TO A BELLE.

Full well you know your beauty's power:
You count your lovers by the score,
Accept their homage for an hour,
Then turn indifferent as before.

Yet not unmoved your heart the while
You're seeking for a worthy mate:
A handsome form, a radiant smile
Half tempt you from your maiden state.

I, looking on, with wonder see
How oft you notice and admire
These knights of modern chivalry—
Their gallant mien, their youthful fire.

To me their gifts seem poor and slight,
Remembering Arthur's noble face,
His clustering hair, his glances bright,
His form replete with manly grace.

My thoughts with bitter memories burn.
I wish good fortune to your quest:
But howso'er your fate may turn
I know that you have missed the best.
—Kate Field's Washington.

MY FRIEND'S STORY.

"It's a very strange story," he said, "a very strange story—one I have dared tell to very few persons, and yet if you insist I will give it you."

I had insisted and besought by turns for half an hour and this concession of his was the outcome of a series of strategic movements on my part that would have done honor to a Parisian detective.

"Well, then," I said, "I insist. Go on with your story, and if any pledge of secrecy is in order, just say so and I'll hold up my hands."

"I don't enjoin secrecy," he answered slowly. "The story is not one you would care to repeat."

"Oh, very well, very well," I bantered, with a mighty affectation of a flippancy I did not feel. "I can close my mouth as tight as any one you know. But to the story. Your wife, you said, died a year ago?"

"I said nothing of the kind," he replied emphatically. "I told you I lost her a year ago." Then he rose and, crossing the room, emptied the ashes from his pipe into the fireplace and helped himself to another round of tobacco. As he stood for a moment silhouetted against the flaring coals in the grate, silent, calm, serene, it burst upon me suddenly that the silence and serenity which in him I had long regarded as most offensive and unpardonable were nothing other than the dignity of sorrow, and I felt ashamed of myself; not the first time, perhaps, that I have had the same feeling, but never mind that now. At last, having lighted the new pipeful, he turned and said simply:

"You insist?"

By this time I realized that I was in for it whatever it might be, and I answered promptly, "Yes."

And then, still leaning on the chimney-piece, he began in a hesitating way:

"As you already know, Gladys and I were married a trifle over thirteen months ago. I loved her madly, and she, poor girl, was all a wife should be or could be. We were very happy together; no clouds ever darkened the clear heaven of our mutual love, nor troubles for a moment disturbed our peace and happiness. Previous to departing on our wedding trip I had leased a suite of rooms in a large uptown flat—you know the place—and when we returned after a short tour those rooms became our home and our paradise. So things ran on for nearly two months, and then—then came the end—the end."

Here he paused, and turning away from me looked into the hissing, spluttering little fire a moment. Somehow I did not feel like breaking the silence—I realized that he was not thinking of me then, and to speak would have been obtrusion if not sacrilege. At length, raising his head, he turned to me with apparent effort and as he did so I could see there were tears in his eyes.

"One evening," he went on, after I had begged him be seated and he had taken the big cushioned chair by the hearth, "one evening last February my wife and I spent with her mother and returned at a late hour to our apartments. The night was a bad one, and Gladys, poor little girl, was weary and exhausted when we reached home. Her bright eyes had a dull, leaden look, she was pale, complained of a headache and said strange things as if her mind were wandering for the moment, and I recommended that she retire at once and sleep off the ill effects of her overexertion. She was very loath to take my advice for some reason or other, and when I had lighted my pipe and drawn my armchair up to the table she came and knelt beside me and took my hand in hers.

"'John,' said she—ah, how well I remember her words, spoken in her piquant, half reproachful way—'John, you don't mean to send me away from you, do you?'

"'Yes, my dear,' I replied, rather petulantly. 'For your own sake I do. You need sleep and rest. I am perfectly safe here with my paper.'

"She rose and turned away, but had taken only a few steps when she returned and took my hand again.

"'You want me to leave you, John?'

"'Yes, yes, my dear; go to sleep and get a night's rest; it will do you more good than anything else under the sun.' Her caresses somehow made me feel strangely cold and nervous, and I spoke more harshly than I should have done had I stopped to think. She rose quickly and passed into our bed chamber beyond, and as the portieres closed behind her a feeling of unutterable loneliness overcame me, my heart beat hard and fast and I breathed with difficulty. It was all absurdity, of course, and when I had hesitated a bit and reasoned I quickly buried myself in my paper and tried to forget the occurrence. But every few moments the same strange unrest oppressed me, until I finally threw aside the paper, and rising paced the floor, trying to drive off the feeling before I retired for the night. Perhaps I had been pacing up and down for an hour, or it may have been but ten minutes—it don't matter how long it was—when my attention was suddenly arrested by a singular movement of the portieres at our bedroom doorway, and I stopped short, unable, afraid to move an inch. Slowly the heavy draperies moved as though someone was pushing them aside and passing through; then they closed as quietly as they had opened.

"The unaccountable thing filled me with terror, and I was about to spring forward and tear the curtains down when I was again transfixed by fear. The ponderous oaken door which led from our apartments into the public hallway swung slowly on its hinges, as if some one were going out. Then came a faint sound, like a woman sighing and the door closed and latched itself. Nothing had been visible but the moving of the curtains and the door, and yet my soul was filled with a nameless horror that I dared not dwell upon. Rousing myself I leaped forward, and tearing aside the portieres rushed to my wife's bedside. There she lay, her eyes closed and her pale face faintly illumined by the light that followed me through the doorway. I seized her hand and strove to awaken her, but she did not move. In an agony of terror, I bent my head and listened for the beating of her heart. Then clasping the limp form in my arms I pressed it to my bosom and called aloud her name:

"'Gladys, Gladys, my Gladys!'

"But there was no answer; she was gone."—George Percy Taggart in Journalist.

Meaning of "Snore."

"Snore," to breath hoarsely in sleep. The word means more. Its root is in the Teutonic "snar," which is the root of "snar," to growl. It also means to grumble. It is an expression of disgust.

An intimate acquaintance with Yankee idioms takes hold on the expression that is put forward at an unsavory report.

"Well, I snore!" which simply means that the hearer is disgusted and says he growls or snarls.

Another curious expression of that peculiar people is "I snum!"—simply a contraction of "I'm struck dumb." This latter has no connection with the subject in hand.

To snore, therefore, means much more than to make discordant noises in sleep.—Davenport Democrat.

Ghosts in India.

The dread of ghosts, so well known to all uncivilized and semiuncivilized countries, is common in the aborigines of India to an unusual degree; the same may be said of their Aryan conquerors and the lower classes of Mohammedans. All Indian ghosts are supposed to be mischievous, and some of them bitterly malicious. The only means employed to appease the rancor of these unlaid spirits is to build shrines for them and to make them offerings, such as a fowl, a pig, and on grand occasions a buffalo. Any severe illness, and more especially any epidemic disease, such as smallpox or cholera, is attributed to the malignancy of certain of these spirits, which must be propitiated accordingly.—St. Louis Republic.

The Reason was Plain.

Dubois—This is a strange case, isn't it? A wealthy man is found dead in his room. There is no wound, no sign of poison and not the slightest evidence of disease anywhere about him. But there he sat in his chair stone dead, one hand still holding the paper that he had been reading. I tell you it is one of the most mysterious things—

Bilgers—What did you say he was reading?

Dubois—One of the Sunday papers.

Bilgers—Oh, well, that explains the whole thing. It was a forty page edition probably, and when he looked at it his heart failed.—Boston Post.

Points About a Good Horse.

There are some points which are valuable in horses of every description. The head should be proportionately large and well set on; the lower jawbones should be sufficiently far apart to enable the head to form an angle with the neck, which gives it free motion and a graceful carriage and prevents it bearing too heavily on the hand. The eye should be large, a little prominent, and the eyelid fine and thin. The ear should be small and erect and quick in motion. The lopear indicates dullness and stubbornness; when too far back there is a disposition to mischief.—Rider and Driver.

Coins of Early Days.

The early Biblical references to pieces of silver do not in the original convey the idea of coins, but of weights, shekels. The Mosaic "oblation to God" was a half shekel, and the shekel is explained by Josephus as equal to four Athenian drachmas, of a value of about 55¼ cents in American money. The first Jewish coinage under authority was, it is believed, struck by Simon the Maccabee, about the year 140 B. C. It consisted of shekels and half shekels. This coinage had its value signified upon it, "Shekel Israel," in Samaritan characters. The trade of money lending at usury soon became a curse among the Jews. It was forbidden to be practiced "on thy brothers, who are poor," while it was more or less permitted against a stranger.—Brooklyn Eagle.