

door-knob when Laura's ma has been so kind as to bring in her sewing and spend the evening with them. And Tom doesn't hate anybody, and feels as good as if he had come out of a six months' revival, and is happy enough to borrow money of his worst enemy. But there is no rose without a thorn, and I am of the opinion that there are in this world a good many thorns without their attendant roses, and very sharp thorns too. Tom's thorn now is—to see his Laura's father. Some how or other he had a rose-coloured idea that the thing was to go right along in this way forever—he was to sit and hold Laura's hands and pa was to stay down in the office and ma was to come into the parlour but seldom—but this could not be, and Tom dreads it, and Laura does not like to see an expression of fear on Tom's face, and her coral lips quiver a little as she hides her face out of sight on Tom's shoulder and tells him how kind and tender pa has always been with her until Tom's feels positively jealous of pa—and she tells him he must not dread going to see him—and he goes to the office to see him. And sees him and romantically says: "Sir, you have a flower, a tender lovely blossom, chaste as the snow on the mountain's top, fresh as the breath of morn, pure as the lily kissed by dew. This precious blossom, watched by your paternal eyes, the object of your tender care and solicitude, I ask of you. I would wear it in my heart and guard and cherish, and the—" "Oh yes, yes," the old man says quietly, thinking Tom is a little tight—"Oh yes, yes, I don't know much about them myself; my wife and the girls generally keep half the windows in the house littered up with them, winter and summer, every window so full of house plants the sun can't shine in. Come up to the house, they'll give you all you can carry away, give you a hat full of them." "No, no," says Tom; "You don't understand. It isn't that. I want—I want to marry your daughter." And there it is at last, as bluntly as though Tom had wadded it into a gun and shot it at the old man. Pa does not say anything for twenty seconds. Tom tells Laura that evening that it was two hours and a half before her father opened his head. Then he says—"Yes, yes, to be sure," and then a dreadful pause. "Yes, yes. Well I don't know—I don't know about that. Have you said anything to Mollie about it?" "It isn't Mollie"—Tom manages to gasp out—"It's—" "Oh, Sallie? Oh, well, I don't"—"No, sir," interposes poor Tom—"it's Laura." "Laura? why Laura is too young." As they sit and stand there, looking at each other—the dingy old office, with the heavy shadows lurking in every corner with its time-worn heavy brown furnishings, with the scanty dash of sunlight breaking in through the dusty window, looks like a painting by Rubens—the beginning and ending of a race—the old man ready to lay his armor off glad to be so nearly and so safely through with the race and the fight of life that Tom, in all his inexperience and with all the rash enthusiasm and conceit of a young man, is just getting ready to run and fight or fight and run—you can never tell which until he is through with it. And the old man, looking at Tom and through him and past him, feels his old heart throb almost as quickly as does that of the young man before him. For, looking down a long vista of happy years he sees a tender face kindled with blushes—he feels a soft hand drop into his own with its timid pressure—he remembers strolling with her through the ferny woods—he remembers lingering on the old bridge—lingering there while he gazes into eyes eloquent in their silent love-light, he remembers all these things and now sees Tom following in his footsteps and tells him he will see him again in the morning. And so Tom and Laura are duly and formally engaged: and the very first thing they do, is to make the very sensible, though very uncommon resolution to so conduct themselves that no one will ever suspect it. And they succeed admirably. No one ever does suspect it. They shun all other people when church is dismissed and are seen to go home alone the longest way. No one *suspects* they are engaged, every one *knows* it. They walk along the river bank under the accommodating shade of one umbrella for which there is frequently no necessity, and at picnics or strawberry festivals they are not often missed as they are always sitting under a tree holding each other's hands, gazing into each other's eyes and saying—nothing. When he throws her shawl over her shoulders he never looks at what he is doing but looks straight into her starry eyes, throws the shawl right over her head, and then there is what a military man would call—a report at head-quarters. When they come through the Victoria Bridge, one would think on arriving at daylight and the station that Laura had been through a railroad accident and Tom looks as red as possible. When they drive out they sit very close—but long years afterwards a street car isn't too wide for them. And so the engagement runs on and the wedding day dawns, fades, and the wedding is over. And the father for a moment finds his daughter Laura alone—his daughter who is going away out of the home whose love she knows, into a home whose tenderness and patience are all untried—he holds her in his arms and whispers the most fervent blessing that ever throbbed from a father's heart and Laura's wedding day would be still incomplete without her tears in which she is joined by her good mother, whom she will remember as the tender shadows of a dream; that mother's kind face with its smile of loving care now resting in the grave, and Laura—but there remains the memory of the mother-love that glistened in the tender eyes now closed in darkness, and of the nerveless hands, crossed in dreamless sleep upon the pulseless breast that will never again caress her loved children—and Laura will remember all the more her mother's kind words. However, to speak of the presents Laura and Tom

got on their wedding day—they of course had the usual assortment of cheap plated ware—a great many duplicates as usual. An assortment of brackets, serviceable, ornamental and—cheap. A French clock, that never went, that does not go, that never will go. Nine sets of salt cellars, eleven mustard spoons—four castors, three cigar stands for Tom, six match safes of various patterns. A dozen tidies, charity fair or bazaar style, made by Laura's dearest friend and with the wonderful picture on them of a blue dog on a yellow background (not backyard) barking at a green boy climbing over a red fence to steal pink apples. They also got five things of which they did not know the names and never could find anybody to tell what they were for; and a fifty cent nickel plated corkscrew. They return from their honeymoon and go to work to buy everything they need, the very day they go to housekeeping: everything—just as well, Tom says, to get everything at once as it is to spend ten or twenty years stocking up a house as his father did. And Laura thinks so too, and she wonders and is pleased that Tom should know so much more than his father. This seems funny to Tom himself and he never rightly understands how it is until he is forty-five or fifty years old and has a Tom of his own to direct and advise him. So they make out a list and revise it and rewrite it, until they have everything down complete, and it is not until supper is ready the first day that they discover there isn't a tea-spoon in the house. And the first day the washerwoman comes, and the water is hot, and the clothes are all ready, they discover that there isn't a wash-tub nearer than the general's grocery. And later in the day they find out that, while Tom has bought a clothes' line long enough to reach to the North Pole and back, they have not a single clothes' pin. And in the course of a week or two, Tom slowly awakens to the realization of the fact that he has only begun to get. And if he should live two thousand years, which he is not likely to do, he would think of something just before he died, of something they had wanted in the worst way for many a year, and had either been too poor to get or Tom had forgotten to bring home. Tom goes on bringing home things they need—absolute simple necessities that were never put down in that wonderful list they made out when they began housekeeping, and the years roll on; old Father Time knows that Tom will never get through bringing things home, and so old Time helps Tom and brings things too. A few gray hairs from time to time, and little cares, and troubles, and trials, and butchers' bills, and grocers' bills, and tailors' bills, and large millinery bills. Old Father Time brings bye-and-bye the baby fingers which pat the mother's cheek—and brings, perhaps, a voiceless messenger that lays its icy fingers on the baby lips, and hushes their dainty prattle, and in the baptism of its first sorrow, the darkened home suffers. Bye-and-bye come the tracks of a boy's muddy boots scattered up and down the clean porch; the younger Tom now goes to college, and the quiet the boy leaves behind him is much harder to endure than the noise. But old Time brings him home at last, and it does make life seem terribly real and earnest to the father, and how the old laugh rings out and ripples all over Laura's face, when they see the mustache budding out on young Tom's face. And still old Time comes around, bringing each year brighter beams of silver to glint the brown of the mother's hair; old Time comes bringing the blessings of peaceful old age and a love-locked home to crown these noble, earnest, real, mortal lives, marred, perhaps, with human faults, scarred with human troubles, and crowned with the compassion that only perfection can send upon imperfection. Time comes with happy memories, with the changing scenes of day and night, with winter's storm and summer's calm, until finally, the sweep of the scythe cuts old Tom down and the cycle of a life is complete, and young Tom takes his father's place,—and now old Time tells me it is time to stop.

Geo. Rothwell.

POPULAR PERSONS.

No matter where you go, you will always find persons who are universally popular and are called "popular men." Now, a man to be popular must have the faculty of observation very largely developed and must know how to say or do the right thing at the right time. On first acquaintance you will find that he is silent rather than talkative and by this reticence fortifies his position in two ways. In the first place he notices and learns the peculiar idiosyncrasies or characteristics of those to whom he has been introduced and remembers them for use at a future opportunity; and by being silent and listening to others with apparent delight, he gratifies their vanity and self-love, leading them to believe that they are making very interesting or amusing remarks.

Further the popular man always endeavours to inform himself as to the past actions or relatives of those with whom he is likely to meet; he can therefore, remind you with judicious tact of some past success that you may have achieved—this pleases and shows that he has watched your past career and of course makes you feel prouder and more important than if you had discovered that nobody even knew your name. The popular man rarely "puts his foot in it" in society—he never asks you "who that exceedingly plain lady opposite is" giving you the pleasant task of informing him that she is your wife—no he, never makes mistakes like these, but always manages to know, perhaps by intuition, that she is your wife.