

THAT THERE BROWN.

The people who occupy the flat immediately beneath ours are great diners out; and as their dog is of a sociable disposition he commonly burrows under the doormat and howls until the return of his proprietors. But the howls now heard by myself and my wife were distinctly human, and proceeded from our culinary department at the passage end. Something must have happened to Loosha! We sprang from the dinner table, and made one bound to the kitchen door. With instinctive delicacy we listened a moment before bursting in. The entries never ceased, though at times they sounded strangely muffled. Had a burglar dropped in for a late afternoon visit? Was he garroting the too faithful creature who had refused to reveal the whereabouts of the plate basket? I grasped the soup ladle—which I had unconsciously retained—with nervous determination. We rushed in quietly.

There was no burglar. Only Loosha behind the scullery door, with her head wrapped up in a towel, was giving vent to bursts of emotion which might well have aroused the envy of the poodle down stairs. With compassion, slightly tempered with severity, we questioned the girl. She took some time to coax out of the chrysalis or pupa condition, but finally emerged from the folds of the towel and explained. Mother—who should have known better, having but a brief twelvemonth since interred her Second—was now receiving the addresses of a potential Third, himself a widower with nine incumbrances. In justice to the aspirant, we may mention that he was fairly well to do, being a retired joiner by the name of Mr. Brown. In Loosha's bitterest moments she deprived him of the prefix, calling him simply, and for short, "That There Brown."

The fell news had only just been brought by Loosha's little stepsister Emmeline, though Loosha had a preliminary warning in the way of creeps down her back whenever she had encountered the designing Mr. Brown for some time past. It had been a darning in her mind, she said, by degrees as there was something up; and this very afternoon he had upped and spoke, most barefaced, on the identical doorstep. Says he, "Mrs. Hemmums, I will not deceive you, that it was just through you dropping in in a friendly way to 'elp at the laying out of her as is gone (and her only buried eleven months) that my attention was in a manner of speaking drawn to you; and in a homely way, putting the thing plainly for your thinking over quiet by yourself, I will say you have three and me similarly nine, and both being unincumbered, why not make one extra large table out of your medium and my full sized?" Which table, Loosha parenthetically observed, would ultimately prove her deathbed.

We tried to soothe the aggrieved handmaid by every means in our power. Being within three days of Christmas day, and having proposed to entertain the representative members of our respective families—between whom, all the year round, great enmity exists—at a social dinner, the prospect before us was overshadowed by Loosha's grief. If matters came to a crisis she would as like as not take to her bed and remain there for two days. At the end of her period of sackcloth and ashes she would we knew by previous experience, reappear as fresh as paint and quite reconciled to the dispositions of fate. But in the meanwhile what would become of us? I tried to argue. I reminded Loosha that her mother was still young, active and industrious; and that one could not, while deploring the act of Mr. Brown, revile him for his choice of a successor to the departed; that that successor might be called, even now, a pretty woman; and that men would be men, no matter how foolish it was. I would have continued in this strain, but that Loosha became hysterical.

"She ain't young!" she screamed; "with me twenty-three, how could she? And she ain't pretty; or if she is she ought to be ashamed of herself! And both my father an Emmeline and Elfred's father would say if they were here! And if she does it—which at her time of life is a disgrace—I shall drown myself!"

Then she went into hysterics and drummed the floor with her heels and the back of a chair with her head in quite an alarming manner; and I was ordered out of the kitchen that she might be unfettered and the inevitable remedies applied. It took a whole gill of Tarragon vinegar and the best part of the tail feathers of our Christmas turkey to bring her to anything like composure.

That was three days before Christmas. We have got over the dinner and the meeting of the clans without any casualties other than those we were bound to expect. And Loosha is preternaturally bright, sharp, tight and brisk. As she goes about her work she sings, "Come Bny My Colored Errin" is a favorite vocal exercise with her. But it has been superseded by "Take Back the Art." And, from the piquantly expressive meaning Loosha infuses into the opening lines, it is plain that she applies them to Mr. Brown, whose addresses have been discouraged, and whose matrimonial plans have been circumvented, thanks to the prompt action, taken by Loosha in the matter. It may be mentioned that our handmaid's baptismal appellation was originally derived from a popular

novel, called "Loosha of Lam Her More," and read by mother at an important crisis. Mother is quite a literary person, having worked for several authors, one of whom was a political genius attached to a well known firm of soap-makers.

Loosha's mother, like many small, meek looking people, possesses a considerable amount of determination. If she really entertained a weakness for Mr. Brown, that weakness was not to be put down with the strong arm. Loosha realized that, she tells us, as she stood on the kitchen floor and met those black beady eyes, so like her own. True, she opened no parables, but dashed upon her subject in a way peculiarly distinctive. Emmeline and Elfred, seated on two chairs against the wall, paused in their consumption of bread and treacle on hearing themselves alluded as poor lambs and joined their lamentations to Sister Loosha's. The tumult raged high, though Mrs. Hemmums preserved a calm, even, stony demeanor. And in the middle of it all That There Brown knocked at the door.

No quick change artist ever effected a more wondrous transformation than did Loosha in that minute. Mrs. Hemmums had glided away to put her cap straight and smooth her sleek parting. In the interval between her disappearance and her return, Loosha and Mr. Brown had become quite friendly. Mr. Brown's manner was quite fatherly, and his features shone with smiles and gin and water. He had been screwing up his courage with that fortifying beverage. Loosha, as she sent the astonished Emmeline out for a quartern of the best and provided the visitor with a reliable chair, made up her mind that the doom of That There Brown, matrimonially speaking, was sealed. Mother, without knowing why, felt uncomfortable when the widowed joiner proposed taking the entire family (it was Loosha's day out to the World's fair, and Loosha warmly responded to the overture.

They took Emmeline and Elfred and the Islington bus, and That There Brown and Loosha occupied a garden chair sent together outside, mother and the children being stored in the interior of the vehicle. Brown was fatherly when they started; Portland Road found him affectionate. By the time they were launched amid the giddy delights of the fair, he was beginning to think—Deluded wretch! What matters it what he thought! It was deliberately done of Loosha, the betraying of That There Brown. He wandered with the mother and daughter, each on an arm, through a fairy land of mingled fog and gaslight. They visited the birds, the beasts and reptiles; and Loosha appealed to him for information as to their names, species and general habitat, and greeted every remark of his with admiring "Lors!" She never seemed to notice when he mixed up the Bactrian camel with the water buffalo.

She went upon the circular switch-back with him, mother being too timid to venture, and became nervous in the middle of the airy journey, clinging to the arm of the ravished widower with feminine squeals of terror. How enthralled she was by his performance on the try-your-strength machine, though the marker on the dial indicated nothing much in the way of a record. The more fascinating Loosha became the warmer and more perspiring became That There Brown. He nudged her frequently. All the sensation of his corporeal frame seemed to have taken up its abode in the elbow to which she hung.

Was it then that the miserable man uttered the words which sealed his fate? It may have been. All we know for certain is that those words once uttered, Loosha's manner became distant and off hand. That There Brown put it down to maiden coyness, and renewed the siege with redoubled rashness. It was when the Flying Demons were about to take their marvelous leap through space, and the popular attention was uniformly diverted to the ceiling, that Mrs. Hemmums—who was not without a consciousness that for a suitor trembling on the brink of acceptance Mr. Brown's conduct was, to say the least of it, inadequate—felt a tug at her shawl.

It came from the infant Emmeline, whose watchful eye, unchildlike in its keen appreciation of the situation, had detected the joiner's arm in the act of inclosing the figure of Loosha under the shadow of her head fringed mantle. After that the widow was taken faintish, and had to be revived with peppermint drops ere the company returned to Brompton. Mr. Brown was not invited in to tea, though he lingered long upon the doorstep. And when he had gone Loosha unhooked the vials of her contempt, and told her parent that she had been nursing an addick in her bosom, but, thank God, it was unmasked at last!

Next morning a procession of four started for the cemetery. Emmeline and Elfred walked in front, hand in hand and bearing votive garlands. In the presence of the headstone on which the virtues of her second were recorded, Mrs. Hemmums renewed her vows of faithful widowhood. On the way back the party encountered That There Brown.

"Mother just 'ung her 'ed," said Loosha afterward, "and walked by him without taking no more notice than if he was dirt. But he spread 'iself out over the path and serce, 'Don't you reckonize your friends, Mrs. Hemmums, mum, at this time o' day, after all as has been said between us? And then I pushes in, an he looks up and met my eye. I give

im a cold stare, and you might see 'im shrink, as if 'e knowed what was comin. 'Begging your pardon,' I says, 'but did you mean me or my mother?' 'Your mother,' says That There Brown, 'as I think and 'ope will make a good wife to me and mother to my nine children.' 'Which you was of a different opinion yesterday,' I sharp back on 'im, 'when you ast me to marry you at the World's fair. Per'aps you'd like to 'ave us both, as the Salt Lake City Morgans ain't too particular in that way, and you may belong to the English branch of the dinomagation.' 'You've been and raised a nornick's nest about my yeers, you cat!' says That There Brown, with a scowl. 'Maria,' and he looked imploring like at mother, 'the 'uman 'art is impulsive, especial when led away by gin and water. Overlook the accident and you won't have no reason to complain.' 'I could never 'ave no reliance on you, Mr. Brown,' says mother, with her eyes cast down and speakin as if she'd got pins in her mouth, 'after what has took place.' 'So make your mind up to it,' I says, 'as neither me nor my mother ain't going to be no wife to you nor your nine children, neither.' And he took and hooked it, did That There Brown."—St. James' Gazette.

A View of the Common Herd.

The society journal Vogue has as one of its correspondents an alleged member of the "Four Hundred," who writes as follows: "What is the attraction yearly at the horse show, which is always jammed to the doors? The horses? No. Society in the boxes, and the people cheerfully pay their money to be able to gaze at the beings so far removed from them, constituting an inner circle. It was this feeling which caused Broadway to be choked with a howling mob on the day of the wedding of Miss Bradley-Martin to the Earl of Craven, and it is this same impulse which prompts the crowds in the upper tiers at the opera and in the orchestra stalls to spend the time of the intermissions in gazing around the house at the fashionables as if they were waxwork from Mme. Tussaud's or the Eden Musee and following them up by aid of the little printed list on the bill, whereby each box owner is conveniently numbered and catalogued.

"We stand as royalty does abroad, and we are prepared for this homage. Those who cannot see us read of us, but unfortunately frequently through the medium of writers who commence their observations in the style of one who a few years ago started his paragraph in this way, 'I dropped in at Mrs. Astor's last night,' and evoked, consequently, the pungent reflection of Mr. Joseph Howard, Jr., a writer of the people, who evidently knew his man:

"'Dropped in at Mrs. Astor's! Good heavens! for what—the ash barrel!'"

Washington's Cabin.

There are few buildings that attract the admirers of Washington that have more of interest in them than a decaying cabin which stands alone in an old pasture field a half mile from Berryville, in the beautiful Shenandoah valley of Virginia.

The old cabin was the home of Washington when he was a surveyor. He came here direct from the maternal road to begin the arduous and at the time dangerous work of surveying the lands of Thomas, Lord Fairfax, who owned all the northern part of Virginia under the king's patent. The work was arduous because of the physical aspect of the country, then a dense wilderness, and dangerous because of the character of the inhabitants, who were principally Indians or scarcely less wild trappers or squatters upon his lordship's domain.

Washington had been selected by the nobleman because of his belief in the youth's ability to cope with these elements early in 1748, just after the completion of his sixteenth year, his only companion being George William Fairfax, nephew of old Lord Thomas.

Whether these boys erected the building or found it already in place history does not state, but well authenticated tradition says that they built it themselves. That they used it for an office, kept their instruments there and slept in the upper rooms there is ample proof.—Washington Post.

Cementing the Russian Empire.

The czar of Russia shows undoubted sagacity in adopting the best physical means to hold together his vast empire. He has pushed the transcasian military railway southward until it has almost reached the frontiers of British India and China, the two powers most likely to dispute with him the acquisition of further dominion in Central Asia. Having thus assured the safety of the Russian position in the southeast, he has undertaken a more stupendous work in beginning the construction of an unbroken line of railway to connect European Russia with a port on the Pacific ocean. The whole length of the Asiatic or main Siberian line is 4,800 miles.

The estimated cost is \$200,000,000. The work, which is now progressing from both ends toward the center, is to be completed in about 10 years. There will then be a stretch of railway, all located upon Russian territory, about 5,000 miles in length, holding European Russia and Asiatic Russia firmly together with a continuous band of steel. Until the proposed railway running north and south to connect the two Americas shall have been built there will be nothing on earth to rival this great stretch of eastern and western railway across the Russian empire.—Omaha Bee.

THE WIZARD'S FATHER.

Samuel Edison Is Hale and Hearty at the Age of Ninety.

Fathers of great men all remind us that we may acquire fame through our children, if not in our own proper persons. The father of Thomas A. Edison, the electrical wizard, furnishes the latest example of this kind. The old gentleman, whose name is Samuel Edison and who lives at Port Huron, Mich., when he is at home, has an ambition for record breaking. He might safely



SAMUEL EDISON.

rest on the laurels he won as a record breaker in 1847, when his son was born, but the particular record he is trying to smash now is that of his own father, who lived to be 103 years old, and as he is now 90 and hale and hearty it looks as if he were in a fair way to do it.

He recently traveled alone from Port Huron to his son's home at Menlo Park, N. J., and five years ago when in France walked the entire distance between Paris and Versailles. He thinks nothing of walking 10 miles today and gets angry if any one offers to assist him in any way and will not have it that he is old at all. In his younger days he was a great athlete, and when he was 60 years old he outjumped every man in the Twenty-second Michigan regiment. He tried to sustain his reputation as a jumper when he was 76 by springing from a train that did not stop at Menlo Park and was quite crestfallen because he got a little scratched.

The old gentleman is 6 feet 2 inches in height, brimming over with good humor, very boyish in disposition and fond of "giving" people. His son says his principal occupations are talking politics and playing jokes on people. He never invented anything, but with such a son he didn't have to.

Faster Trains to Come.

That the speed of passenger trains in this country is destined to rapidly increase in the near future seems certain. There is nothing in railroad building that renders such large and quick returns to the management as catering to the wants and desires of the traveling public. Nothing so fully exemplifies this as the immense change that has taken place in the past five years in the equipment of through express trains from the seaboard to the west and southwest.

The luxury and comfort that can today be obtained on one of the many limited trains passing over any of the great trunk lines is in strong contrast to what was furnished five or six years ago, and it would seem that there was not much room for further improvement in that direction. What the public are now seeking, and what will certainly be furnished, is fast time; and that this is appreciated by railroad managers is well evidenced by the large sums that are now being spent to perfect the roadways of the more important lines.—Scribner's.

It Must Have Been Chilly.

A Georgia man was in Waterbury during a cold snap. He had just arrived from the sunny south and his pores were all open. He slept at the Scoville House when the mercury went below zero and the wind blew a mile a minute.

"Why," said he, telling of it in his pleasant southern accent, "the chambermaid gave me some extra blankets because I was from the south. I wore all my underclothes and piled my clothing over the bedclothes.

"Then I put the contents of my satchel over all and piled the satchel itself on top of that, and weighed it all down with the crockery and furniture. If I could have got the door off its hinges I'd have put that on too.

"Blame me, seh, 'twas as cold in that bed as it ever was on Plymouth rock."

Another southern man who lives here says that Georgian is sure to go home and tell his about this climate which will give the whole state a chill.—Waterbury American.

The Tall Grass of Yucatan.

The sisal grass of Yucatan is one of the most remarkable vegetable products known. It grows in long blades, sometimes to the length of four or five feet, and when dry the blade curls up from side to side, making a cord which is stronger than any cotton string of equal size that has ever been manufactured. It is in great demand among florists and among manufacturers of various kinds of grass goods, but as soon as its valuable properties become known it will have a thousand uses which are now undreamed of. Ropes, cords, lines of any description and any size may be manufactured of it, and a ship's cable of sisal grass is one of the possibilities of the future. It is almost impervious to the action of salt water, and is not readily decayed or disintegrated by moisture and heat, and will in time prove one of the most valuable productions of Central America.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Ancient Girdles.

Ancient girdles were in some respects like the chatelaines not long ago so much the rage among the ladies, but they differed therefrom in being more useful, more comprehensive in regard both to sex and to articles worn, and when completely furnished more costly. It is partly for this last reason that we find girdles bequeathed as precious heirlooms and as valuable presents to keep the giver's memory green after death. They were not infrequently of great intrinsic value. One of King John's girdles was wrought with gold and adorned with gems, and that of the widow of Sir Thomas Hungerford, bequeathed in 1504 to the mother church of Worcester, was of green color harnessed with silver and richly jeweled.

Not a few wealthy commoners were able to afford the luxury of gold embellished belts and were not superior to that pardonable vanity so long as no regulation prohibited them. Those who have studied our social history will not be surprised to learn that enactments were passed restraining them. Edward III forbade any person under the degree of a knight from wearing girdles, gilt or silver, unless he should happen to be an esquire of substance valued at more than £200, when a reasonable embellishment was tolerated. Henry IV confirmed this regulation, but it does not seem to have been stringently enforced, for Edward IV was constrained to impose a penalty of 40 pence upon the wives of servants and laborers who should have the pertinence to aspire to be as good as their masters' spouses.—Chambers' Journal.

Making the Most of Household Pets.

Whatever beast is kept it should have its own quarters in which it is at home and free from intrusion and to which it can retire when it chooses. This home should be kept clean and sweet by frequent changes of bedding and the use of soap and water. No one has a right to keep an animal in confinement who finds it too much trouble to attend to its health and comfort. It should be regularly fed on food that is most healthful for it, and what is quite as essential to its happiness and consequently to its health, it should be talked to and noticed as much as any body.

I am certain many animals and birds suffer and die in our homes from pure loneliness and from being regarded by their human neighbors as creatures of an altogether different nature. Whereas the truth is, if one will but cultivate their acquaintance, he will be astonished to see how the dull and most stupid will wake out of its apparent torpor and show understanding and character.

I know a family very fond of pets, in which the creatures show most extraordinary individuality. Their cats do things no cat was ever before known to do; their parrots and other birds show what we call human nature in a wonderful degree, and their dogs almost talk. The reason is plain; the animal or bird is made one of the family. It is talked to and petted as well as cared for. Its intelligence develops, and the beast becomes very like the human being.—Olive Thorne Miller in Harper's Bazar.

A Glean of Sunshine.

I stood in the great courtyard of Sing Sing prison two days before the famous escape of Roedel and Pallister. The genial keeper had shown us everything and everybody of the hundreds of prisoners save the fatal five in the condemned cells. We had seen the workshops, the dining room, the tiny sleeping apartments, the chapel painted by a convict's pencil with scenes from the "Prodigal Son." As we turned to go away the attendant called to me:

"Look yonder."

There was a little girl, the daughter of an official of the prison, surrounded by three men in stripes. How they kissed her innocent face and almost worshipped her as she stood around them with the sunlight playing around her slender form!

"Strange thing, sir, but these fellows do so love children!" said the keeper. "If we only let them play where the prisoners can see them, they will watch them by the hour and spend days in making little toys for them. Ay," continued he, "and robins, mice, rats, anything alive, they will catch, tame and cherish."

The scene in the grim, gaunt prison was a fascinating one. As the great iron gates clanged behind us I turned and looked again. The group was still there, gilded by the April sunlight.—New York Ledger.

A Madagascar Marriage.

While searching the woods of Madagascar M. Hamelin, the botanist, had for guide and hunter the brother of the chief, Mayombana. This unhappy guide had the misfortune to be so severely mauled by a Madagascar lion that he died, and M. Hamelin returned alone to tell the tale. After recital the late chief gave the survivor the option of marrying the widow or being grieved and burned. He chose the lesser of the two evils, but coupled with the marriage contract an undertaking on the part of his brother-in-law to close those lands to all other orchid seekers.

A Profitable Profession.

One of the paying professions of Paris is said to be that of a trunk packer. He will fold expensive gowns in tissue paper and stow away delicate bric-a-brac in the safest way.

A \$300 Egg.

The remarkable price of \$300 was paid in London recently for a fossil egg of the apornis, an extinct, eagle-like bird that inhabited Madagascar in prehistoric times.