

THE STORY OF MY WEDDING RING.

The inn at Louisa, Va., was a disagreeable place. The odor of cabbage and dampness and dirt were insupportable, and so I decided to push on to Danvers. The only vehicle I could procure was a rattling two-seated gig, drawn by a bony white horse of doubtful ability; but as my destination was only three hours away, and I was not liable to meet any one on the lonely road, I started off cheerfully enough, resolved to enjoy my solitary drive to the utmost.

The moonlight, as it glinted on the soft green of the hedges, and streaked the gray of the dusty road, was very beautiful, and before half a league had been passed over I heartily congratulated myself upon my good fortune in escaping the horrible inn at Louisa.

After an hour's drive, and a delightful ride I came to a cross roads where with difficulty I deciphered the battered signpost and learned I must turn to the left to reach Danvers. So, clucking up my deliberate steed, which proceeded in a half dignified, half protesting fashion, I turned into a grassy lane between two tall hedges and drove through a lonely district until the dreamy influence of night overcame me, and I drifted into a somnolent state midway between sleep and waking.

I was aroused by the sudden halting of my horse, that gave a frightened snort and planted both front feet firmly before him.

A subdued sobbing, as of a woman in distress, fell upon my ears, and leaning forward I peered into the moonlight to discover whence it came.

A high brick wall ran close to the roadway, covered with ivy and lichens, and leaning against an angle of this, a few steps before me, was a slight girlish form, draped in a dark mantle.

I sprang to the ground and softly approached her. Her face was buried in her hands and she sobbed bitterly.

"Mademoiselle," I said, speaking in French, "you are in trouble. Can I assist you in any way?"

She lifted her head, and the moonlight fell upon the most beautiful face I have ever seen. Absolutely faultless in feature, it was surrounded by a crown of yellow hair that shone like gold in the glare of the moonbeams, while a pair of deep violet eyes that even tears could not dim looked earnestly into mine.

"Who are you?" I asked gently, "and why are you here?"

"I am Amelie de Boursous, monsieur, and I reside at the chateau just within these gates."

The soft, musical notes of her voice added to the powerful impression her exquisite beauty had already produced upon my heart.

"But it is late," I continued; "surely some great misfortune must have befallen you to bring you here at this hour."

"It is true, monsieur," she replied, struggling with a new paroxysm of grief; "to-morrow is my wedding day. The tone of despair in which these words were uttered startled me."

"But is that so terrible an event?" I asked.

"If you but knew, monsieur," she said, "how vile and brutal is the man they are forcing me to marry, you would willingly save me from my horrible fate."

She accompanied these words with an appealing look into my face, and then she dropped her head and sobbed anew.

I did not stop to reason upon the strangeness of all this. I was a young, generous-hearted man in those days, and could not resist this appeal from beauty in distress.

"But, tell me," I said, "how can I save you from this distasteful marriage? Do you wish to fly? I have a conveyance close by, and will gladly escort you to a place of safety."

"To fly would avail me nothing," she answered with a sweet sadness; "they would follow us and force me to return."

"But how else can I save you?" I asked, helplessly.

"I do not know," she replied, with a sudden calmness that surprised me. "But unless you can find some way to succor me I shall take my own life."

There was no doubt, from the expression of her low, earnest voice, that she meant this, and, filled with consternation at the thought, I racked my brain for some way to preserve both her life and happiness.

At last an idea came to me, but I trembled at my own presumption as I suggested it.

"Mademoiselle," I said, haltingly, "I see but one alternative. You must marry me."

The violet eyes opened wide in surprise. "Marry you, monsieur?"

"Then pursuit would be useless. Being my wife, you would escape this villain who insists upon wedding you. I am free and able to give you all that would add to your happiness. I shall learn to love you very dearly. It is true that I am a stranger to you, but I assure you that I am in all ways worthy to seek both your heart and your hand."

She gazed with earnestness into my face for a moment, and then replied slowly:

"I think I shall trust you, monsieur. Indeed, I cannot help myself. I will be your wife."

There was no coyness in her answer, no blush tinted the pale, beautiful face; simple dignity that commanded my respect and admiration.

"Then come," I said, eagerly; "we must lose no time. It will be midnight before we can hope to reach Danvers."

"Not Danvers," she replied, springing back as I sought to take her hand; "let us go to Trezone; there is a lady's party there who will marry us, and we are far safer from pursuit."

"Very well," I answered, "let us be off."

Refusing my proffered assistance, Mlle. de Boursous walked to the carriage and sprang lightly to the back seat. Rather awkwardly I took my place in front, gathered up the reins and drove off as swiftly as I could induce the ancient steed to move.

Mademoiselle drew her mantle closely over her head and shoulders, and but once during the long drive did she speak. Then it was to direct me to the Trezone road.

With ample time for reflection, my adventure now began to seem rather queer and uncanny, and by the time we discovered the lights of Trezone twinkling before us I had come to doubt the perfect wisdom of my present course.

But it was too late to draw back now—and the girl was very beautiful.

eyes regarded me with the same sweet expression I had noted in my bride of the previous evening.

"It is Amelie de Boursous," said the notary, in a gentle voice. "I have seen this picture often, and heard the girl's pitiful story, and that is why I knew her last night to be a mere phantom. Her father was a stern, hard man, who insisted upon her marrying a person utterly distasteful to the young girl. She tried to escape, but was captured and brought home to confront her fate. On the wedding morning they found her dead. She had taken her own life. That was forty years ago, monsieur."

As we left the room I glanced curiously at the ruby that sparkled on my finger.

It is the only evidence I have ever possessed of my phantom bride—St. Louis Globe Democrat.

VARIATIONS IN ACORNS.

No Two Seeds Nor Even Two Leaves Exactly Alike.

It is said that in individual trees scarcely two leaves can be found exactly alike. What is true of leaves is true of seeds, and, indeed, of every part of a tree. It is also true of the behavior of trees during their life career. In acorns especially one may note a remarkable difference in their behavior. Some species of acorn will preserve their vital power without much difficulty for a couple of years, while others can rarely be found with life after a few months. Some acorns put into the earth will remain months before sprouting, while others will sprout before they are fairly out of their cups on the trees.

The acorns of the live oak of the South often sprout before they fall. The process of germinating is among the most remarkable of all American trees. The root puts out from the acorn to a distance of many inches before it enters the ground, the root then goes into the earth while the bud or plumule ascends to form the incipient tree trunk. The young tree of the live oak will frequently be a distance of six inches from the acorn. In this respect the behavior of this species of oak corresponds nearly with what is almost universal in monocotyledonous seeds.

Another early sprouter is the common white oak. These have not been known to sprout on the tree, but they scarcely reach the ground before the little radicle prepares to enter the earth. It does not wait to get to the surface of the earth before doing this.

THE HAND WAS AS COLD AS ICE.

On shelves or boxes where there is some number of them together, the whole will be a mass of roots before a few weeks after gathering. On the other hand the nut of the burr oak will remain a long time before showing any disposition to sprout. It is these varying characteristics which make rules for the transportation of seeds difficult, each kind has to be a method of its own. So far as the two oaks are concerned, it has been found better to send young plants long distances than the acorns themselves—Mechan's Monthly.

Lafayette's Courtesie to a Woman.

The visit of Lafayette to America, as the nation's guest, is graphically recalled in the Ladies' Home Journal, by Jean Fraley Hollowell, who writes of "When Lafayette Rode Into Philadelphia," one of a notable series of articles on "Great Personal Events." The welcome given Lafayette in Philadelphia is said to have exceeded in its warmth and enthusiasm that extended to the distinguished visitor in any other city. In connection with his riding into Philadelphia, the central figure of a resplendent pageant, an interesting incident is thus recalled: "Lafayette's barouche was passing, on 11th street, the house where dwelt the widow of Robert Morris, financier of the revolution, a sister of the revered Bishop White. Mrs. Morris was at her window, and, recognizing her after many years, Lafayette rose up in his carriage and bowed to her. The spontaneous was instantly discerned by the thousands congregated at this point, and it seemed as if the people would go mad with enthusiasm. The recognition of Mrs. Morris seemed to set them aflame. Even Lafayette appeared surprised that the simple act should evoke such a wave of fraternal buzzes. Shout after shout rent the air; women vied with men in their efforts to show to Lafayette that his graceful act touched them; the great was the furor that the hero had to rise again and again in his carriage, and it was several minutes before the wonderful enthusiasm had abated. But if the applause subsided at the special point where it had been wafted into a flame, it was rekindled again and again, and carried along the entire route of the march. By a simple act he had aroused the people, and the fruits of it remained with him all through his visit in the Quaker City."

Confidence the Keynote to Success.

"Doubt and unbelief mean destruction to any business, and a man who loses confidence in his own affairs finds failure awaiting him in a short time," writes Evangelist Moody in his Bible Class in the Ladies' Home Journal. "Uncertainty disqualifies for work and usefulness and doubt that caused the recent state of depression in our business interests. Financial and economic difficulties differed in their effects regarding the political causes of this feeling of insecurity, but they generally agreed in directly attributing the reverses to the lack of assurance in business circles. Confidence is essential to success in every part of life. In this sense a safe truth is no less evident in spiritual things than it is in temporal affairs. The only Christian life that is useful to the church of God and to fellowmen is the one which is assured of its own salvation. Distrust and unbelief mean sadness and care to our souls; but joy and rest come with the certain knowledge of forgiveness and favor with God."

THE SAD MISHAP.

Walter had a fine large dog, And a gentle dog was he, But Walter was bad, So the tale is sad, As you will presently see.

One day he climbed on Fowler's back, Climbed like a sailor true, He pursued up his hip, Then lashed his whip, And over the ground they flew.

But Fowler spied a spotted cat, Perched on a high board fence, So with eager eye, And a panting sigh, He turned his heels thence.

He bounded over the fence so high, With one gigantic stride, But Walter, that day, We're sorry to say, Remained on the other side.

—San Francisco Examiner.

Guess Who!

There is an old woman, pray, can you With such a bad temper name her a shrew. She frets and she scolds, and she storms And she shrieks, and she crows, and she howls, And never old woman had so many freaks, She'll smile and she coo, and she purrs, and she coos, And then she'll turn round—faster than a cat— And many good people had rather leave home Than stay when this sorry old woman will come! Her children behold her with terror and dread, And hardly dare peep from their warm, cozy bed, Though brave little Golden-Locks, hardy and bright, Sometimes ventures out for a taste of night!

Yet such a rare housekeeper never was known to sweep the wide earth, every corner and zone; And this queer old woman, so hated and feared, Most beautiful children has nurtured and reared. She carefully hides them away out of sight, And keeps them by daytime, and guards them by night; She cradles them gently on earth's tender breast, And lulls them with breezes from south and west, Until their sweet beauty is ripe for display.

When two charming maidens, young April and May, Call out the dear children to play in the day, And then claim the work the old woman has done!

—Youths' Companion.

Diary of a Busy Kitten.

A little girl is responsible for the following entries in her diary:

7 a. m.—Got up and took a little exercise before breakfast. Mistress' work-basket was on the mantelpiece. Didn't think it was in proper order, so tried to set it to rights, but didn't succeed somehow. The whole thing tumbled to the floor and the thread got all tangled around the chair legs. Gave it up as a bad job.

9 a. m.—Got hungry. Tired waiting for the folks to come down, so helped myself to Time for my nap. Found a comfortable place on top of a large clock. Moved the big vase that stood on top of it out of my way. It fell to the floor and made a terrible racket. Had a fine nap.

2 p. m.—Slept till way past dinner time. They would not give me a bite, so had to find a mouse.

3 p. m.—Succeeded; a fine, fat fellow made me feel good.

4 p. m.—Saw my mother asleep in the sun. Climbed up in a tree and jumped down on her just for fun. She didn't take it that way. Had to run and stay hidden for a long time.

6 p. m.—Saw a bird in the cherry tree that looked as if it had been working for my supper. Got him.

8 p. m.—Happy at last on this delightful roof. Shall sit here and sing all night long. M-a-o-w!—San Francisco Call.

Timid as a Rabbit.

It isn't always safe to count on the timidity of a creature that is proverbially timid. Jack, a big, white, lop-eared rabbit, with pink eyes, was one of these exceptions.

Jack was one of the biggest members of his family, and when he didn't want to be picked up by his long ears he would scold and kick and jerk until it took a firm hold to keep him from getting away. At other times he was as gentle as a kitten.

Above everything, Jack hated dogs, and when his anger was worked up he would lay back his long ears and run in a white streak straight at the prowler. Just before he reached the dog he would spring into the ground and land all four feet into the dog's side. No dog ever stood that charge. Doubtless they thought that a rabbit wouldn't do such a courageous thing, and when the rabbit did it they must have thought it some strange animal which they didn't know how to fight.

Jack couldn't have hurt them, of course, but he wasn't afraid to try, and it was just that which won him all his battles. Some dogs in the neighbor-

A Hint Too Late for Mary.

Whenever little Johnny, who is naughty sometimes, is afraid he is going to get a whipping he hides under the bed. He has great confidence in this trick of his.

One day he went to visit his auntie, and in looking around he came to the picture of Mary Queen of Scots being beheaded.

"What's that, Auntie?" he asked.

"That," said Auntie, "is Mary Queen of Scots, and they're going to chop her head off."

"Oh, why does she let them do that?" asked Johnny. "Why doesn't she hide under the bed?"—Evening World.

The Split Wafer.

A man who now stands high in the mercantile community related to me the following little incident of his early life:

At the age of 16 I entered the store of Sturdevant as a clerk. One day, shortly after my installment into the office, I was employed in sealing and superscribing a lot of business circulars—several hundred of them. That was long before the day of gluten, and I used small red wafers for securing the missives. While I was thus busy Mr. Sturdevant came into the counting room; and when I observed that he was watching me I worked the best I could, hoping to get a word of approbation. By and by he spoke to me: "Young man, don't you think half a wafer would secure one of those circulars just as well as a whole one?"

I looked up, probably exhibiting as much disgust as surprise.

"If you split your wafers," he added, "you will accomplish all you desire, and at the same time make a saving of just one-half."

He turned away; and while I was thinking what a mean old wafer-splitter he was, a lady entered who had been appointed one of a committee to obtain subscriptions towards building an orphan asylum. One public-spirited man had given the land, and now they wished to raise \$200,000, if possible, for the buildings and necessary endowments. Mr. Sturdevant said he had already been consulted on the subject.

"Yes," thought I, "and I guess that's all it will amount to!"

But he took the paper and wrote his name, and then he said:

"I will give \$5,000."

I could hardly believe my ears. At that moment the merchant arose to a stature of grandeur before me, and in my heart I blessed him; for even then I knew that the lesson of the split wafer, with its sequel, was to be the initial of my future success.

Changed His Tone.

Visitor (gruffly)—Are you the editor? Editor (without looking up from his work)—I am.

Stranger (more gruffly)—Do you hold yourself responsible for everything appearing in the paper?

Editor (rising to his six feet three inches)—I do. What's on your mind?

Visitor (meekly)—Oh, nothing at all. I assure you, I was under the impression that the little man over in the corner took all the responsibility—Spare Moments.

Quite Impossible.

When they met again she tried to be very cold and distant. "Move up forward, there," shouted the conductor. It was easy to be very cold in a cable car, but as for being distant, especially at certain hours of the day, that was another story.—Truth.

People never know that they had anything to lose by marriage until they are married.

GOD IN THE INAUGURALS.

Reference to a Supreme Being by All the Presidents Save One.

God has been invoked in every Presidential inaugural address save one. In some instances the invocation has been made in the beginning of the address, and in nearly all divine guidance has been invoked in the last words.

President McKinley happened to invoke "the guidance of Almighty God." In fact, the first paragraph of his inaugural is sufficiently reverential to satisfy the most exacting. The inaugural closes with a petition to the "Lord Most High," an appellation which no former President used on a similar occasion.

Washington's first inaugural, in its opening, was full of mention of the "Almighty Being," "Great Author" and "Smiles of Heaven." "Providence" was invoked in the last paragraph. In his second inaugural there was no reference to God.

John Adams acknowledged an "Overruling Providence" in the beginning of his inaugural, and in the close of the address references were made to the "Being Supreme Over All," "Patron of Order," "Fountain of Justice" and "Protector of Virtuous Liberty."

Thomas Jefferson called upon "That Infinite Power" in the last section of his inaugural, and supplicated "That Being" in his second address. The second address also contained the word "Creator," referring to God, and there was some "allusion" touching on Christian religion.

James Madison acknowledged the "Almighty Being" in the last paragraph of his first inaugural, and the "Smiles of Heaven" in the first paragraph of his second.

James Monroe, in the beginning of his inaugural, acknowledged that the "Almighty" had been graciously pleased, etc., and in the close of his second inaugural he spoke of the "Supreme Author" and "Almighty God."

John Quincy Adams referred to being in the "presence of heaven" in the opening of his inaugural, and in the close he quoted the text, "If the Lord keepeth not the city the watchman waketh in vain."

Andrew Jackson in his first address invoked "That Power" and in closing asked "His divine care and benediction." In his second inaugural he made a "most fervent prayer to that Almighty Being."

Martin Van Buren, in the first of his inaugural, "hoped for the sustaining support of an ever-watchful and beneficent power," and in closing he "looked to God, Divine Being."

William Henry Harrison's inaugural was the most voluminous yet delivered. It was made up of more than 8,000 words. The "Beneficent Creator" was mentioned once, and "That Good Being" twice.

John Tyler, who succeeded Harrison a few weeks later, printed his inaugural in the newspapers. He "looked to an all-wise and all-powerful being who made me," and "trusted in the ever-watchful and ever-ruling Providence."

James K. Polk invoked the "Almighty Ruler of the Universe," and supplicated the "Divine Being."

Zachary Taylor, in the last words of his inaugural, invoked "Divine Providence."

Millard Fillmore, who succeeded him a little later, spoke in a brief address of "Him who holds us in His hands."

Franklin Pierce put his "dependence upon God," and asked the blessings of "Divine Providence."

James Buchanan asked for the aid of "the God of our forefathers" twice in the same inaugural.

Abraham Lincoln acknowledged a "firm reliance on him" in his first inaugural. This is the only reference to a supreme being in that address. But nearly one-half of his second inaugural is a sermon.

Andrew Johnson mentioned God once in his short inaugural, but not by way of invocation.

Grant mentioned "Providence" and "Almighty God" once in his first, and the "Great Maker" in his second inaugural, but not in supplication.

Mr. Hayes asked the "guidance of the divine hand."

Garfield mentioned "Almighty God" once in his inaugural. They are the last words.

Arthur, in succeeding President Garfield, asked in his brief address for "aid and divine guidance."

Cleveland, in his first inaugural, acknowledged the "power and goodness of Almighty God."

Benjamin Harrison "reverentially" invoked "Almighty God for strength."

There was no invocation in the closing, but the word God is used once in the address after acknowledgment.

Cleveland, in his second inaugural, invoked a "Divine Ruler."—New York Sun.

Second-Hand Silver in White House.

It seems that when the Executive Mansion was again occupied by Mr. Monroe, after its destruction, the United States purchased at an appraisal its private furniture, and with it a "small service of plate," writes President Harrison in the Ladies' Home Journal. "In 1833 the most important purchase of silver plate was made for the Executive Mansion, and at second hand. The pieces constituted the outfit of a Russian nobleman—M. le General Baron de Turyl, who had been the Minister Resident of Russia at the Court of Portugal. The total cost was \$4,208. The silver service consisted of 328 pieces, and there was a gold-plated dessert set of spoons, knives, forks, etc., consisting of 140 pieces. These 'gold spoons' were particularly active in the campaign of 1840. Much of this old silver is still in use—and a piece or two has been added now and then; but the White House plate is now merged compared with that to be found in the home of many a private citizen who, at the time it was bought, was playing in his bare feet about the cabin door of a pioneer. The silver service recently presented by the citizens of Indiana to the battleship of the same cost \$7,785.10—much more than the service used in the White House."

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