

TO-DAY.

Voices, with what mounting fire thou singest free hearts of old fashion, English storners of Spain sweeping the blue sea-way.

THE SICK NURSE.

In the dusky light of a fragrant and richly-adorned drawing-room two people were in animated conversation. One, a woman of fifty, handsome still, and with a toilet suggestive of much care and thought, was speaking not only with decision, but with positive anger.

"It is the most absurd thing I ever heard of," said the elder lady, with a scornful smile. "I really can not waste any more words upon it. You always were quixotic, Teresa, and this performance caps the climax. In nearly one and the same breath, you tell me you love him, and that you have refused him. Oh! it is too disappointing!"

"Well!" "Please let it drop—forget it." The tone was pleading, the voice sweet. "Forget it, indeed! Do you think I will allow you to oppose me in this style? Have I not daughters of my own, and cares enough of my own, without being longer burdened with one so obstinate and self-willed as you, Teresa?"

"I did not know—I mean—" said the young girl, deprecatingly. But she quickly interrupted. "Now, don't plead ignorance; don't tell me that you do not know my wishes, and did not mean to offend me."

"I really did not think of you at all." "Worse and worse! Well, this is plain speech. And whom do you think of—only yourself? Selfish child!—is this my reward for educating you, and allowing you every luxury, spending time and money on you as freely as on my own?"

"Aunt—Aunt Geraldine, please forgive me." The young voice faltered; the pink flush gave way to pallor; the brown eyes filled.

"No, Teresa; it's mockery to ask that; and I want you clearly to understand that this is to be no longer your home; you have exhausted my patience, and now the end has come. I have rented this house, and I am going abroad. Sibyl and Gladys are both delicate, and need the change."

the house with a sign. To be sure, it was a nice, neat little silver plate, with only "F. Gansevoort, M. D.," on it, but it drew too many poor people. On this particular afternoon Dr. Gansevoort had occasion to hunt up a book on the library shelves. It was an old one, and had been tucked out of sight. As he searched for it a strange sound met his ears—a sound as of some one sobbing.

This brought a very dejected-looking damsel to the threshold, who, finding Frank alone, immediately fell on his shoulder in a fresh burst of tears. This was all very nice, to be sure, and Frank had no sort of objection to support a weeping damsel, who, despite her tears, looked as pretty as a picture. But the grief was real, and that pained Frank.

"I did like him, Frank—I always used to care for him when he was nice. But he isn't nice any more. He's horribly fast, and I will not marry him just for his money, as aunt wants me to do, and I've told him so, and—and—" The handkerchief went up again.

"Tessie, dear, you are a foolish little thing. I don't uphold mother's unkindness; but you must remember that I love you if she doesn't." "Yes, dear Frank, you are always good to me."

"Well, then, why not put an end to all this bother and be my little wife?" "Oh, Frank, don't, please don't talk that way. You know we are cousins, and I've no idea of burdening you with any other relationship. You are very kind, but, all the same, that cannot be."

III. It is night in one of the great city hospitals, and all is silent but for the moans of those in pain and the mutterings of those in fever. Pacing slowly up and down the aisle of a ward full of white coats, on which are helpless sufferers, is a nurse whose duty it is to watch and wait upon those who require the little attentions they can not bestow upon themselves.

To one she gives a glass of water, another's pillow needs raising, and another demands soothing words. To all alike she yields cheerful compliance, stopping often merely to give a kind look or a little show of interest. The dim light falls upon her slim figure in its neat gown, and reveals the sweet and sympathetic face of a woman of mature years, more beautiful even than in its first bloom.

It is a face of rare charm, so contented, so placid, and yet so bright and cheerful. Evidently these poor sick people it is a boon just to gaze upon it. But just now she is called away; a physician wishes to speak to her—probably give his orders for the night. She hastens to the office where he is waiting.

"Well, then, I shall have to go, I suppose; but what is the nature of the case?" "An accident." "Can you supply my place here?" "Yes. We shall have to double the duties."

With the promptness of custom, no more questions were asked, and in a few moments Miss Stanton was on her way to Fifth avenue. As she rolled along in the darkness, with only the street lamps occasionally lighting it, her thoughts were as calm and cool as if she had been a belle to whom the triumphs of a ball-room were an old story; but she knew that she had need of all her courage and all her resources.

"I don't know yet—perhaps to Mrs. Russell—nor do I know what I shall do. I have no money, and I am so ignorant. Oh! if I had only studied as I ought to have done, I might then teach; but I will find some way of getting along," and she held her head more proudly still.

"Which you will do with all the ease in the world, dear Frank. And now I am going to pack, and will send you my trunks over to Mrs. Russell's, and tell Sibyl and Gladys I am sorry not to say good-bye, and aunt that I regret having displeased her, and—and—Oh, how happy I have been, and how foolish, and how foolish and—but—"

"I have you at last; that is all I want. Do you know, I have never loved any one else—never. You were quite right not to marry me: a deuce of a life you'd have led!"

IV. It is the fourteenth of February, and Dr. Gansevoort is mounting the stairs of a New York boarding-house. He has a patient on the top floor for whom he has a scientific interest, and as he enters the room, which he has at last reached, he looks with anxiety toward the dormer-window filled with flowers. The patient is standing there with a watering can and scissors, tending her plants. His anxiety is relieved when he sees the little tinge of color on his patient's face, and the glad bright glance she gives him.

"So you are better to-day?" he says, taking the offered hand and giving it a kindly pressure.

"Yes; I am getting quite strong again. I shall soon be able to resume my duties." "You need not be in haste to do that. By-the-by, do you know what day this is?"

"What! A valentine for me?" "Really, I don't know what you'll call it. Perhaps being such a business woman, you may regard it as a bill, a receipt for services rendered, etc., etc."

"You also accept the giver," said Frank, smiling, as he finished the sentence for her. "That is just what he wants, Teresa. I am a poor diplomatist, as you see, for I ought to have used much more circumspection; but I will send Leroy to do his own courting."

New York Station-house Scenes. Next to the tenement house in point of degradation, says the New York correspondent of the Troy Times, is the station-house. I called at one of these places lately and spent sufficient time to get a view of what may be called "station-house life."

"I had n't nary stamp, but I went into a Dutchman's and he put the bottle out, and before he knewed it I bummed a glassful and then he kicked me out, but I didn't care." A general hum of applause followed the narration of this exploit, and then another mentioned to the company that he had a dime in his pocket and added: "To-morrow I'll have a good drink; that's the breakfast for me. I don't want any breakfast, but a good horn."

A Sea Grass for Bread. On the west coast of England grows a sort of sea grass which is made into something very like bread. In the main it is gathered by women; they then wash it and pluck all other plants carefully from it. After this it is boiled for some two hours; then the mass is cut in pieces with knives, and kneaded into loaves.

Our efficiency depends so much on our concentration that nature usually in the instances where a marked man is sent into the world, overloads him with bias, sacrificing his symmetry to his working power.

THE WHEAT PRODUCTION. Wheat Produced and Consumed Since 1867—Interesting Figures.

In an article on the production and consumption of wheat since 1867, a writer in the New York Tribune says: It happens that about July 1, 1867, the supply of wheat was reduced exceedingly low. And again, the exhaustion of stocks was relatively still greater about July 1, 1867, because of the partial failure of crops the year before in this and other countries.

Table with 4 columns: Years, Acres, Wheat crop, bush., Exported bush. Rows range from 1867-8 to 1883-4.

According to the best information that can possibly be obtained, there were raised in these fifteen years 4,735,307,367 bushels of wheat, and there were exported in the same years, from the point of great exhaustion of stocks, July 1, 1867, to the later point of great exhaustion of stocks, July 1, 1883, 1,263,239,755 bushels.

The consumption depends partly upon the acreage sown during the year following that in which the crop is grown. The aggregate acreage sown in fifteen years after July 1, 1867, which includes the acreage for the crops of 1868-1883 inclusive, was 405,162,589. Formerly it was supposed that an average of one and five-eighths bushels was used for seed to the acre; later the statistician of the department of agriculture ascertained that one and one-half bushels would be more nearly correct, and more thorough investigation showed that 1.39 bushels were used for the crop of 1883 and 1.377 for the crop of 1884.

The yield of 1883 is now officially reported as 420,154,500 bushels. This, with the stock carried over, makes an available supply of 486,031,655 bushels. The population July 1, 1883, calculated upon the basis above explained, was 55,325,979, and the increase in six months, at the rate of two per cent. yearly, was 553,259, while the emigration from July 1 to January 1 was 238,351. This would give a population January 1, 1884, of 56,117,589, which may be assumed as the mean population for the current consuming year.

Pre-historic Sharks. "What was the largest fish of the ancient seas?" asked a reporter of a New York geologist. "The sharks were probably the largest," was the reply. "Here is a tooth," taking one from a drawer. "You see it is almost as large as the palm of your hand; in other respects it is similar to those of the existing genera of sharks. It has the same serrated edges and the fine polish. Now, if you take the jaw, as I have done, of an existing shark, and arrange those gigantic fossil teeth similarly, you have a mouth large enough to drive a horse and cart in, and the length of the animal, if proportioned like our sharks of to-day, must have been considerably over 130 feet. Fine specimens of these teeth can be seen in the halls of the Philadelphia academy of science. Probably the finest collection in the country is owned by Professor Holmes, in Charleston, S. C. This is the best locality for them, the beds there being great burying grounds for the creatures of this lost age."