A FIELD FLOWER'S COMPLAINT.

If I had been a snowdrop, the first one of the year,
Would you have thought me beautiful, being the first, my dear?
If I had been a royal rose grown higher than your heart,
Would you have bent your face to mine, and drawn my leaves apart,

Until they dropped about your feet, and all my heart lay bare?
A broken heart, a golden heart, for you to leave or wear—
Would you have gathered in your hand each fallen rosy leaf,
And said a gentle word for life so beautiful and brief?

But I, that fain would be a rose and wear her royal red,
A field flower among field flowers, I lift my loveless head;
Among the tall dead nettles, white campion who will heed?
White campion shrinking faintly mid dock and silverweed?

—Black and White.

Cupid and Gray Hairs.

THE pretty gray-haired lady sighed. "I never really had a fair chance at partridge before," she said, indicating her well-filled plate with a pathetic smile.

"I have a fellow-feeling," she continued, "for that old gentleman who said that the wing of the chicken was doubtless the very nicest portion of all, but that he had never tasted it. When he was young the old people were supposed to monopolize it, and now that he had grown old, he said, it had to be reserved for the young. 'My dear,' he lamented, 'I have never tasted the wing of the chicken!' Tragic, wasn't it?"

"It was dastardly!" The fine-looking white-mustached gentleman on her right hand stifled a snort of indignation.

"Nothing gets away from the youngsters of to-day," he growled. "I'm only a bare 59, you know—"

"Yes—I remember you were always just five years ahead," the sweet-faced little lady smiled sympathetically.

"Fifty-nine years, Mrs. Merrydew! and to judge from the attitude of the young fledgelings in this hotel, one would say I was a relic of the stone age—belonged somewhere, unclassified, with the pyramids and Rameses II."—his genial face took on a sudden mulberry hue; "dastardly, I repeat! You can't plead the most trivial sensation of indigestion nowadays, even just a plain ordinary headache, but it's put down to incipient senility—I meet it on all sides. I can tell you!"

"I know—I know!" responded his fair listener, appreciatively. "And that rosy-cheeked girl from the academy prefaces every other remark to me with 'In your day—!' It does come hard, certainly, when one is still in a fair state of preservation, and can yet maintain ordinary conversation."

"Conversation, humph! merely the last expiring efforts of a once powerful intellect, my dear madam," quoted the elderly gentleman, savagely.

The pretty little widow giggled outright at this—she could look very charming when a smile dispelled her naturally pensive expression. "Really, it's a comfort to meet you again, after so many years," she confided, "let's go over to that window seat, where we can sympathize. I feel quite as young as I did twenty-five years back—and younger; but there is always such an unreasoning prejudice regarding gray hair—it's public opinion concerning it that harrows up your soul."

"Gray hair is most becoming over a youthful face," put in the gentleman, with a gallant bow, while they both withdrew to a friendly alcove. "Oh, thank you for not saying 'still' youthful! That 'still' is such a paralyzing word!" the little lady shuddered. "They might as well say: 'Mrs. M. still retains her intelligent expression.' It is all very unnerving."

He chuckled, and moved his chair a trifle closer.

"I say, this judging of age by years is the most outrageous procedure ever, isn't it now? I maintain that it is primitive and unworthy of our so-called civilization. One might as well judge by rheumatism, of which babes in arms are our most prominent exponents in these days. Why, that young cub out yonder at tennis is barely a self-confessed twenty-four, and yet his mamma (the stout, be-diamond person, with three chins) is sore put to it to extricate him from his considerable and flourishing crop of wild oats (regular horse-chestnuts they are, too, I believe!). My dear young friend, you and I might be styled mere babes in the wood by comparison with this world-weary youth! And yet"—the white mustache went upward with a twist of fierce exasperation—"he wanted to know what colleges they had in my day, and were telephones and horse cars invented."

The lady laughed so heartily that the irate speaker joined in perforce after a while.

"I'm so glad you came," she remarked prettily; "I am getting demoralized here alone by myself. Of course my daughter comes at times, but then I am more than ever guiltily conscious of my shortcomings. If I as much as mention wearing my brooch or tortoise shell comb down to dinner I feel that it is almost a personal insult to her, and sometimes I just long to take up the baby and soothe and pet him when he is hungry or fretful, but I am promptly informed that the best grandmothers do not do it. Of course it is all for my best good, for she says it all in love, and it hurts her more than it does me (or she thinks it does). As for an eardrop, an eardrop is an anachronism! I don't mind any of these things so much, but in my little parlor at home there are my pretty colored wreaths, and that quaint shell work father made, and the tidies I worked long ago when mother was alive—all unhygienic, I suppose—"

"Unhygienic!" ejaculated her listener hotly, "and I've an old red silk dressing gown, reeking with germs, no doubt, that's been the chief prop and stay of my declining years; it's got to go, of course, as soon as my folks strike the place!"

"And the mottoes my little Emma worked when she was ill, before the last!"—the sweet voice trembled a little—"I can't let them go, even if for their own sakes: The Lord Will Provide,' 'Welcome,' 'No Cross, No Crown'—I cling to them all, even if they are old-fashioned." Her voice ended in a little sob.

The elderly man cleared his throat with a mighty noise and patted the plump little hand in wordless sympathy. "Anyhow," when it comes to the old drama we're all right!" he ventured at last. "Think of those good old names, and the old standard shows they gave! Plays that hurt nobody, and gave our imaginations some small chance for exercise." (A tacit but vigorous opinion of the modern stage was conveyed in the repressed growl with which he concluded.) The pretty color deepened a little in the lady's face; she looked up, smiling brightly.

"I have a curtain tassel from the old museum," she said softly; "I had to have something."

"And I have a gilt cherub from one of the upper boxes," he chuckled. "Jove!" he went on, his voice sinking to a confidential whisper, "it's good to meet some one who has things to remember! Mrs. Merrydew—Anna!" he said softly, "do you ever recall a piece that answered to the name of the 'Carnival of Venice' or the 'Blue Danube Waltzes?'"

"And the 'Last Hope,' and 'The Maiden's Prayer' and the 'Battle of Sebastopol?' Can I ever forget them, you mean? And yet, if I want them nowadays I have to steal away and lock the doors like a criminal. And—what's the matter?"—she broke off suddenly as some memory of past wrongs darkened his face for a moment.

"Matter?" he echoed; "perhaps you noticed that at my parlor chat last evening nobody listened or appeared to care a straw for my modest reminiscences of Holmes, Longfellow, Lowell and Emerson? I was a doddering old imbecile to have undertaken it, of course. Everybody simply yawned until the lady monologist came on—the humorist."

"Humorist!" ejaculated the little widow, warmly. "There was nothing humorous about her except her bonnet—and our $20 doubtless went for that 'creation!' If that be creation, give me chaos!"

"I was a little lower than the janitor," he continued gloomily. "And the worst is yet to come. A sweet young freshman from Yale, addressing me as 'in your day' (why is that innocuous observation so unfailingly exasperating?) said he supposed I was acquainted with all the leading lights of the early nineteenth century? I effaced myself before he could ask about Washington and Lafayette, and did I sign the Declaration of Independence. It was blood-curdling!" The speaker mopped his brown in fevered retrospect. "But the limit was reached this morning, when some youngster offered to read me the war headlines in the morning papers. I made up my mind then that I was considered in the advanced stages of paresis."

"It's fearfully aging, I think, to meet such things," sighed the little lady pathetically. "And then—some of the old ways I simply cannot get over—I don't want to try! The old hymns I lived by, and shall die by—that have brought me through so much sorrow and loss; there have been crises I never could have survived without the help of those old tunes"—she was weeping softly into a delicate film of a handkerchief.

"Never mind, dear little woman—these things are ours for keeps, and nobody can take them away." His voice was full of sturdy optimism and sympathy, but it was very gentle, and a bit unsteady, too.

"I have some almost priceless old laces and some china such as those rosy maidens have never even dreamed of in their philosophy," she affirmed, "and a highboy and sideboard that are worth their weight in gold, and some andirons—you remember those andirons of mother's, don't you, Stephen?" She blushed slightly as she spoke—it had been a quarter of a century since she had called him Stephen.

"And possibly you forget the waffles I made you one day—"

"Waffles! say no more! I may be a past, a pluperfect, but there are some memories that tell me I have not lived in vain!"

"That soup to-night," he interrupted, breathlessly, "Mrs. Merrydew—Anna! didn't it seem to you that it lacked a faint touch of something—something impalpable, inexpressible, soul-satisfying—almost psychological—"

"It did, indeed; also the steak and the croquettes! As you say, a something—"

"Onions!"

"Onions!"

The word burst from both simultaneously—they gazed at one another in speechless ecstacy.

"I just love them in everything," she faltered in sweet confusion.

"Everything—everything! Mrs. Merrydew—Anna! Dearest!"

The Yale "fledgeling" who was just entering the door closed it softly again, and reflected that there are some things that youth does not monopolize, after all.—Boston Transcript.

What proportion of people speak of a boy as a "kid?"

FURIOUS FOREST FIRES.

Man and Beast Are Helpless Against Their Oncoming.

The furyof a forest fire is indescribable, especially in soft-wood or coniferous forests. Here the flames sweep through, making a roaring wall of blaze that reaches from the ground, carpeted with inflammable material, to the topmost branches where resinous sap snaps and crackles fiercely, throwing blazing particles to ignite other trees at a considerable distance. In addition a high wind blows, in many cases generated by the fire itself, the heated air rising causing an inrush of colder air from adjacent areas that acts like a draft of a furnace. Before this combination of ground and crown fire nothing can prevail. Animals flee before it or are roasted to death. During the fires in Washington and Oregon in 1902 lakes were found packed solid with putrefying and partly roasted bodies of bear, deer, panther, and other animals, fearless of each other in the frenzy that brought them together to perish through drowning, heat, or suffocation. In these same fires a picnic party of nine persons, with team and wagon, was cut off by flames near Mt. St. Helen, and all that was found later to prove the tragedy were the irons of the wagon, the carcasses of two horses, vestiges of the remains of human beings, the buttons of the clothing the only evidence left to show how they fell. The horses had been cut loose in a vain mercy that sought to give them a chance to shift for themselves. Near the tires of the wagon were the remains of the women of the party and the position of the men at various points from the central group of the tragedy showed that they had tried to make some sort of a fight. The task was as hopeless as making a living space in the midst of a blast furnace. —The Chautauquan.

Lost Her Whole Fortune.

After having toiled for many years without being able to lay aside more than a few dollars for a rainy day, Mrs. Mary Slavin, a middle-aged woman, of 57 South Sixth street, Williamsburg, by the recent death of a relative inherited a piece of property. She sold it for $8,750, and deposited the money in the Nassau Trust Company, near her home. As the banking institution pays but 2 per cent on deposits she decided to withdraw the money and deposit it in institutions paying 4 per cent.

She took out all the money, and after placing it in the bosom of her dress she set out for the Dime Savings Bank, at Broadway and Wythe avenue, two blocks distant.

There were eight $1,000 bills, a $500-bill, two $100 bills, and one $50-bill. When she reached the Dime Savings Bank she withdrew $100 she had on deposit there, and then set out for her home, intending to arrange the money in lots, and deposit each lot in a separate savings bank.

On reaching her home she discovered that all her money was gone. She became hysterical, and while in that condition she went over the ground she had traversed from the two banks, but failed to find the money. A crowd gathered around her and joined in the search. Policemen lent their aid, but the money was not found. On reaching her home she collapsed completely and a doctor was called in.—Washington Post.

Where Lies the East?

"Yes, I've just returned from a two months' visit in the East," the Portland young lady was saying, "and, oh, I had such a lovely time! Those Easterners are so different from us though."

"What points did you visit?" inquired the new comer in Oregon. "I do hope you saw dear old Boston."

"Boston!" the Portland girl ejaculated. "I should say not. I was in Montana."—Portland Oregonian.

On a rainy, windy night, when you are unable to sleep, ever look yourself over candidly, and admit your faults! And wasn't the result pretty tough?