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[Exchange.]

If you are particularly anxious to abuse a man don't call him a fool, he might be annoyed; don't call him a rascal, he might knock you down; quietly remark, with a heavenly smile: "Sir, you present a fine large margin for improvement."

Bronson Alcott: The deepest truths are best read between lines, and, for the most part, refuse to be written.

JERRY JARVIS' WIG.

[R. H. Barham in Swinton's Story-Teller.]

"Joe," said old Jarvis, looking out of his window—it was his ground-floor back—"Joe, you seem to be very hot, Joe, and you have got no wig."

"Yes, sir," quoth Joseph, pausing and resting upon his spade, "it's as hot a day as ever I see; but the celery must be got in, or there'll be no autumn crop, and——"

"Well, but Joe, the sun's so hot, and it shines so on your bald head it makes one wink to look at it. You'll have a coup de soleil, Joe."

"A what, sir?"

"No matter; it's very hot working, and if you'll step in doors I'll give you ——"

"Thank ye, your honor, a drop of beer will be very acceptable."

Joe's countenance brightened amazingly.

"Joe, I'll give you—my old wig!"

The countenance of Joseph fell, his gray eye had glistened as a blest vision of double-X flitted athwart his fancy; its glance faded again into the old filmy, gooseberry-colored hue, as he growled in a minor key, "A wig, sir!"

"Yes, Joe, a wig. The man who does not study the comfort of his dependents is an unfeeling scoundrel. You shall have my old worn-out wig."

"I hope, sir, you'll give me a drop of beer to drink your honor's health in; it is very hot, and ——"

"Come in, Joe, and Mrs. Witherspoon shall give it to you."

"Heaven bless your honor," said honest Joe, striking his spade perpendicularly into the earth, and pursuing his way to the door of the back kitchen.

"Joe," said Mrs. Witherspoon, a fat, comely dame, of about five-and-forty—"Joe, your master is but too good to you; he's always kind. Joe, he has desired me to give you his old wig."

"And the beer, Ma'am Witherspoon!" said Washford, taking the proffered wig, and looking at it with an expression somewhat short of rapture.

"The beer, you guzzling wretch!—what beer? Master said nothing about no beer. You ungrateful fellow, has he not given you a wig?"

"Why, yes, Madam Witherspoon! but then you see, his honor said it was very hot, and I'm very dry, and —"

"Go to the pump, sot!" said Mrs. Witherspoon, as she slammed the back-door in his face.

Joe remained for a few moments lost in mental abstraction; he looked at the door, he looked at the wig; his first thought was to throw it into the pig-sty—his evil nature rose, but he resisted the impulse; he got the better of Satan; the half-formed imprecation died before it reached his lips. He looked disdainfully at the wig; it had once been a comely jasey enough, of the color of overbaked gingerbread, one of the description commonly known during the latter half of the last century by the name of a "brown George." But Mr. Jarvis' wig had one peculiarity; unlike most of its fellows it had a tail—"cribbed and confined," indeed, by a shabby piece of faded shalloon.

Washford looked at it again; he shook his bald head. The wig had certainly seen its best days; still it had about it somewhat of an air of faded gentility; it was "like ancient Rome, majestic in decay;" and as the small ale was not to be forthcoming, why—after all, an old wig was better than nothing!

Mr. Jeremiah Jarvis, of Appledore, in the Weald of Kent, was a gentleman by act of parliament—one of that class of gentlemen who, disdaining the plain-sounding name of "attorney-at-law," are, by a legal fiction, denominated solicitors.

Jeremiah Jarvis was a worthy exemplar of the class to which he belonged. Few persons in his time had created greater solicitude among his majesty's lieges within the "weald." He was rich, of course. Indeed his possessions were so considerable as not to be altogether accounted for, in vulgar esteem, even by the usual modes of accumulation; nor were there wanting those who conscientiously entertained a belief that a certain dark-colored gentleman of indifferent character, known principally by his predilection for appearing in perpetual mourning, had been through life his great friend and counselor, and had mainly assisted in the acquirement of his revenues. That "old Jerry Jarvis had sold himself to the devil" was, indeed, a dogma which it were heresy to doubt in Appledore.

When the worthy solicitor next looked out of his ground-floor back, he smiled with much complacency at beholding Joe Washford again hard at work—in his wig—the little tail aforesaid oscillating like a pendulum in the breeze. If it be asked what could induce a gentleman whose leading principle seems to have been self-appropriation to make so magnificent a present, the answer is that Mr. Jarvis might perhaps have thought an occasional act of benevolence necessary or politic; he is not the only person who, having stolen a quantity of leather, has given away a pair of shoes, pour l'amour de Dieu.

Joe, meanwhile, worked away at the celery-bed; but truth obliges us to say, neither with the same degree of vigor nor perseverance as had marked the earlier efforts of the morning. His pauses were more frequent; he rested longer on the handle of his spade; while ever and anon his eye would wander from the trench beneath him to an object not unworthy the contemplation of a natural philosopher. This was an apple tree.

Fairer fruit never tempted Eve or any of her daughters; the bending branches groaned beneath their luxuriant freight, and, dropping to earth, seemed to ask the protecting aid of man, either to support or to relieve them. The fine, rich glow of their sun-streaked clusters derived additional loveliness from the level beams of the descending day-star. An anchorite's mouth had watered at the pippins.

The heat was still oppressive; no beer had moistened his lip, though its very name, uttered as it was in the ungracious tones of a Witherspoon, had left behind a longing as intense as fruitless. His thirst seemed supernatural, when at this moment his left ear experienced a slight and tickling sensation, and a still, small voice—it was though a daddy-long-legs were whispering to him—a still, small voice seemed to say: "Joe!—take an apple, Joe!"

Honest Joseph started at the suggestion; the rich crimson on his jolly nose deepened to a purple tint in the beams of the setting sun; his very forehead was incardinate. He raised his hand to scratch his ear—the little tortuous tail had worked its way into it—he pulled it out by the bit of shalloon, and allayed the itching, then cast his eye wistfully toward the mansion where his master was sitting by the open window. Joe pursed up his parched lips into an arid whistle, and with a desperate energy struck his spade once more into the celery bed.

Its northern extremity ended at the hedge before mentioned; its southern one was in fearful vicinity to a Ribstone pippin-tree. One branch, low bowed to earth, seemed ready to discharge its precious burden into the very trench. As Joseph stooped to insert the last plant with his dibble, an apple of more than ordinary beauty bobbed against his knuckles. "He's taking snuff, Joe," whispered the same small voice; the tail had twisted itself into its old position. "He's sneezing!—now, Joe! —now!" And, ere the agitated horticulturist could recover from his surprise and alarm, the fruit was severed, and—in his hand!

"He! he! he!" shrilly laughed, or seemed to laugh, that accursed little pigtail. Washford started at once to the perpendicular. With an enfrenzied grasp he tore the jasey from his head, and with that in one hand and his ill-acquired spoil in the other, he rushed distractedly from the garden.

II.

All that night was the humble couch of the once-happy gardener haunted with the most fearful visions. He was stealing apples—he was robbing hen-roosts—he was altering the chalks upon the milk-score—he had purloined three chemises from a hedge—and he awoke in the very act of cutting the throat of one of 'Squire Hodge's sheep! A clammy dew stood upon his temples—the cold perspiration burst from every pore—he sprang in terror from the bed.

"Why, Joe, what ails thee, man!" cried the usually incurious Mrs. Washford; "what be the matter with thee? Thee has done nothing but grunt and growl all t' night long, and now thee dost stare as if thee saw summut. What bees it, Joe?"

A long-drawn sigh was her husband's only answer; his eye fell upon the bed. "How the devil came that here?" quoth Joseph, with a sudden recoil; "who put that thing on my pillow?"

"Why, I did, Joseph. Th' ould nightcap is in the wash, and thee didst toss and tumble so, and kick the clothes off, I thought thee mightest catch cold, so I clapt t' wig atop o' thee head."

And there it lay—the little sinister-looking tail impudently perked up, like an infernal gnomon on a Satanic dial plate.

When Joseph Washford once more repaired to the scene of his daily labors, a sort of unpleasant consciousness flushed his countenance, and gave him an uneasy feeling as he opened the garden gate; for Joe, generally speaking, was honest as the skin between his brows; his hand faltered as it pressed the latch. "Pooh, pooh! 'twas but an apple, after all!" said Joseph. "Had it been an apple pie, indeed!——".

"An apple pie!" the thought was a dangerous one—too dangerous to dwell on. But Joseph's better genius was this time lord of the ascendant; he dismissed it, and passed on.

On arriving at his cottage, an air of bustle and confusion prevailed within, much at variance with the peaceful serenity usually observable in its economy. Mrs. Washford was in high dungeon; her heels clattered on the red-tiled floor, and she whisked about the house like a parched pea upon a drumhead; her voice, generally small and low, was pitched at least an octave above its ordinary level; she was talking fast and furious. Something had evidently gone wrong. The mystery was soon explained. The "cussed old twoad of a cat" had got into the dairy, and licked off the cream from the only pan their single cow had filled that morning! And there she now lay, purring as in scorn. Tib, heretofore the meekest of mousers, the honestest, the least "scaddle" of the feline race—a cat that one would have sworn might have been trusted with untold fish—yes—there was no denying it—proofs were too strong against her—yet there she lay, hardened in her iniquity, coolly licking her whiskers, and reposing quietly upon—what? Jerry Jarvis' old wig!

The patience of a Stoic must have yielded; it had been too much for the temperament of the Man of Uz. Joseph Washford lifted his hand—that hand which had never yet been raised on Tibby save to fondle and caress—it now descended on her devoted head in one tremendous "dowse." Never was cat so astonished, so enraged; all the tiger portion of her nature rose in her soul. Instead of galloping off, hissing and sputtering, with arched back and tail erected, as any ordinary Grimalkin would unquestionably have done under the circumstances, she paused a moment, drew back on her haunches; all her energies seemed concentrated for one prodigious spring; a demoniac fire gleamed in her green and yellow eyeballs, as, bounding upward, she fixed her talons firmly in each of her assailant's cheeks—many and many a day after were sadly visible the marks of those envenomed claws—then, dashing over his shoulder with an unearthly mew, she leaped through the open casement, and was seen no more.

"The devil's in the cat!" was the apostrophe of Mrs. Margaret Washford. Her husband said nothing, but thrust the old wig into his pocket, and went to bathe his scratches at the pump.

Day after day, night after night, 'twas all the same, Joe Washford's life became a burden to him; his natural upright and honest mind struggled hard against the frailty of human nature. He was ever restless and uneasy; his frank, open, manly look, that blenched not from the gaze of the spectator, was no more; a sly and sinister expression had usurped the place of it.

Jerry Jarvis had a good-looking tulip-bed, and his neighbor Jenkinson fell in love with the pips and petals of "Neighbor Jarvis' tulips." There was one or two among them of such brilliant, such surpassing beauty—the "cups" so well formed, the colors so defined. To be sure, Mr. Jenkinson had enough in his own garden; but then, "Enough," says the philosopher, "always means a little more than a man has got." Alas! alas! Jerry Jarvis was never known to bestow—his neighbor dared not offer to purchase from so wealthy a man; and worst of all, Joe, the gardener, was incorruptable. Aye, but the wig?

Joseph Washford was working away again in the blaze of the midday sun; his head looked like a copper sauce-pan fresh from the brazier's.

"Why, where's your wig, Joseph?" said the voice of his master from the well known window; "what have you done with your wig?" The question was embarrassing—its tail had tickled his ear till it had made it sore; Joseph had put the wig in his pocket.

Mr. Jeremiah Jarvis was indignant; he liked not that his benefits should be ill appreciated by the recipient. "Hark ye, Joseph Washford," said he, "either wear my wig, or let me have it again!"

Washford's heart smote him; he felt all that was implied in his master's appeal. "It's here, your honor," said he; "I had only taken it off because we had a smartish shower; but the sky is brightening now." The wig was replaced, and the little tortuous pigtail wriggled itself into its accustomed position.

At this moment Neighbor Jenkinson peeped over the hedge.

"Joe Washford!" said Neighbor Jenkinson.

"Sir to you," was the reply.

"How beautiful your tulips look after the rain!"

"Ah! sir, master sets no great store by them flowers," returned the gardener.

"Indeed! Then perhaps he would have no objection to part with a few?"

"Why, no! I don't think master would like to give them—or anything else—away, sir." And Washford scratched his ear.

"Joe!" said Mr. Jenkinson—"Joe!" Mr. Jenkinson said no more; but a half-crown shown from between his upraised fingers.

How Joseph Washford's left ear did itch! He looked to the ground-floor back—Mr. Jarvis had left the window.

Mr. Jenkinson's ground-plot boasted at daybreak next morning a splendid Semper Augustus, and Joseph Washford was led home, much about the same time, in a most extraordinary state from the "Three Jolly Potboys."

From that hour he was the fiend's!

III.

Joseph Washford had taken the first fatal step. He had taken two—three—four steps; and now from a hesitating, creeping, cat-like mode of progression, he had got into a firmer tread—an amble—a positive trot! He took the family linen "to the wash;" one of Mme. Witherspoon's best Holland chemises was never seen after.

"Lost!—impossible! How could it be lost!—where could it be gone?—who could have got it? It was her best—her very best!—she should know it among a hundred—among a thousand!—it was marked with a great W in the corner. Lost!—impossible! She would see!" Alas! she never did see. But Joseph Washford's Sunday shirt was seen, finer and fairer than ever.

The meeting?—ay, the meeting. Joe Washford never missed the Appledore Independent meeting-house, whether the services were in the morning or afternoon—whether the Rev. Mr. Slyandry exhorted or made way for the Rev. Mr. Tearbrain. Let who would officiate, there was Joe. As I have said before, he never missed; but other people missed—one missed an umbrella, one a pair of clogs. Farmer Johnson missed his tobacco-box, Farmer Jackson his great coat; Miss Jackson missed her hymn book, a diamond edition, bound in maroon-colored velvet, with gilt corners and clasps. Everything, in short, was missed—but Joe Washford; there he sat, grave, sedate and motionless, all save that restless, troublesome, fidgety little pigtail attached to his wig, which nothing could keep quiet, or prevent from tickling or interfering with Miss Thompson's curl, as she sat back to back with Joe in the adjoining pew. After the third Sunday, Nancy Thompson eloped with the tall recruiting sergeant of the Connaught Rangers.

The summer passed away, autumn came and went, and Christmas, jolly Christmas, was at hand. It was a fine, bracing morning, the sun was just beginning to throw a brighter tint upon the Quaker-colored ravine of Orlestone hill, when a medical gentleman, returning to the quiet little village of Ham Street, that lies at its foot, from a farm-house at Kingsnorth, rode briskly down the declivity, when suddenly his active cob brought herself up in mid-career upon her haunches, and stood stock still, snorting like a stranded grampus, and alike insensible to the gentle hints afforded her by hand and heel.

It is of no great use, and not particularly agreeable, to sit still, on a cold, frosty morning in January, upon the outside of a brute that will neither go forward nor backward; so Mr. Moneypenny got off, in order to discover, if possible, what it was that so attracted the attention of Bucephalus.

His curiosity was not long at fault; the sunbeam glanced partially upon some object ruddier even than itself—it was a scarlet waistcoat, the wearer of which, overcome perchance by Christmas potation, seemed to have selected the thickest clump of the tallest and most imposing nettles, whereon to doze away the narcotic effects of superabundant juniper.

This, at least, was Mr. Moneypenny's belief, or he would scarcely have uttered, at the highest pitch of his contralto, "What are you doing there, you drunken rascal? frightening my horse! Get up, I say—get up, and go home, you scoundrel!" But the "scoundrel" and "drunken rascal" answered not; he moved not, nor could the prolonged shouting of the appellant, aided by significant explosions from a double thonged whip, succeed in eliciting a reply. No motion indicated that the recumbent figure, whose outline alone was visible, was a living and breathing man.

"Come here, Jack," quoth the doctor to a passing plow-boy—"come here boy; lay hold of this bridle, and mind that my horse does not run away."

Peggy threw up her head and snorted disdain of the insinuation; she had not the slightest intention of doing any such thing.

Mr. Moneypenny meanwhile, disencumbered of his restive nag, proceeded, by manual application, to arouse the sleeper.

Alas! his was that "dreamless sleep that knows no waking;" his cares in this world were over. There lay before the doctor the lifeless body of a murdered man!

The corpse lay stretched upon its back, partially concealed, as we have before said, by the nettles which had sprung up among the stumps of the half-grubbed underwood; the throat was fearfully lacerated, and the dark, deep, arterial dye of the coagulated blood showed that the carotid had been severed. There was little to denote the existence of any struggle; but as the day brightened, the sandy soil of the road exhibited an impression as of a body that had fallen on its plastic surface, and had been dragged to its present position, while fresh horse-shoe prints seemed to intimate that either the assassin or his victim had been mounted. The pockets of the deceased were turned out and empty; a hat and heavy-loaded whip lay at no great distance from the body.

"But what have we here?" quoth Dr. Moneypenny; "what is it that the poor fellow holds so tightly in his hand?"

That hand had manifestly clutched some article with all the spasmodic energy of a dying grasp. IT WAS AN OLD WIG!

VI.

In an old fashioned court-room a hale, robust man, somewhat past middle age, with a very bald pate, save where a continued tuft of coarse, wiry hair, stretching from above each ear, swelled out into a grayish-looking bush upon the occiput held up his hand before a grave and enlightened assemblage of jurymen. He stood arraigned for that offense most heinous in the sight of God and man, the deliberate and cold-blooded butcher yof an unoffending, unprepared fellow creature.

The victim was one Humphrey Bourne, a reputable grazier, worthy and well-to do, though, perchance, a thought too apt to indulge on a market day, when a score of ewes had brought in a reasonable profit. Some such cause had detained him longer than usual at the cattle show; he had left, the town late and alone; early in the following morning his horse was found standing at his own stable door, the saddle turned round beneath its belly, and much about the time that the corpse of its unfortunate master was discovered some four miles off by our friend, the doctor.

That poor Bourne had been robbed and murdered there could be no question.

Who, then, was the perpetrator of the atrocious deed? The unwilling hand almost refuses to trace the name of—Joseph Washford.

Yet so it was. Mr. Jeremiah Jarvis was himself the coroner for that division of the county of Kent. He had not sat two minutes on the body before he recognized his quondam property, and started on beholding in the grasp of the victim, as torn in the death-struggle from the murderer's head, his own old wig!—his own perky little pigtail tied up with a piece of shabby shalloon, now wriggling and quivering, as in salutation of its ancient master. The silver buckles of the murdered man were found in Joe Washford's shoes—broad pieces were found in Joe Washford's pockets—Joe Washford had himself been found, when the hue-and-cry was up, hid in a corn-rig at no great distance from the scene of slaughter, his pruning-knife red with the evidence of his crime.

Various Ways to Wed, as Practiced by Different Nationalities.

[Chicago News.]

In Bavaria the peasant girl tells her love, and after her engagement dance, her mother relieves her of all house-work, and sets about fattening her up for the wedding-day. Though relieved of domestic cares, she is by no means idle, and finds the days and long nights too short for finishing her sewing, which includes dresses and underclothes, sheets, pillow-slips, quilts, mats, tidies, table-linen and stockings enough to last her for a dozen years. Any fantastic goods will make her toilet, but be the color or fabric what it will a veil is indispensible, with a wreath of orange blossoms and a little satin pillow on which the wedding-ring is carried. This cushion is usually about eight inches square and radiantly decorated with embroidery or bead-work, in which all the village maidens have a finger, if but to do a single stitch.

The Russian bride wears a trousseau of blue, with a short, full veil fastened on the hair with a wreath of silver leaves, which may be made of solid silver or fine wire, but where this extravagance is beyond the means of the bride, silver paper or tin foil is substituted, unless a coronet is plaited with silver ribbon. In the ceremony two rings are used, the bride decorating her husband after accepting his ring. In farther India the couple are married while seated on a circular matting placed in the sun. All the girls in the place constitute the bridesmaids. Each carries a staff bound with blue and finished at the end with a bunch of fiery-red feathers. They dance round the happy couple, who are not permitted to rise till the girls have exhausted their vocal selections, and are too tired to vary their graceful motions.

An Egyptian bride wears a gorgeous robe of blood-red satin, embroidered with roses, birds of gay plumage, and graceful little cupids, thrown out into broad relief by outlines of silver thread or gold lace. The veil is carelessly draped over the left shoulder, so as to partially obscure her face from the view of the groom, and fastened on with a diadem of glittering gems.

In Natal the bride wears a dress of feathers, with metallic flowers in her hair. She kneels on a brass wire mat, with a shield in one hand and a knife in the other. Her attendants, who are selected because of strong lung power, dance round her in circles, stamping, jumping, kicking any impediment that comes in their way, and making the air resound with their hideous screams.

In some of the Barbary states the bride is confided to the care of her mother-in-law for forty-eight hours, in which time her hands are painted with ugly figures and complicated difficulties, and miseries that will certainly cross her path.

An Australian groom has to face the village maidens, who force him to run a shower of spear-shaped arrows.

Tricks of New York Girls.

[Clara Belle in Cincinnati Enquirer.]

Bewitching magicians are what a good many of the New York girls are trying, with variable success, to make of themselves. Their dear little fingers (and I have observed that only those with nice hands take to the diversion) are apt to be deft and deceptive in manipulating such simple apparatus as they select from those originally intended for boys to play with. Among the apparatus which they employ is the marble and vase, consisting of a pedestal of hard wood, in which a ball is placed and caused to suddenly disappear, apparently shot into the ceiling or into the air out of sight. It suddenly reappears in your hand, or at any place that may be designated. Also the magic nail, an illusion in which the performer exhibits a common sixpenny nail, which may be passed round among the spectators. Immediately upon its return she passes it through her finger. Still another is a box for a wedding ring. It causes the greatest consternation at the supposed loss of a wedding ring that slips out of it in the most mysterious manner, and is as suddenly recovered. Then there is a handerchief that showers bon-bons on the table and can be made to disappear in a twinkling. The magic finger can be had. This trick enables the performer to thrust one of her fingers through the crown of a hat, which is distinctly seen, and after exhibition she pulls her finger out of the hole and returns it uninjured to the owner.

"Goodness me!" she exclaims, as she hands an impressionable caller his hat, "what has happened to this?"

He sees what looks like one of her digits thrust right through his new tile, and the sensational situation is dramatic.

An Edition of Six.

Charles Francis Adams, Jr., is amusing himself in a delightful, if somewhat expensive fashion says a Boston letter to The Chicago Tribune. He has written a book and had six copies printed for his own use. More properly speaking he has written only the first volume of what is in the end to be a four volume work. This first volume is printed in admirable style, and contains about 450 pages. About two-thirds of it is occupied with an account of the early settlement of Boston, while the remainder is taken up with the narrative of the Antinomian controversy. Several papers which have before appeared in print are substantially included in the work; as the account of Morton and Merry Mount, Sir Francis Gardener and Blackstone, the first settlers on the peninsula. The six copies are none of them given away; they are loaned to men who are adepts in Boston history, and the criticisms of the readers are invited. Ultimately the work, revised, if revisions from these criticisms are necessary, will be published.

Something Besides Music.

[Boston Transcript.]

"Oh, bother!" exclaimed Banger; "what's the use? The boys are sick of music. Music, music, music; that's all you give them, week in and week out. At our meeting to-night why can't we get up something new—something. I don't care what, so long as it isn't music?" "A good idea, Banger!" cried Fogg; "a splendid idea. We have had a little too much music, as you say, and it is time we had something new. Suppose you sing for us, Banger."

WANDERINGS IN VENICE.

First Impressions---Bridges and Canals---The Charm of the Gondolas---Venice's Picturesque Beauty.

[San Francisco Chronicle.]

It takes a good many days to get accustomed to Venice and many more to appreciate it. First impressions are not always agreeable ones. It is damp and chilly, and the canals are full of none too clear water, and the hotel is too quiet and large, and you lose all identity in its vaulted salons and interminable corridors. At first you do not know of any place you can walk to, and gondola riding is for a few days monotonous. You came perhaps for rest and quiet, but there is too much stillness. The buildings are soiled; the posts in front of the houses are clammy and wet; the windows are vacant; the guides are too loquacious and too preserving, as they offer to show you the treasures of the city. You have heard so much of Venice, and you see so little of it at first that you are disappointed, and almost feel ready to vote the place a fraud. The interior of St. Mark's is dark, the galleries in the ducal palace are dark, the pictures by the masters are faded and blackened.

Beggars are as numerous as the pigeons that fly about the piazza, there is too much listlessness and too little activity. You cannot throw off all animation and life at first and you feel cramped, and the water makes you feel cold. Altogether one gets impatient and is inclined to pay his bill at the hotel and get away. He begins to feel that Ruskin, Byron and Howells are rash enthusiasts and that they have overrated the beauties of Venice. But one does not go away. The inclination to do so grows less and less as the weather begins to brighten and the sun to shine upon the canals and out upon the lagoon. We had wished to leave on our second day and now regret going for weeks to come. The silence oppresses us no longer. We like it because it lets us hear the bells of the city and the songs of the gondoliers, who sing every evening in front of the hotel.

We have found, too, a succession of narrow alleys leading from the hotel to St. Mark's square, and when we do not wish to be rowed over there we walk. It is a quaint stroll this, and the way leads in and out between long rows of high houses and across half a dozen little bridges which span the side canals. The path is narrow, to be sure, but there is always a doorway to get into when a vegetable seller comes toward us with his goods, and at the bridges there are always boats to be seen coming and going up the twisting roads. I have grown immensely fond of these Venetian bypaths, which are so narrow and so quiet, and where there are no horses or heavy teams. You see the real life of the city in them, too, for here are the shops and the people who work. In some of the stores I have found choice bits of woodwork and old brass goods, and odds and ends of every description. Here I meet the dark-eyed women and the men who wear rings in their ears, and a slouch hat and knee-breeches. Here Venice is natural and not on exhibition, as she is in the better known places, and there are no guides to trouble you. I wander where I please and take as much time as I wish, and linger on the bridges and ask questions of the traders. In some of my walks I have been led into walled gardens where there were flowers, and where the sunlight was warm and delightful, and where a fountain played.

There is a deal of hospitality in watery Venice when once you know the town. I have found it an easy matter to gain entrance to the houses I know and to the balconies that look out upon the canals or into secluded gardens. Some of these places are owned or occupied for the season by American artists or men of leisure, or writers, and they form a little colony of their own, and enjoy Venice every day of their stay. I should think they would, and I envy them. I am ready even now to defend the city in its claim of being attractive, picturesque and beautiful. It has been in existence for nearly eighteen centuries, and why should it not be richly stored with attractions? It was a rich metropolis years ago, and for centuries its merchants ruled the commerce of the world. Were not the Doges, the grand dukes who ruled the city from 697 to nearly 1500, the most fastidious and richest men who ever held the sceptre of power? Why shouldn't they have the best of everything?

In the days of the Doges the gondolas were brilliant with the work of decoration lavished on them; and to-day, robbed as they are of all their finery and having a uniform blackness, they are the treasured carriers of the people. They fill the grand canal as thickly as wagons do Broadway; they swing gracefully around sharp corners, dart up narrow but still watery ways, plunge under bridges and are rowed over the lagoon and across to neighboring islands. And these strange boats, gliding up streets of water, these curious carriages without horses that meet you at your doorsteps, that are hired to go on errands with, that are so comfortable, so easily managed, so fleet, so silent, so well rowed, constitute one great charm of Venice.

No other city has them; no other ever will. They are purely local; as much a part of the city as the churches are, or as the ducal palace is. They meet you on arrival at the station and carry you to your hotel, and they never leave you. By their aid you see the city. Lazily settled back in their embrace you behold the sunsets from near San Giorgio Maggiore, or see the tall Campanile rising beyond the water out of St. Mark's square. They carry you to the Lido and to Della Salute, and under the Rialto. Seated in them and noiselessly darting here and there and everywhere, one needs not the presence of Gothic columns and Byzantine architecture, and the time-stained works of the old masters to tell him that he is in an ancient city and in one that has the richest art and the most novel features of any in Europe. Venice is an unnatural reality; it is an existing curiosity that seems though it must have been forced up out of the sea, upon which it rests, instead of having been built where it is because its founders had nothing but submerged sand-bars to use.

"Sampling" the Grocery Man.

[New York Tribune.]

"There are samplers and samplers," said a down-town grocer, as he carefully covered up a barrel of cut-loaf sugar with a wire protector and took a seat on a soap box. "Talk about mean people, I don't believe there's anbody in this world meaner than a full-fledged sampler. There are two general classes of samplers—those who are honest and ask for samples for the purpose of testing the desired article, and, if satisfactory, of purchasing quantities of the same afterward, and those who are dishonest and get samples simply for the purpose of sponging their supplies out of the grocer, I have had considerable experience with both classes as I have been in business on this corner for twenty years, and have had plenty of opportunities to study human nature.

"I will give you an illustration of the way in which some of these samplers conduct their little game. A richly dressed lady one day entered my store and asked to look at some of my best grades of coffee. The clerk showed her samples. She examined them with much care, and at length turned to the young man and said:

"'Would you be kind enough to give me samples of this coffee to take home? My husband is particular about his coffee and so I would like to try these three kinds before purchasing.' She looked sweet and innocent as she said this, and her face lit up with a gratified smile as the obliging clerk reluctantly complied with her request. I had been watching the transaction from behind my desk, and feeling somewhat suspicious of the lady I called one of my boys aside and told him to follow her when she left the store. In the course of an hour he returned and reported that the woman had visited four other stores, and had obtained from each samples in the same way as from us. I made inquiries, and found that she was the wife of a well-to-do merchant down town. She tried to play the same game on us afterward, but didn't succeed.

"There's another class of people who give us trouble," remarked the grocer, as he bit off the end of a cigar and passed another to the reporter.

"I mean petty thieves. If your clerks are not supplied with eyes in the back part of their neck you will lose enough groceries in the course of a year to supply a boarding-house. A woman wearing a shawl, or loose cloak, can grab a handful of sugar, or a potato, or something of that sort, and conceal it quickly, when no one is watching her. I caught an old Irishwoman trying to get away with a cabbage which she had deftly slipped into her basket when the clerk's back was turned. There are some people, too, who have no idea that it is thieving to appropriate things in this way. How hard it seems to be for folks to learn that honesty is the best policy, especially when dealing with the grocer. When I catch any of my substantial customers trying to confiscate a codfish or something else of value, I say nothing about it, but charge it on the books. I never knew one of them to object when he saw the items in his bill. I will tell you confidentially that I never have any scruples in charging such persons a double price for the articles they have stolen. 'Tis a sort of reminder, you know, that the way of the transgressor is hard," and the grocer laughed till the tears rolled off the end of his nose and a clerk shouted "Cash."

Cigar-Box Labels.

[Chicago Herald.]

An important item in the manufacture of cigar-boxes is the label, which costs from 60 cents to $6 a thousand. A few especially fine labels, made for special brands, cost $9 and $10 a thousand. The larger box factories have a printing-room attached to their establishments, and print the ordinary quality of labels themselves, while the more elaborate qualities of more or less artistic design, and printed in from three to a dozen colors, are made by the lithographic establishments, where designers for this particular branch are kept steadily at work.

It is a noticeable fact that in a great many cases one may judge of the quality of cigar by the kind of label attached to the box. The "loud" label with flaming colors, presenting all kinds of impossible birds and flowers, or females more or less decollette, do not, as a rule, speak favorably for the quality of the cigars. The habitual smoker knows his label, although some of the favorite brands of "three-for-a quarter," or "straight tens," such as "Corono," "Prof. Morse," "Mark Twain," "La Rosa," "Henry Clay" and others, are sold in numerous imitations. The better quality of cigars, like the better quality of men, do not "show off" in a very elaborate style, they have a well-designed and artistically executed label in unobtrusive colors, and some of the very best cigars have very plain packing. Cigars for private sales are generally packed in boxes which are fastened with brass clasps instead of the old-fashioned silk ribbons.

There is one firm of lithographers in this city who do nothing else but print cigar labels, and there are eight box factories, employing 250 hands, and a capital of $100,000, while the annual production is valued at $400,000.

Don't Know to Whom They Belong.

[Philadelphia Press.]

There is said to be a little piece of territory in Germany whose citizens actually do not know to what sovereignty they belong. The size of this strip of land is about 370 square yards. It is situated on the Prusso-Wurtemberg frontier, between the villages of Dettensee, in Prussia, and Nordstetten, in Wurtemberg. The archives could not settle the dispute, and the inhabitants of the little plat had a hard time of it when the tax-gatherers on their last rounds swooped down on them from both sides. A partial adjustment of the boundary has been reached, but even now one family cannot solve the conundrum "Under which king?"