## THE STRANGE GUEST.

He brought a branch of olive-This stranger guest of mine; Could I deny him entrance, Who bore the peaceful sign? h, no! I bade him welcome,

I set him ment and wine; How laughed his eyes divine

I took the branch of olive (The soothest plant that grows). And from the curven ceiling hung it with the ro "But why to me this token, never lacked repo Why this to me," I question "Who know no fend nor fo

He smiled beneath the This strangest stranger guest A branch from off they Had told his errord best or since my house he entered There's ne'er a heart at rest.

## UNEXPECTED \$10,000.

o mock me with the olive! But Love ofth love his jest.

While Smith was 19-pretty, viva cions, ambitious, but just now the very much discouraged owner of the Smith weeks before she had been summoned her school at Staunton by the death of her grandfather, and, as there was no other relative, bad entered at once into possession of the property A few days after the funeral the owner of the mortgage had made an ostensible visit of condolence, but had so interpolated his expressions of sympathy with matters of practical significance that when he left Willie was for the first time aware that she was only the nominal owner of her plantation.

At first she was stunned, for she had already begun to make plans for the improvement and extension of the ancestral acres. The poor cabins of the negro tenants were to be replaced by new ones, neglected fields were to be again fenced and brought into cultivation, and better methods and better machinery were to be used. Her grandfather had been easy-going and impracticable, but she had supposed that schooling and the house expenses had been met by the rents paid him by negro tenants. Now she knew that the mortgage had been gradually increased to meet the deficits.

This morning she was in the kitchen helping Aunt Chloe with the ironing. but her thoughts were busy with the formidable problems of the future There were the expenses and the interest to be met, and, worst of all, there was \$100 still due her school at Staun-She could not see any possible way to pay it. for the season had been bad, and the renters, instead of paying what they owed, were beginning to clamor for advances on the next year's crops; and the creditor had delicately hipted that her grandfather had al ready raised the mortgage out of all proportion to its security. In anxious succession her mind went over her own accomplishments in search of some thing that would be money-producing. She was fond of scribbling, and was fairly good at drawing and music, and had won a school reputation as a linguist. But she was too honest and practical to overrate these accomplish-They were good things to know, but would not help her at this

then she would go out and seek a place among the wage earners. "Heyer's yo' mail, Mis' Willie," called window, and a black hand was thrust in with a package of letters. . She took them and glanced over the postmarks carelessly. Most of them were from school friends at Stannton. Several were circulars, and one was one from Leadville, Col. She selected this and examined it curiously. She had no correspondents in any part of the West.

crisis. No, she must struggle as best

she could until the creditor foreclosed;

Inside was a check and a short letter, with the printed address of a Leadville banking house. The letter read:

"Willie Smith, Talbottom, Ga.: We are requested to forward you the inclosed check for ten thousand dollars (\$10,000). Please acknowledge receipt, and oblige, yours truly.

"WALDRON & CO."

the stared at it for a moment, then hurriedly examined the check. Yes, it was for \$10,000, made in favor of Willie But, of course, it was a mis-Smith. take. If she had any relatives in the world, they were so far removed as to have been overlooked, and certainly none of them was rich enough to send

Talbottom was a small, unprogressive town, whose straggling arms reached out drowslly to the line fence of the Smith plantation. Willie crossed two fields and went down a short lane, and was then in the principal street. There was but one bank, and Its cashier was an old friend of her grandfather's. She went directly to him and explained her errand.

"I reckon it's all right, Willie," said the old man, after he had carefully examined the envelope and its contents. "It's directed to Willie Smith, Talbot m, and you're the only Willie Smith I know. And Waldron & Co. are all right. Our house has dealt with them. And I'm bound to say, my dear," putting down the papers and looking at her beamingly, "I'm plumb glad for this windfall. I can almost hear yo' grandfather chuckle in his grave.'

"But it can't be mine," Insisted Wil-"I don't even know that I have a relative in all the world."

"Somebody yo' family has lost sight of," said the cashier genially. "Now, there's a man over in Jasper County got a fortune from a cousin he hasn't heard from in thirty years. I reckon this is something that way. It's likely yo' mother's cousin or somebody else. He led the way into his private room Anyhow, it's all right, and I'm willing and motioned the young man to an

to take the chi it on deposit? "I wish I lt more sure," hesitated

ippose I telegraph to Wal-"Well. dron & Can you come in again this after

When she returned in the afternoon cashier handed her a slip of paper

"Merchants' Bank, Talbottom, Ga.-Gentlemen: Nothing to explain. We forwarded check to Willie Smith, Talbottom, as requested. If the party presenting it can be identified you may cash same with perfect safety. Yours, "WALDRON & CO."

"So you see It is all right," said the cashier. "Now, you will please indorse

Willie did so with a sudden feeling of

"How will you have it?" briskly "Suppose you give me \$6,000. That will pay off the mortgage and make ome necessary repairs. The rest I will deposit with you. And-and suppose you let me have a check book; it will be more convenient."

The next few hours were momenton ones in the young girl's life. The mortgage was paid, and visits were made blantation and its encumbrances. Two to grocery and harwware and seed stores, and to painters and carpenters and stone masons; and before she went home a check was on its way to the principal of her school at Staunton.

In the morning men came out and made estimates, and they were follow ed by painters and carpenters and laborers, who began to repair the old family mansion, and to surround the neglected fields with substantial fences. and to build new cabins under the magnificent live oaks that grew along one side of the plantation

Willie spent most of her time out doors watching the work and making occasional suggestions. The new cabins were surrounded by generous truck patches, and when they were finished she was careful to rent them only to industrious, reliable negroes. In this she was greatly assisted by the cashier, who came out frequently to watch the progress of the work and whose advice was always valuable.

One day a brisk, prepossessing young man stepped into the Talbottom post-

"Any letters here for Willie Smith?" he asked.

"No, she called after them not an hour ago,"

"She?" curiously. "Yes. Generally her man Tobe gets

them, but she happened to be in town this morning. You're one of the men working out there, I suppose?" "No, not exactly."

He left the postoffice and walked across the street to the bank.

"Has Willie Smith presented a check here for \$10,000 recently?" he asked. "Miss Willie Smith has," replied the

cashier. "I beg your pardon, I meant Miss Willie Smith. You see, out West, we get in the habit of dropping ceremony. The old cashier looked at him

thoughtfully.

"So you are a Westerner, are you?" he asked.

"I was, but expect to be a Southerner said the young man frankly. "My mother left this country nearly thirty years ago, but I have often heard her describe her old home. When I made my pile I concluded to con tlown here and look around; and if I liked the place to stay permanently.

The cashier's face cleared instantly. "Good," he exclaimed. "You can't Uncle Tobe's voice through the open help liking such a grand country. All it lacks is money and energy. But y part of the West are you from?"

"Leadville, Col." "Ah, I began to suspect it. You have been connected with the house of Waldron & Co., and called in to see if the check reached its destination all right." He came from behind the coun ter and took the young man's hand warmly. "I am right glad to see you, suh. Yo' house never sent out a better check than that in all its life. Miss Willie has paid off a mortgage on her plantation, and is making wonderful improvements, suh-wonderful! And do you know," lowering his voice, "if it hadn't been for that check I achally believe she'd been forced to go off and look for work-achally forced, suh."

"Indeed! That would have been too

bad," said the young man, "but-"There's no but now," interrupted the cashier cheerfully. "Her future's as clear as a June sky. If I'd received the check myself I wouldn't have been half as much pleased. Miss Willie's a fine girl-a gem in a land that is full of jewels. You must excuse my enthusiasm, suh," apologetically, "but in a sort of way yo' house seems to have had a hand in the good fortune. But come into my private room and we'll talk over the country. You're to be one of us now, and maybe I can give you some points on buying a place. And I'll tell you about Miss Willie and her plans." Here a new thought seemed to strike him, "How'd you like to go out and see her yo'self?" he asked abruptly. We close early, and I generally go that way for a walk. She'll be glad to

"Nothing would please me better." "Very well. You'll take dinner with me, and if I can be of any assistance in you' plans do not hesitate to use me Now, there's the Calhoun plantation, Joins Miss Willie and just now can be had for a song. And, really, it's the best thing you can do in the whole country. But you haven't told me yo'

see anyone from Waldron & Co."

name yet, sub!" "Smith-er. Call me Hamilton Smith." "A good name, sub-a good name. We have Smiths in every county in the South, but I tell them a good thing can-

not be too common. My mother was a Smith.

ne settled himself in an easy chair and gave a glowing picture of the Calhoun plantation.

The young man said little, but on his they went out to the Calhoun plantathe evening, it had wholly disappeared.

"Miss Willie is an exceptionally fine he said, with suppressed enthusiasm, "and if I am not mistaken the community will yet be proud of her plantation. She seems to have the faculty of knowing just what she wants Harvard and besides has been graduand just how to go about doing it. I ated as a lawyer, could not have planned the improve bank of the river, which runs between the two plantations, and that it would be nice if the owner on the other side

"The Calhoun place? Certainly, and

"Well, I want it. I suppose it's too late to get it to-night," regretfully; "but if you'll arrange for its purchase early in the morning, so that the papers can be made out before noon, I'll be infin-

"But you haven't seen the place yet?" expostulated the cashier in amazement,

Yes, I have-across the river, you Besides, I'm willing to take your word for it. If you can have everything settled before noon I will go over after dinner and talk with Miss Willie about the shade trees. And, do you know," with animation, "I've been thinking that those bluffs above the live oak grove will be a fine place to thrown bridge across the river. I wender if Miss Willie will like the idea.

The next day the good people of Talbottom were stirred to unwonted excitement by the news that an energetic stranger had bought the old Judge Calhoun plantation, and that unlimited improvements were contemplated. And, even while this report was being circulated from mouth to mouth, it was followed by rumors of lavish contracts and engagements made with the towns people of the town. Decidedly the stranger was no ordinary man.

And evidently Willie thought so, too. for she would flash covert, inquiring glances at him from under her long dark eyelashes, and sometimes would listen with almost bated breath, wondering what daring scheme would be proposed next. He was so different tion as he was on his own, but she his money in one could see no way to prevent it.

ly announced, and all Talbottom said himself whenever he sees the opporit was the most suitable match of the tunity. There is no waiting-no secur-

carefully overhauled his papers. There good reasons, such as accident or sickwere many letters addressed simply to ness. In fact, it does not pay to fail to Willie Smith; some were to Willie H. pay, for it will cost more in the long Smith. All of them were destroyed.

sollloquized, as the last one was re-duced to ashes, "Some folks see them." Washington Star. New York Ledger.

The Man and the Snake.

The reputed fascination of the serpent's eye is the motive of a story in Mr. Ambrose Bierce's volume of tales entitled "In the Midst of Life." Mr. Brayton was the guest of a friend, an eminent zoologist, whose specialty, of which he had a fine collection, was snakes. Stretched upon a sofa in his own room, Mr. Brayton glanced from the book he was carelessly scanning while awaiting the summons to dinner, and saw, in the shadow under his bed. two small points of light about an inch apart. He gave them no specian thought and resumed his reading.

In a few minutes he gave an involuntary start, and stared into the obscurity under the bed. His gaze disclosed the coils of a large serpent; the points of light were its eyes, but were no longer merely luminous points; they looked into his own with a malign significance, Brayton was a brave man, but this was the better part of valor. He would beat a retreat and backward, so as not

The snake did not move, but its eyes seemed to become larger and more luminous. There were strange noises in Brayton's ears as, with reluctant steps, he could not refrain from drawing nearer the bed. Suddenly something struck him a hard blow upon the face.

He had fallen to the floor. The zoologist, startled by a terrific scream from above, rushed to his material was abandoned. senseless. As he bent over him he glanced under the bed.

"How did this thing get here?" he exclaimed, and pulling out the snake, flung it to the center of the room, where it lay without motion

It was a stuffed snake; Its eyes were two shoebuttons.

How time flies from the date on which a man distinguishes bimself!

Will you have the easy chair by an open window. Then CHINESE ARE THRIFTY FELLOWS Start in Ensiness on Borrowed Capital and Always Repay the Loans

'In some respects the much-abused face was an expression of mingled Chinamen," said Hong Sing Long, one amusement and indecision. And this of the interpreters and general agents amused indecision remained with him of the Chinese Six Companies, to a Star and even appeared in his voice until reporter, "are way in advance of the ordinary workingman, and particularly tion. But when they returned, late in so in regard to their Ready Money As-

Hong Sing Long spends most of his time in New York, though he visits Washington several times each year. He is an educated Chinaman and has had the advantage of several years at

"With the exception of one, all of the ments better myself. Miss Willie told Chinese laundry places in this city are me she wanted to plant trees along her the result of the Ready Money associations; that is, the money necessary to Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont, recently Mrs. Money. The plan is not unlike the could be induced to do the same. Are building associations, which I am told ter. you sure the place can be bought?" have quite a clientele here, and which were originally started in Philadelphia. The Chinese plan is to start Ready Moneys as often as a party of Chines find they have any surplus money on hand, the idea being to keep the money moving along. It is the custom of the laundry boys, for Chinamen always speak of each other as boys, to gather itely obliged. And I'll make it worth about on Monday, that being their off day, and gossip. All who have spare money put it in a pool and authorize some one to keep it personally as a deposit in a bank. As soon as the pool gets any size the word goes out and it is sold to the largest bidder, if there is more than one applicant for l

"As a general thing there is but one applicant and he gets it, at a rate of interest agreed upon. It starts him in business and in a few weeks he begins paying back. Now and then there is no demand for the money. It then goes to the cities where it is needed. Just now the Chinamen are starting laundries in a number of small towns of the South, and my errand here now is to get some of the Ready Money funds to be advanced for that purpos

"Safe! Perfectly safe. The civilization of the Chinese is no new thing. It is 5,000 years old. They have found out that honesty is the best policy; not on account of the moral or religious question involved as you understand it, but on account of the business proposition involved. Honesty is best because it pays, as for many other reasons. In business dealings Chinese are very strict, much more strict than any other

people "The Chinaman knows that if he borfrom any man she had ever met-so rows he must pay back, and that the energetic and impulsive and chivalrous, consequences of not doing so are very She could not help liking him, and she serious, much more serious than it is could not withstand his impetuosity with Americans or Europeans. He any more than the reeds of the river knows this before he gets the money could withstand the current in spring- and does not take it unless he means to She offered objections to the pay back. The man who acts as secrebuilding of the bridge and he overruled stary of the Ready Money is also the them in a single impetuous speech. She treasurer. He takes pretty good care to did not like the idea of assuming all give a good account of his stewardship, the expenses of improving the river, for his happiness depends upon his conbut did not dare expostulate for fear of duct. The Chinese Ready Moneys frethe quizzleal look which she knew quently close up in a week, though crwould come into his merry eyes. In- dinarily they last longer. Each transside of a month she began to feel that action is a separate one. A man may he was as much at home on her planta- be a member of a dozen or have all of

"The great advantage of the Ready And, indeed, she did not want to. In Money is that it gives everyone who the fall their engagement was definite- wants it money to open up business for ity is needed except a promise to pay. A few weeks before the marriage he The payment never falls, except for Smith, and a few to William Hamilton run. When your civilization is 5,000 years old, you will know more than you "It isn't well to keep papers," he do now, and will understand things that

Big Cotton Presses.

Of the many cotton presses which were in operation in New Orleans sixty years ago the two principal ones were the Levee cotton press and the Orleans cotton press. They were large and massive buildings, each occupying, like most of the others, a square of ground. The Levee cotton press was built in 1832 by a company bearing the same name at a cost of \$500,000, and was two stories high. It compressed some 200. 000 bales of cotton a year. The Orleans press, also fronting on the river, occupied an area of 632 feet by 368, the building nearly covering the whole space. This press, which was begun in 1833 and completed in 1835, cost over \$753,000, compressed about 150,000 bales per annum, and could store 25,000 bales of cotton. Its laumense length gave it a very imposing appearance

from the river. Alligators Twenty Feet Long. Alligators were formerly one of tha seemed an occasion when discretion chief animal life tenants of Red River of and the bayous of Louisiana, where, before steamboat navigation came to into disturb the reptile; but instead of the terrupt them, they could be seen by Schell were there as referees. One of movement his will had shaped, his hundreds huddled tegether on the banks the young men, however, had a more or massed on the floating or stationary logs-especially of Red River-waking the solitudes of the forest with their bull-like bellowing. Their length was generally between eight and twelve feet, although they sometimes grew to be twenty feet long. Their hides become his wife. For four hours the were once used extensively for the wood-chopping went on; the girls got making of shoes, but the leather, not red in the face; they rolled up their proving of sufficiently close texture to keep water out, shoemaking from this

Likes and Dislikes of Birds. It is said that birds are nearly as sensitive in their likes and dislikes as dogs. Some people can never gain the friendship of a caged bird. A bird has to learn by experience that it is safe with a human being before it will respond to kind treatment

No man ever disappeared that some one did not invent a woman story on



GOTHAM SOCIETY QUEEN.

RS. WILLIAM C. WHITNEY cant throne of queen of Gotham's society. Such at least seems to be are familiar with fashionable intelligence. Since the decline and fall of Mrs. William Astor Gotham society has been queenless. It was thought for a time that young Mrs. John Jacob Astor would be elevated, but the fact that she is a Philadelphian ruined her hopes. start them came from the Ready W. K. Vanderbilt, aspired and was crushed. She will live abroad hereaf-Mrs. Cornelius Vondervilt cannot



MRS. WILLIAM C. WHITNEY.

assume the headship of the butterflies on account of her husband's illness, Mr. Whitney's new wife is just the lady for the crown. She is 36, entrancingly beautiful, and as the wife of Captain Randolph had entree to the very best drawing rooms of aristocratic England She is eminently fitted for leader of the smart set by reason of her wealth, famlly and experience. As mistress of the big Whitney mansion at the corner of Fifth avenue and Fifty-seventh street she will be brilliant.

Chop Wood for a Husband.

There was a novel wood-cutting contest in the Seventh Ward of Williamsport, Pa., the other day, in which five young women took part. The girls are all employed in the Lycoming rubber factory, and, having a holiday, they turned their time to good account, besides settling a much-disputed question as to which was the most entitled to a husband. The girls are Res Mayers, Flora Mahl, Lillie Mahl, Lillie Dunlap, Belle Gouldy and Mary Russell, all pretty, vivacious young women, who earn their own living and make good wages in the rubber factory. In a banter the other day one of the girls proposed that they have a wood-chopping contest, and the one who proved



WOOD-CHOPPING MATCH.

the others, it was agreed, must wait Home Journal, two years before joining fortunes with her best beau.

The girls, each with a brand-new ax. bedecked with red, white and blue ribbons, marched into the back yard of Widow Hartman's home and made an assault on the woodpile. Widow Hartman is a helpless invalid, she having fallen and hurt herself quite badly last winter. Her daughter Lou works in the rubber factory, too, and she was one of the movers in the wood-cutting scheme, although she took no part in

Five loads of hemlock slab wood, cut to stove lengths, had been delivered at Widow Hartman's place the day before -the girls paying for it-so there was plenty of material for them on which to test their strength and skill. But the way the ribboned axes flew and tongues wagged was only equaled by the shower split sticks that gradually piled themselves up around each choppingblock William Baskins and Joseph direct interest in the contest than being judge, for one of the girls was his sweetheart, and, according to the compact, if she proved one of the losers in the contest he would be compelled to sleeves until their plump, pink arms were bared almost to the shoulders and whacked away at the hemlock blocks as though their lives instead of a husband depended upon it.

Finally 12 o'clock came, and at the end of that time there were five weary, perspiring girls and five big piles of nicely split hemlock wood for Widow Hartman. But for the life of them the referees could not decide between the sticks and counting them separately, with or without a jacket.

girls had cut exactly alike. The contest was declared a draw. And now will soon succeed to the va- all the marriageable young men of the seventh ward are casting their eyes with favor in the direction of these fair the understanding among those who young women who so gallantly demonstrated their ability to cut firewood.

> Danger in Mock Marriage Not a few giddy girls think it is a huge joke to participate in a mock marriage, yet such events have often led to serious embarrassments. Marriage is a matter too serious to be triffed with. Judges in the courts have frequently been called upon to dissolve the ties thus thoughtlessly entered into, sometimes, it is sad to relate, with the connivance of ministers of the gospel and magistrates who ought to know better than to play the part they do in these affairs. If a clergyman were to announce that a baptizing pool would be opened some evening, either in the church or elsewhere, and that he would perform the rite of baptism as a public entertainment on the fattest woman or the tallest man in the neighborhood. there would be no more sacrilege than there is in a mock wedding gotten up for a public show.

Place to Keep a Bicycle. An ingenious English woman has designed a cabinet for the bicycle in the form of a hall table and hatstand. This cabinet can be made of any wood and finished to suit any style or color. The sunken panels are filled in with Japanese leather paper, both in the doors and on each side of the mirror back. All the ordinary requirements of the en trance hall are supplied, but naturally the interior required a good deal of skillful arrangement to afford the greatest amount of accommodation with the least possible space. The flap in the cabinet above the opening doors is



CABINET FOR BICYCLE

hinged, to throw back, so that the bicycle can go in without any alteration of the handle bars. Then the floor is fitted with grooves and draws out altogether, to be used as a "home trainer," while in its proper place in the cabinet it serves to keep the bicycle in position. There is plenty of room inside for all the bicycle belongings, as well as the deaning apparatus.

How to Keep Wrinkles Away, A simple preventive against the appearance of wrinkles is this: Saturate soft towel in very hot water, wring it and apply it to the face, keeping it dry the face very gently. This must be done just before going to bed. When traveling, if the skin is very sensitive, do not bathe the face except at night and in the morning, and then throw a few drops of tincture of benzoni into herself to be the champion cutter the water, so that it may be made soft should be entitled to a husband, while and agreeable to the skin.-Ladies'

Grace Howe McKinley.



Niece of the President-elect, who will take a prominent part in Washington society during the next administration. Boston Post.

Waistcoats for Fair We-re-s Vests of cream lace over white satia wait two long years before she could are very dressy, and are particularly chic with the all black braided tailer made gown.

Pretty serviceable vest fronts are made of gay plaid silks or striped velvets. These are finished with the full pour, which is held in place by small enameled buttons.

For morning shopping excursion nothing is smarter than the bright little scarlet waistcoat of smooth cloth, buttoned high to the throat wit. dull gold

or old silver buttons. Any sort of excessive decoration is piles of wood cut by Miss Duniap and not considered too much for the little Miss Russell as to which was the larger, vest, which seems to be a necessary And, indeed, after raking over all the part of every gown, whether it is made