



One of the great necessities incumbent upon Russia in the present era is that of keeping open her railroad communications with the eastern portions of her great empire. Over the single track Siberian line must be forwarded all her re-enforcements and supplies, so that any interruption of traffic, whether by bandits or Japanese spies, might be disastrous. The railroad is carefully patrolled in the entire Manchurian region by Cossacks and so thorough is the system of supervision that serious injury has been inflicted on it, notwithstanding that the country is swarming with bandits, said to be organized and in cases led by Japanese officers. Russian staff officers frequently inspect the line and see that the Cossacks are performing their duties. These officers are mounted on bicycles, with which they readily cover great distances. Our illustrations from the Illustrated London News.

marry. Surely you do not come in either class?"

"No," said the woman, reflectively. "I can't say that I do, and yet—"

"Perhaps," said the man, and now his voice was very gentle, as though he feared he might here touch some old wound unwittingly, "there is in your life some romance which I have not guessed. Believe me, I would not wound you for worlds, and I trust you will pardon my clumsy speech."

"Oh, I am not a blighted being, never fear," this with a laugh that did not ring altogether of merriment.

"Then your refusal to marry me is not based upon the ground that you prefer some other man?"

"No, I am not in love—with some other man."

"Then why not marry me?"

"I have given you the best of all a woman's reasons, 'because.'"

"But your refusal of me is final, I may take it?"

"Yes—the 'yes' with an almost inaudible sigh, a sigh so nearly inaudible that it did not reach the man."

He had thrown away his cigar and stood for a moment gazing out toward the trees. Then he began to speak, and his voice was harsh with feeling that had been restrained.

"I think I quite forgot to mention one thing in my proposal. I did not say that I love you very dearly; that, not wishing to be a beggar of love, I have waited all these years to be in a position to offer you the things which I mentioned as rendering me eligible for your hand. You, who are so cool and calm, what can you know of love and passion? Now, I know that I have worked all these years in vain—no, not altogether in vain—for I am going to kiss you once, here and now, if it means the loss of all the little that is left of me or your regard."

He gathered her in his strong arms and kissed her, not once, but many times, on her forehead, on her eyes and on her lips, and then released her, with the full consciousness that he had done an unpardonable thing which he did not regret.

But the woman held out her arms to him and said:

"Oh, Jack, dear, why didn't you tell me that you loved me at first."—San Francisco Call.

Tagging a Fish.

The United States fish commission has contracted the small boys of the tagging fishes. Metal tags are fastened to marine fishes, which are loose in the ocean with the idea of identifying them in case they are caught at any future time.

The tag, which is light and made of copper, is securely fastened by a copper wire passed through a fin near its junction with the body. No two tags are alike, each having its own markings. A hundred cod were thus tagged and released last spring off the New England coast. The object of the tagging is to ascertain the time which a cod grows, the frequency of its spawning and the extent of its travels in the ocean.

The same experiment is being tried this year with young salmon, especially hatchet, for the rivers of the Pacific coast. The fishes are "tagged" about three inches long, in this way it is expected that the time at which the salmon comes from the sea to spawn will be ascertained, the rate of growth and the percentage of fry that attain maturity. The experiment is an interesting one and has an obvious bearing on fish culture problems.

One Genius and Another.

"A genius is a genius whether he is rich or poor. There's really no difference."

"Pardon me, there is a slight difference. A rich genius can afford to let his hair grow long; a poor genius cannot afford to get it cut."—Philadelphia Press.

A Hard Worker.

"You oughter git me a job," the office seeker said. "Why, I done the work of a dozen men for you on vacation day."

"You did?" replied the successful candidate, incredulously.

"Sure! I voted for you twelve times."—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

Workingmen's Wages.

Wages in the United States are the average are more than twice those in Belgium, three times those of Denmark, Germany, Italy and Spain and one and one-half those in England and Scotland.

CHILDREN STILL.

We seek no more a daily prize,
Nor triumph in our dreams,
So changed the luster of the skies,
So faint and few the gleams,
Yet comes anew, when others play,
That forgotten thrill,
And are we dull and old to-day,
Or only children still?

We loved the battle once, but now
We are not overbold,
There's wisdom on the weary brow,
And in our hearts the cold,
Yet in the light of eager eyes
We lose the wintry chill,
And then we are not overwise,
But simple children still.

The visions of our glorious youth
Have faded long ago;
We hope no more to find the truth,
And should we care to know?
Not ours to scale the viewless height,
But there's a purple hill,
And still we gladden at the sight
And climb as children still.

How much of all the good we planned
Is perfect or begun?
Who watched the lifting of God's hand,
And waits for his "well done"?
But when the children whom we love
The good we missed fulfill,
Thank God our hearts prevail to prove
The hearts of children still.
—London Saturday Review.

Her Inconsistency.

FROM the open windows came music by the orchestra in the ballroom on the further side of the house, softened by distance. Moonlight, broken up by intervening trees into bars and splotches of golden radiance, lay all about them as they walked up and down the veranda.

"The right kind of a woman always appreciates a proposal of marriage from any man as a great compliment. Coming from you it is the much more to be valued, but I cannot marry you," said the woman.

"I have to thank you for having listened to me so patiently. Might I trespass a little more upon your good nature and ask permission to discuss the matter further with you?"

"No amount of discussion can profit either of us, so far as I can see. But, as I have said, in asking me to marry you a great compliment was paid me, and, in return for that compliment, I suppose I owe you permission to indulge your love for discussion or argument."

"Thanks for the permission," said the man, still in his stolid manner. "I cannot recognize my proposal as, in any sense, a compliment, but I am willing that you should, if you wish, take the manner in which I made it as a compliment. Recognizing the splendid development of your own logical faculties, I have made my offer of marriage in perfectly business-like form. I have heard you often declare that a contract of marriage is like any other contract, and should be entered into only when both parties are fully aware of what they are doing."

"Do you think women are ever entirely consistent?" interrupted the woman.

The man looked a trifle surprised and replied:

"At least I give you credit for having a splendidly consistent mind. You do not mean that I have erred in my manner of proposing, that you would have preferred more of an air of romance, and all that sort of thing?"

"Now the situation is something like this," continued the man in very much the same tone of voice that he would have used in arguing an important case before the Supreme Court. "You are twenty-nine—or is it thirty?—years old, have a reputation as a beauty, and all that. You can, I know, marry any one of two or three men who can offer you at least as much as I, but modesty was never a prevailing characteristic of mine, and I have not feared to measure myself with these other men."

"On the other hand, I can give you pretty much anything you desire that costs money. I stand well in my profession, and have prospects of soon being near the top of it. Altogether, I am satisfied that any one would call it a very suitable match all around."

"Does the prosecution here close its case?" inquired the woman, laughing a little.

"I hardly care to regard the matter as one of prosecution and defence," said the man imperturbably, "but if you wish to use the terms I am forced to admit their applicability. Will the defence rest its case on the testimony submitted by the prosecution, or will it elect to submit an argument?"

"The defence will submit an argument," replied the woman. "I admit that the match would be, as you say, pronounced suitable to every one. As for the two or three other men whom you aver that I can marry at any time, I cannot answer. I have noticed that the number of my proposals has been falling off of late, and attributed the fact to advancing age—you were right when you said I was thirty. I may close the discussion by saying that I have made up my mind to become an old maid."

"Far be it from me to say anything against those estimable members of society—the old maids," said the man, "but I do not think you will ever be one of them. A wise man once said that the cowl of a monk hides either a disappointed lover or a great rascal, and while I do not indorse his opinion unqualifiedly, I am firm in the belief that every old maid is a woman who was disappointed in love or who was too cold-bloodedly selfish ever to

A DOCTOR'S MISSION

BY EMILY THORNTON

Author of "ROY RUSSELL'S RULE," "GLENROY," "THE FASHIONABLE MOTHER," ETC.

CHAPTER XI.—(Continued.)

"O, my dear Miss Nevergail, the Fates certainly have befriended me this time! To think that I should have met this your beautiful self, just as you start on a ramble, is too fortunate for belief! Which direction shall we go, for I at once constitute myself your devoted attendant."

"Mr. Glendenning, you will excuse me if I decline your services. I came out for a quiet walk by myself, and therefore shall not certainly trespass upon your time."

"Pardon me, my angel, my time is of no consequence at all. I must insist upon accompanying you, as I could never allow so lovely a lady to stroll around without a protector."

"Sir," said Ethel, now really losing patience, "there is no danger certainly to be met in the short walk I intend to take in your uncle's grounds. But since you aver otherwise, I shall instantly return."

"You will do no such thing," was the insolent reply, as Robert sprang to her side, seized her hand, and drawing it firmly under his arm, held it tight, and thus drew her back to the walk. "When I propose walking with a charming girl, I usually do it."

"Sir, release my hand. I have no desire to go further. I shall merely add that your presence is disagreeable, and your words of flattery almost insulting."

"Notwithstanding that, my dearest girl—"

"I am neither your 'dearest girl,' nor your 'angel,' and you have no right to address me in that style. I am your uncle's secretary and amanuensis, and am here merely to carry out his wishes, and work, not to be attended by you in any way whatever," returned the indignant Ethel, disengaging her hand, and returning towards the house.

"Miss Nevergail, go, since you are so determined, but remember, although you decline my friendship, nothing you may do will provoke my enmity, and before many days you will spend hours in my company, voluntarily."

Ethel made no answer, and the next moment, re-entered the hall, leaving the chagrined youth to his bitter reflections.

In one of Dr. Elfenstein's visits he had been presented with a quantity of exceedingly choice flowers by a grateful patient, and suddenly remembering the dismal life Ethel Nevergail was leading, he resolved to divide them with her.

Driving, then, first to his own home before seeking the hall, he selected the most beautiful, and forming them into a graceful bouquet, drove into the ramble with them in his hand.

Belle was in the drawing room and saw him leap from the gig, with his floral prize, so stepped quickly from the window that reached to the floor, in order to attract his attention, supposing, in her extreme vanity, that he would instantly present them to herself.

But to her deep chagrin, he merely made a few passing observations, and walked on, carrying the coveted flowers with him. Biting her lips in keen vexation, she muttered as she retreated to the room she had left:

"I will stay here and watch for his return. Something seems to tell me that those flowers are for that odious Ethel Nevergail. If they are—"

She did not finish her sentence audibly, but the ominous look in her eyes told of bitter feelings that would seek some petty revenge.

Ethel was passing through the upper hall to her room when Dr. Elfenstein ran lightly up, and as he pronounced her name to detain her, she tarried until he reached her side.

"Miss Nevergail, I do not know whether you are as fond of flowers as I am, but I have brought you a few, hoping they may cheer you in your lonely duties."

"O, thank you, doctor! They will, indeed, as I love them dearly. These are perfect beauties and I shall prize them highly."

"That rose, I think, will adorn your hair to perfection. Allow me to fasten it there. May I?"

With a pleased blush the young girl bent her head, and with skillful fingers Belle placed it just above her small, white ear where it nestled lovingly, adding a new charm to her bright young face.

Just as he was finishing a step approached, and Belle, who could not restrain her curiosity another moment, as she heard him pause on the floor above, and then make some remark in a low tone, came upon the scene.

Just in time to see his hand leave the rose, and to see Ethel turn toward her own room, and disappear with the bouquet in her hand and a gratified smile hovering around her lips.

Waiting until she had seen the doctor leave the premises, and Ethel again repair to Sir Reginald's side, the malicious girl proceeded directly to that room, where she found the flowers carefully bestowed in a fancy vase upon the dressing case.

Seizing them without a moment's hesitation, she turned directly to the baronet's room. Ethel sat by the bed, and at his request was striving to cool his heated brow by gently moving a fan. Raising her eyes, to her astonishment, she recognized her flowers, but before she could claim them, Belle's angry voice arrested her attention.

"Sir Reginald," she exclaimed, "I think it my duty to inform you that Miss Nevergail seems to have forgotten her position as your assistant nurse, and paid dependent, and seizes every opportunity that offers to carry on sly flirtations with gentlemen. I just surprised Dr. Elfenstein placing that rose in her hair outside your door, while at the same time she gave her these flowers. Do you approve of such behavior?"

"Approve? No! Of course not!" she returned, flying into a passion at once, as she well knew he was sure to do. "Miss Nevergail, what business have you to conduct in that style? Did I bring you here to form intrigues with gentlemen?"

"You certainly did not," was the calm reply, "nor have I done so. Dr. Elfenstein is an old friend, and as such he presented me with the flowers Miss Glendenning has taken from my room. Being my own property now, I will thank her for their restoration." So saying, she reached forth her hand for them.

But Belle drew back, and scornfully replied:

"You shall never have them again, I assure you, as I shall instantly see that every stem, leaf and bud is destroyed. If you do not know your place better in this house than to put yourself on an equality with its visitors, you must be taught. Do you not think so, Sir Reginald?" she added, appealing to him.

"Certainly. Just take the trash away, and see that it is destroyed. I shall myself inform Dr. Elfenstein."

"You will not do that, surely, uncle. He would then be vexed with me," Belle hastily exclaimed. "I will destroy them, since you wish it also, but not until you promise to say nothing to him about it."

"Well, have it your own way; but if I do not, perhaps Miss Nevergail will."

"She dare not! she knows it would seem unmanly to mourn over the loss of a few flowers that were his gift, in his presence. I am not at all afraid of her doing so."

So saying, regardless of Ethel's beseeching words and looks, the spiteful girl left the room with her ill-gotten treasures, and Ethel saw them no more.

Sir Reginald remained excited, cross and nervous, for some time after this scene, and poor Ethel found it almost impossible to please him in anything she attempted.

The sight of the flower she still wore seemed to aggravate him, although he made no further comments upon the subject, but Ethel felt that without a direct command she was not required to remove it.

Therefore it remained, and when Dr. Elfenstein returned in the afternoon for his usual second visit to the sick man, he smiled, as his eyes rested upon it, but never was told the fate of the rest of his offering, nor heard of the hard words she had endured on account of his friendly gift.

CHAPTER XII.

After Robert Glendenning had been so justly repulsed by Ethel in the grounds of the hall, he felt exceedingly ill used, and the more he pondered over the coldness of this beautiful girl towards himself, the more he felt inclined to punish her want of appreciation of his merits as a handsome, wealthy and popular young man.

Immediately after his last adventure with Ethel, while yet chafed and sore on account of it, his sister gave him a graphic account of the presentation of the flowers by Dr. Elfenstein, and her own bold destruction of them, then concluded by saying:

"She is a proud, stuck-up thing, and I do delight in humiliating her lofty feelings. I intend to do all I can to bring her from the high pedestal on which she has perched, and if I can only incense Sir Reginald against her, so that he will send her away, I shall be delighted. Bob, I wish you would help me."

"I will do all I can to reduce her abominable pride, I assure you, though I do not care to have her sent away. She shall, however, repent snubbing me as she did yesterday."

"Snubbing you! What do you mean? Did she really dare to do that?"

Robert then related his experience with the subject of their discussion.

"The idiot! She does not deserve your further notice! However, if I see a chance to lower her in Sir Reginald's esteem I shall do it. If needful, I shall also call on you for assistance."

That afternoon he wished for opportunity arrived.

Belle happened to be in her uncle's room a few moments, when she heard the following conversation take place, which gave her a plan upon which to work.

Sir Reginald had received a note from a neighbor in reference to some very important private business, which he found necessary to attend to immediately. Wishing some intelligent person to see and converse with Mr. Perkins in regard to the matter, he had explained his views to Ethel before Belle had entered, and was just saying:

"Do you think you could find Perkins for me, and attend to this important work, Miss Nevergail?"

"I do. I understand your wishes perfectly now; so if you can direct me there, I will go at once."

"You had better not go around the road, as the walk would be full a mile and a half, but go from the rear of the hall and take a short cut through the fields. There will only be a couple of bars to lower, and the path is direct and plain."

"Then I will start at once."

"It will only take you until five o'clock to go and return. Please be as quick as possible in getting back, as I shall need you by that time. You understand, I wish you to hurry. I never like a person to loiter when I send them upon an errand."

Seeking Robert at once, Belle informed him of the errand Ethel had to transact for Sir Reginald, and his strict injunction that she should hasten back to his side.

"He told her the whole work could be accomplished by five o'clock. Now, Robert, I think it would provoke him greatly if she were detained until seven. Can you not intercept her on her return and manage to keep her away?"

"Yes, indeed. It will be splendid fun. I will do it. If I cannot keep her in any other way I will force her into a phaeton and take her off upon a ride."

"Do; then I will inform his lordship that she was seen riding with some strange young man."

"He, ha! good; and if she says it was this chap, I will deny it in full."

"And I will come in to prove an alibi. Where will you meet her?"

"Just the other side of the Perkins wood. I will have a horse and phaeton waiting on this side. There is a woodman's road there that leads to the main road; we can take that, and have a jolly long ride. But I shall have a fuss to get her into the vehicle, I expect; however, I shall manage it some way, never fear."

Laughing gayly over the fun in prospect the two separated to put in force the mischief they had brewed.

Poor Ethel left the house without a suspicion of what awaited her; glad, in fact, that she could thus enjoy a stroll after the confinement of that close, hard day.

She found Mr. Perkins at home, and soon explained the cause of her visit, and transacted the business with which she had been intrusted.

This completed, she turned her face homeward. All went well with her until she approached the woods. At their entrance she found, on consulting her watch that it was quarter past four.

"I shall reach the hall just about five," she thought, "and so please Sir Reginald. I would not have liked being late, after what he said."

Suddenly she was startled by a sound at her side, then, to her surprise and chagrin, Robert Glendenning stepped directly in her path.

"My dear Miss Nevergail, this is a delightful meeting in a delightful place. Where may your curiosity have taken you?"

"My curiosity, Mr. Glendenning, took me nowhere. I have merely been to transact a matter of business for Sir Reginald and am now on my way home. Being in a hurry, I would be glad to pass on."

"Not so fast, not so fast, my pretty girl; surely you will linger awhile in this romantic place, now that you have some one to enjoy the beauties of the wood with you?"

"No, Mr. Glendenning," was the dignified reply; "I cannot linger a moment. Sir Reginald desired my immediate return, and I cannot keep him waiting."

"Nevertheless, my sweet creature, he will wait; for you cannot return just now, as I intend for once to fully enjoy your society."

So saying, the bold young man attempted to take her hand, to draw it under his arm.

Snatching it instantly away, Ethel fixed upon him a stern look and ordered him to stand aside.

Not heeding her in the least, he impatiently slipped his arm around her waist, exclaiming:

"Perhaps you would like this way of walking better. It makes no difference to me."

Shaking off his arm, Ethel pushed him aside indignantly, then with rapid steps pressed onward. Not a word more was spoken by either, although, to her dismay, Ethel found that he kept perseveringly by her side.

As they emerged from the woods, Robert grasped her arm firmly with one hand, while with the other he produced from his pocket a pistol, which he instantly pointed at her.

"Now, Miss Nevergail," he said, "you stand still and hear what I have to say, or take the consequences. I do not intend to harm you, if you keep perfectly quiet; but I do intend to show you that I am master of the situation at this time. You need not look round for assistance, for I assure you, no soul comes this way at this hour."

"Robert Glendenning," at last issued from the girl's pale lips, "put up that pistol instantly and allow me to pursue my way un molested. Sir Reginald requires my presence immediately."

"So do I; and what is more, I intend to have it, so he must wait. Do you see that horse and phaeton, behind those trees? They are there expressly to take you riding. I ask you therefore, politely, will you favor me with your company?"

"No, sir."

"Yes, sir, you mean. If you do not mean it, it makes no difference, as ride with me you will. Go forward now, at once, to that conveyance, and let me assist you in; I assure you I will bring you back to the Hall in good season. Go on! I am determined you shall obey me!"

These words he enforced by planting the cold mouth of the weapon against her forehead. Now this pistol, though it looked formidable, was not loaded, and he knew it, but for the sake of carrying his point, he intended fully to frighten her into complying with his strange wish. But Ethel was a brave girl, and though pale, she never even shuddered. Fixing her eyes fearlessly on his, she said in a firm, stern voice:

"If you think it manly, or wise, to shoot, shoot away! But I will not stir one step towards that phaeton."

Cristobal's Joke.

A Genoa paper tells this delightful story at America's expense: When the Duke of Veragua, the descendant of Christopher Columbus, visited Chicago he inquired at the telegraph office the charge for a telegram to the city of Columbus of ten words.

"Fifteen cents," answered the official, "not including the signature, which is wired free."

Whereupon the Duke wired: "Mayor, Columbus: Shall visit your city next Monday or Tuesday." And he signed it: "Cristobal Colon de Toledo y Laaretegui de la Cerda Ramirez de Baquedano y Gante Almirante y Adelantado Mayor de las Indias, Marques de Jamaica, Duque de Veragua y de la Vega, Grande de Espana, Senador del Reino, Caballero de la Insigne orden del Tolson O'oro, Gran Cruz de la Concepcion de Villavieosa, Gentil Hombre de Camara del Rey de Espana."

Pumping a Ship's Cargo.

The "grasshopper" or derrick elevator now in use by the London Grain Elevator Company at the London docks has been specially designed for transshipping the corn from the holds of the largest types of American liners engaged in the grain trade into lighters for conveyance to other coasting vessels or warehouses. Its spout, in which travels an endless belt covered with buckets, will draw 150 tons of corn an hour from the hold of a vessel. When ready for action it suggests the great stomach pump that it is.

An old bachelor says that a marriage dowry is a lump of sugar intended to nullify the bitterness of the dose.

Her Inconsistency.

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CUT THROUGH SOLID ROCK.

Centuries Elapsed Before Completion of Corinthian Canal.

"Speaking of canals," said the engineer who had been talking about Panama, "a very interesting canal, and one not much heard of, is that connecting the Gulf of Corinth and the Gulf of Aegina in Greece. It's some older than any we have in the Western hemisphere, also, for Pericles, tyrant of Corinth, proposed to cut through the Isthmus as long ago as six hundred years before Christ. Superstition stopped him, however. Julius Caesar and Calligula took it up again when Rome had hold of Greece, but it was too much for them. Then came Nero, and he went at it with vigor, but the work stopped when he died. Others kept pounding away at it for the next several hundred years, but it was not until 1881 that real work of the Nero energy was put upon it. Then Gen. Turr, aide-de-camp to Victor Emmanuel of Italy, organized a company and worked on till the money gave out in 1890, the chief