

[Chambers's Journal.]

Miss Lirripp had a pretty face and five thousand a year, and she spoke of expectations. Pretty faces are common enough, even in these days of agricultural depression and a stagnant trade; but a girl with five thousand a year and a pretty face into the bargain is a positive phenomenon, and, as such, can not fail to be greatly admired by a number of more or less eligible young men with a taste for beauty of the most substantial kind. Even middle-aged bachelors awoke from their habitual indifference when, on being introduced to a lovely damsel of twenty and twenty, they are conscious that the possessor of a considerable fortune stands before them; for although money is the root of all evil, it is a root which most people very willingly undertake to take the trouble of cultivating.

Since Lydia Lirripp was thus beautiful and rich, it is not surprising that she had not only admirers—men, who dared to venture uncertain things; but lovers, too—men who had the presumption to hope. It is true that Lydia encouraged none of them, for she was quite satisfied to live at home with her father, Gen Lirripp, in Bruton street, Grosvenor square, and to ride in Rotten Row on the morning and to drive in the park on the afternoon. But, fortunately, young men do not require encouragement; nay, in certain affairs the less encouragement they receive the greater their persistency becomes; and considering that healthily constituted young women seldom, if ever, give any encouragement to the suitors, the persistency of these suitors in the face of slanging and ill-natured remarks on which all of us may heartily congratulate ourselves. Indeed, but for the persistency who knows whether the world would go round?

It was the height of the London season, and Lydia Lirripp went with her father one evening to a great ball at the countess of Carnaby's. Everybody was there—everybody, that is, of rank and fashion—and ere she had been in the brightly lighted rooms for five minutes Lydia was engaged for all the dances on the programme. Now, to most of her partners she was only engaged for a single waltz or polka, but, for old acquaintances sake, or for some other reason, she allowed three gentlemen to take the dances each. It was no doubt very indicative of her good nature. But in one case at least it was also very good-natured of her, for she permitted old Sir Pertinax Popinjay, who, as every one knew, was far too stiff and gouty to move about properly, to put down his name for the only two sets of lancers. Sir Pertinax was effusively grateful and smiled his sweetest upon her as he returned her programme, and Lydia, instead of regretting her kindness, felt thoroughly rewarded by seeing that she was giving pleasure to the gray-haired baronet, who, thirty years before, had been a noted dandy, but who now struck her as being simply a proxy for the fellow, whom very few girls would be likely to dance with. Lydia's other favored partners were Mr. Horace Fraake—a young artist who had that year for the first time exhibited at the Royal academy—and Mr. Merton Murley, a man who had no profession and no occupation, and who, if he had a private income, derived it from a source not generally known even to his friends.

In this world many strange coincidences happen. Two chemists have been known to make exactly the same discovery on the same day; and two astronomers have claimed to catch sight of a new comet at almost the same moment. It is not, therefore, incredible that, while dancing with the three gentlemen, three favored partners, Lydia casually mentioned to each of them that upon the following evening her father was going to take the chair at the annual meeting of the Society for the Encouragement of Cold-water Bathing on the Continent; that she was not going, but would be alone at home; that she wished that girls were able like men to amuse themselves; and that she envied her partners their clubs, their theatres, and their sociable smoking concerts. Nor is it incredible that, having heard this, Sir Pertinax Popinjay, Mr. Horace Fraake, and Mr. Merton Murley all made up their minds to call on her, and to make to her certain avowals, which, although they had long meditated them, they now felt impelled to make as soon as possible, and without any unnecessary delay. What these avowals were may be guessed; but why the three gentlemen all determined at the same time to make them is a question which can not be explained, although the fact that Lydia that evening looked even prettier than usual may possibly have been one of the causes of the extraordinary coincidence.

Lydia little dreamed, when in the small hours of the morning she went off to sleep of what was hanging over her. Sir Pertinax had made no sign; Mr. Murley had not been more attentive than had for some time been his wont; and Mr. Fraake had been actually more dull and uninteresting than Miss Lirripp had ever seen him. She therefore slept soundly, and was undisturbed by fears of the coming evening and its visitors.

The following day was wet. The general, who had lived for many years in India, and had a liver which caused him to be somewhat irascible, shut himself up in his library and savagely studied the statistics of Cold-water Bathing; and Lydia, who could not go out, painted in her boudoir. The Lirripps dined at 5.30, to enable the general to get to the meeting at 7.30; and as he had taken no exercise during the day, and had been quite unable to master all the information he required relative to the average of cleanliness upon the continent, Lydia's father was not in the best of tempers. "Sit up for me," he said; "I shall be in by 11.30." These were his last words, as the carriage having been announced, he hurried away from the table, stopping for an instant at Lydia's side to kiss her hastily on the top of the head. And Miss Lirripp was left alone in solitary grandeur, sitting at one end of the dining-room. She did not stay there long, but went to the drawing-room, whither she bade the servant bring two candles, which but dimly lighted the large apartment. Then, taking her seat at the piano, Lydia began to play and sing alternately.

The drawing-room at Bruton street was like many other London drawing-rooms. It occupied the whole of the first floor of the house, save where in one corner the staircase ascended; and it was therefore L-shaped, the longer arm of the L having three windows looking out into the street, and the shorter arm one window looking out over some mews in the rear. Heavy curtains of tapestry hung between the back and front portions of the room, but were usually looped up; and in the back room was the piano at which, within the halo of the two candles, Lydia Lirripp played and sang.

She had considerable knowledge of music and a fine voice, and, wrapped up in her occupation, she started when the door of the drawing-room opened and servant, who was to her invisible, announced Mr. Horace Fraake.

Lydia rose and received her visitor, meantime ordering the gas to be lighted. It was 8.30. Why had he called at that hour? Why had he not come in the daytime, while she was so dull, rather than just when she was singing? But, upon the whole, she was glad to see Horace, who, no doubt, simply desired to inquire how she was after the dance of the

once more rated. "You know what I have just gone through. My head is in a whirl."

"But think how happy you can make me, Lydia! You would be everything to me, as indeed you are already, and I would spend all my days in making you happy."

It is unnecessary to chronicle the whole of the further conversation that took place. Suffice it to say that at last Miss Lirripip discovered not only that she could, but that she actually did, love Horace Franke a little, and on the strength of that she promised to marry him.

Horace was in the act of presuming upon this promise by kissing Lydia for the first time, and was enjoying one of the happiest moments of his life, when another of those furious rattatattats shook the house.

"Another!" said Mr. Franke, with a smile. "I shall go back to my retreat until we know who has arrived, for now I must be on the spot to look after you." And in spite of Lydia's protestations, he once more retired to the back of the drawing-room.

Two minutes afterward the steady, very hot and very angry, stamped up stairs, and burst into the presence of his daughter. "Everything has gone wrong!" he exclaimed. "They voted me out of the chair; they flew in my face; they decided that the wretched foreigners don't want cold baths." And he pounded with his stick, which he had brought up with him, and looked at Lydia, as though she were the cause of his discomfiture.

"Well, papa," said Miss Lirripip, soothingly, "all the better. Now you won't have to go to any more of their horrid meetings."

At this juncture Horace, who was troubled with a slight cold, gave forth a stifled and infinitesimally small sneeze.

"Lydia," cried the general, as he threw himself wearily into an arm-chair, "I'm sure there's a cat in the back drawing-room. Go and turn it out. And Miss Lirripip, having no alternative, went cautiously behind the heavy curtains, and was there received in her lover's arms.

"You cannot speak to him to-night," she whispered. "He would not listen to you. You see how cross he is. Come again to-morrow."

Horace, therefore silently took another kiss; and Lydia, having unlocked the little-used door of the back room, chased him, with many expressions of animosity, down the softly-carpeted staircase, and with a cry of "Shoo, cat!" finally let him out of the front door.

When she returned to the drawing-room, Gen. Lirripip gave vent to some angry expressions of hostility toward the entire feline tribe, and when he had thus delivered himself went off to bed.

How the story ended may easily be guessed. When Lydia's father was in a cooler mood, Horace found no difficulty in obtaining his consent to the marriage, which took place three months afterwards; and to the end of their days, neither Sir Pertinax Popinjay nor Mr. Merton Murley had any idea that a third person was present when they proposed to Miss Lirripip in Bruton street, Grosvenor square.

The "Local Hit" Man.
(Arkansas Traveler.)

The "local hit" man of the minstrel show is a great humorist. He has no education and could not couple two sentences of English to save his life, but he is the man to plunge an audience into a roar of laughter. All that is required to accomplish this feat is to mention the name of some man who lives in the town, some very fat or extremely lean fellow. This is pure wit, and persons who could not find a glint of humor in the entire range of English literature, yell and swell up and explode, and look around to see if they can single out the crushed victim. When he is found they don't grin at him, and a rough fellow sitting near him slaps him on the back, and exclaims: "He got you that time—er haw, haw—he put it on you—er he, he."

The Douglass Jerrold of the stage is called back, and while he rakes the strings of a banjo, says: "Oh, yas, got de bes' lookin' gin in town. Oh, s'n's awful fine. Got a foot like de ole John's." Another roars. "Col. Jugglin's face grows as red as a terrapin's eye, and he tries to laugh. His friends slap him, and the fools in front of him turn around, stare impertinently and explode. Ten dollars a week is not a salary commensurate with the accomplishments of the local hit man, and the manager should better reward him. In fact, he should kill him.

One Hundred and Three Men Knew All About Sun Spots.
(New York Journal.)

An old street scientist in New York has been renting a venerable telescope to such curious passers by as desired to gaze at the sun and would pay a nickel for the privilege. Quite a crowd collected each day and patronage was liberal. It became rushing when the veteran fakir hung up a sign, "One day only—a free view of the sun." The line extended half a block. Old Deacon Pennymann, who lives in Harlem, and walks home to save car fare, was included to take advantage of the free show as he came by. He took position 103 in the line and at the end of an hour he was No. 3. His face wore an expectant air, and as he wiped his brow, for it was hot, he asked the exhibitor:

"How can you afford to do this for nothing, my friend?"

"A wealthy and philanthropic man who wishes to enlighten the people on the appearance of the sun pays me so much a day to show it; you turn now."

The deacon bent down, craned his neck as if he were going to cover all the spots at once, and saw "Smizgin's Sun Stove Polish." The deacon solemnly followed 102 wise, sad men down the avenue.

What Did They Say?
(Boston Globe.)

I had the honor lately to perch at a luncheon-table near two young men of the lunch-burlesque. As near as I could find out, they were discussing some manager, and as near as I can remember it was a fragment of their conversation—"His partner," said one, evidently in reply; "why, he's N. G. I always thought his nibs was yaller, and now I know it. He took out a quishy fake last season, and queered himself from way back. If he'd stuck to cross-road snaps he'd been solid to this day, but he got the big head, and that settled it. I know the guy. He struck me for fifty cents at the start, and 'lowed he'd quit winner the first week and square himself, but he went in a hole all the same. Why, even his paper did 'nt come in."

The Laying On of Hands.
(Chicago Herald.)

One Mormon superstition is that children, when ill, may be cured by the laying on of hands. More than 5,000 of the little ones are said to have died in the last twenty-five years who might have been saved by medicine. The laying on of hands is of no benefit to a child except when he talks back to the old man.

Purely Scientific.
(Chicago Tribune.)

Housewives plagued with black beetles will be glad to know of an English invention for their destruction, known as the "Deadly Beetle-Buster." It is constructed on purely scientific principles, and is worked by an air-pump which draws the beetles from their holes by force.

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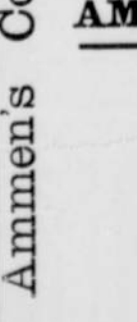


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