

Miss M'Carty and Her Verdict.

(Continued.)

The emotional nature of the jury, cleverly or craftily wrought upon by counsel, may be said to have found expression in the hardpan verdict rendered in the United States Court in this city, in which the damage done to the affections of a spinster by the change of mind which absence or reflection wrought in her elderly wooer was assessed at \$22,500.

The case was a peculiar one—unique, in fact—in that it introduced something new into the annals of the old contention by which a woman scorned seeks legal balm in the shape of hard cash for blighted affections and wounded pride. The woman in this case insisted that she had held unlawful relations with the man, while he as stoutly affirmed that this was untrue. The finding of the jury was conclusive evidence that the woman's story was believed, judgment in the case being no doubt based upon the assumption that the man for this reason declined to marry her, given as a pretext that he had "ceased to love her."

If there were any reason to suppose that the public repetition of this old story would convey a wholesome lesson in prudence and in the inestimable value to woman herself of womanly modesty and chastity, its recital might be welcomed. There is, unfortunately, no ground for such hope, since the lesson that the story conveys is sadly, sorrowfully, grossly and, presumably, grossly old. Its recital may arouse compassion for the folly-stricken woman of whose lapse from virtue it treats, and reprobation for the man, who, having compassed this purpose under solemn promise of marriage, repudiated his promise. But there is not the slightest reason to suppose that it will convey a warning when and where warning is needed. It is not necessary, for the sake of informing her, to tell any girl of 15 who has been decently reared, still less any woman of 25 or 30, that a man is not likely to fulfill a promise of marriage after a woman has fatally cheapened herself as this woman asserts that she did in the respect and estimation of this man. This is a matter of common knowledge—a fact so well established in human nature and sad experience that it does not require the sensational and disgusting details of a suit for seduction or breach of promise to establish or bring it out.

Though in the main the details of this story are old, there was something new in the self-accusing of the plaintiff upon this point and the indignant denial of the defendant. The real surprise that was brought out by this trial, however, was not in this unique feature, nor yet in the large sum which the jury, wrought upon by the tale of woman's awarded as recompense for her wounded affections. Verbal protestations of love, including a promise of marriage, especially when supported by visible evidence of substantial worldly possessions, may outweigh uncouth surroundings and lack of culture even to a school teacher of mature years. But those letters, literally permeated by a deadly "spell"—how could a jury look upon a woman who pretends to some culture and deliberately determine that after having received them she still ardently desired to stand sponsor before her friends for the man who wrote them by marrying him? Herein lies the surprise that was sprung through this case upon a wondering community. And, it may be added, this feature served a good purpose in overshadowing some of the more common and disgusting features of the case.

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