?" asked the girl quickly.

"The shogunites! They are after me. If they catch me they will kill me. Quick, Nikama!"

The girl darted glances in every direction, and finally her eyes lighted on what she at once recognized as the best place for concealment. In every Japanese house is a dust hole. The ground floor is raised about two feet above the earth, and a square hole is cut in the floor, into which the dust and litter of the rooms are swept.

"Get in there, quick!" cried the girl, pointing to the hole.

Herobumi sprang into the hole, doubling himself up to occupy the space. Nikama put a board over it, and on the board she placed a brazier, thus concealing the hole and making it appear that the brazier rested on the floor. Then she sat down before the brazier, in which was a fire, and appeared to be lazily warming herself. In another moment a band of armed men rushed in. The girl looked up at them in feigned surprise.

"A man is here," said their leader, "whom we seek. We saw him enter. Where is he?"

"You are welcome to look for him."

"We will see for ourselves," replied the man, and, with his followers, he began a search of the premises. They moved furniture; they opened closets; they pulled out drawers. Into every cranny in the house they peered, but none of them thought of the dust hole. Thinking him they sought had simply passed through and had gone on, they rushed out as hurriedly as they had come in. When they were well away the girl called to the hide:

"There is nothing now to fear, Herobumi, but you had better remain where you are for awhile in case they come back."

"Thank you, Nikama. You have saved my life. I knew when I came, having been here at times for tea, that I would not be betrayed, and I did not know that I would find one who by her presence of mind would keep my head on my shoulders."

The girl went out and looked about and, finding all pursuit of the fugitive in that vicinity had been abandoned, returned to the house, removed the brazier, and Herobumi came out of the hole. He did not think of the dust with which he was covered, but Nikama did, and, getting a wisp broom she brushed his clothes. Then he took both her hands in his and said to her:

"You are but a poor geisha girl, while I am of a far different rank, but I promise that you shall never regret the act of this day."

When it was dark he slipped out of the tea house and found a more permanent place of safety.

One day—it was after the shogun had been permanently defeated and the mikado securely placed upon the throne of Japan—a Jirikisha stopped before the tea house. Nikama was standing at the door, and who should she see alight from the Jirikisha but the young man whose life she had saved. He came up and led her out on to a veranda.

"I have not seen you for a long while," she said. "I feared that the shogunites had caught you at last."