

asserted Deborah, a little breathlessly, as she climbed up the sides of the dell, holding her pinafore high and disposedly for fear of injuring its precious contents. She was clearly a child of one idea! "I don't know his name."

The absurdity of the situation struck David forcibly, and he laughed loud and long, and by the time the laugh was ended he had reached Miss Laing's side.

"It seems as if I had strayed in a moment into Wonderland," he said, half apologetically. "What does Deborah mean? Do the owners of the old house yonder hold out a sort of feudal hospitality to all who pass this way?"

Miss Laing answered the question with the frankness with which it was put.

"Yes, under two conditions. You must give references, or bring some recommendation, and you must pay."

So here was the solution of the mystery! Poverty and bad times had evidently reduced the owner of the Hall to the strait of receiving a few "paying guests." David bethought himself that he might find considerable amusement in spending a few days of his vacation at the Hall if the matter of references could be quickly settled, and he fumbled in his pocket for his card-case, which he shortly produced. He handed one of his cards to his companion.

"Do you think that would do it?" he asked, "and the fact that they can find

my father's name and address in Crockford? He is a clergyman, and I am out on a walking tour, but I think I should be glad of a few days' rest."

Truth to tell, the idea of rest had not suggested itself until he had seen Miss Laing.

"It might, but the Menzies are very particular. They are a very old family, dating back to the Conquest or thereabouts"—with a little smile.

"In that case I'm not in it. I fancy we were not heard of until Charles I.'s time," David answered, with a mischievous twinkle.

Deborah was looking from one to the other with puzzled eyes.

"Are you going to stop? for, if so, I will take you to set-up-grandmother," she said, slipping her hand into that of her new friend.

"Yes, Deborah, I'll stop if they will have me."

It must be confessed that his audacity failed him as they drew near the house, and a tall, spare lady issued from the hall door, whose look plainly betrayed enquiry as to what brought David there.

The awkwardness of the situation, however, was relieved by Deborah, who ran forward hurriedly, and pulled down the lady's head close to her own.

"He's very nice," she said, in an audible whisper, "and he wants to stay dreadfully, but he does not know whether you will have him."

"I did not know that I had the happy chance of putting up for a few days in this delightful neighbourhood until I quite accidentally learned from Miss Laing that you might perhaps take me in. My only credential is my calling card and my father's address, which you may know by chance."

Mrs. Menzies coughed, to give herself time to think, and took the proffered card.

"Russell," she said. "My husband knows the Russells of—shire."

"I believe we are distantly connected with them," said David gravely.

Mrs. Menzies glanced furtively, uneasily, at David through her spectacles, and the wrinkles round her mouth relaxed a little. He was so pleasant to look upon, with his fresh, ruddy face, his tall, well set-up figure. He was undoubtedly a gentleman, and she could detect no sinister purpose in his simple request to become an inmate of her house for a few days.

"Come in," she said, more cordially. "I will introduce you to my husband."

Then David knew he had won the day.

"I think that you said that you and Miss Laing knew each other?" said Mrs. Menzies, when the party were assembled at lunch.

"Yes," David replied quickly. "We have met before."

(To be continued.)

VARIETIES.

WOMEN IN BURMA.

Before the law, in religion, and in regard to the moral code, men and women in Burma are perfectly equal.

The women administer their property themselves, and, when they marry, it remains in their full possession. The Burmese husband has no jurisdiction over his wife's belongings, nor over her person. She is perfectly free.

Married or single, all Burmese women have an occupation besides their home duties. Among the upper classes they look after their property; among the middle and lower classes they generally manage stores. Most retail stores are in the hands of women. As business is conducted during three hours of the day only it does not interfere with their home duties.

Women may, however, adopt any calling they please in Burma without fear of shocking public opinion. Curiously enough, sewing and knitting are specially occupations, not for women, as with us, but for men.

FAITHFUL TO HER PROMISE.

Here is an original love-story.

Mademoiselle Adelaide de Brigisse, a French poetess, when she was a young girl wrote a letter in the form of a sonnet, promising her hand to the finder. She placed it in a secret drawer in an old bureau and then forgot all about it.

Years after, the poetess having reached the mature age of seventy, the bureau was bought by a romantic old colonel in the army. He found the love-letter and considered himself duly engaged to the writer. The poetess resolved to be faithful to her promise, written when she was seventeen, and the marriage only recently took place.

THEY DON'T COMPLIMENT US.

Many hard things have been said about women, and criticism being wholesome to listen to, we here quote a few:—

"Women's friends are cushions in which they stick their pins."

"A woman has never spoiled anything through silence."

"Who takes an eel by the tail and a woman at her word holds nothing."

"Friendship between two women is usually a plot against a third."

"Half the sorrows of women would be averted if they could repress the speech they know to be useless."

"In going to ask a favour a man says to himself 'What shall I say?' But a woman asks herself 'What shall I wear?'"

POEMS WE SHOULD ALL READ.

Which are the ten noblest poems in English literature "measured by the test of poetic form, ethical insight and spiritual inspiration?"

This question was recently addressed to a large number of eminent Americans, and from the replies received the following list has been constructed.

"Intimations of Immortality."—*Wordsworth*.

"Saul."—*Browning*.

"Elegy written in a Country Churchyard."—*Gray*.

"Rabbi Ben Ezra."—*Browning*.

"Ode to a Skylark."—*Shelley*.

"Commemoration Ode."—*Lowell*.

"The Ancient Mariner."—*Coleridge*.

"Thanatopsis."—*Bryant*.

"The Eternal Goodness."—*Whittier*.

"Tintern Abbey."—*Wordsworth*.

AN ARITHMETICAL PROBLEM.

Once upon a time in Barnstaple, in North Devon, there were two old women who sat in the market every Tuesday and Friday and sold apples. Each one regularly brought thirty apples, and one of the old women sold two for a halfpenny and the other old woman sold three for a halfpenny.

In that way the first old woman—"ole dummon," as they say in the West—got fifteen halfpence for her basket of apples, while the second old woman received ten halfpence; so that together they made twenty-five halfpence each day.

But one day the old apple-woman who sold three for a halfpenny was too ill to go to market, and she asked her neighbour to take her apples and sell them for her.

This the other old woman kindly consented to do, and when she got to market with the two baskets of apples, she said to herself, "I will put all the apples into one basket, for it will be easier than picking them out of two baskets."

So she put the sixty apples into one basket, and she said to herself, "Now, if I sell two apples for one halfpenny and Kitty Webber"—which was her old friend's name—"sells three for a halfpenny, that is the same thing as selling five apples for a penny. Therefore I will sell five for a penny."

When she had sold the sixty apples she found she had only twenty-four halfpence; which was right, because there are twelve fives in sixty, and twice twelve are twenty-four.

But if the other old woman had been there, and each one had sold her apples separately, they would have received twenty-five halfpence. How is this mystery to be explained?