

UP A BACKWATER.

The picnic at length it was over,
Fiaz and questions were popped;
Hints and handkerchiefs dropped,
With some lines about "clover" and "lover"
Which somebody's chaperon stopped.

We most of us surely remember
Some similar scene,
As occurring between
The months, say, of March and September.
When we, like the salad, were green.

The tablecloth held down by pebbles:
The exquisite fare,
And fair exquisites there;
The chorus of daisies and trebles
Which frightened the birds in the air!

But now, as I said, it was over,
And nobody knew
That a damsel in blue,
Not quite by herself, was a rover
In a craft to accommodate two.

Smooth, dreamy, delicious the motion
As they glided along,
With a rhythm like song
(And neither, of course, had a notion
That either meant anything wrong).

To a backwater sun ne'er invaded—
An aquatic side-street,
Over which the boughs meet;
Where others have loitered, as they did,
And found the seclusion was sweet.

From clouds that curl round his manilla
An aerial estate
Can his fancy create—
A lawn, and a riverside villa,
And a damsel in blue for his fate.

He laughs as if joy were immortal;
And who'd prophesy
How a chance in the sky,
Making Poverty peep through the portal,
Makes Love through the window to fly!

The dream was so sweet! 'Twas a pity
Both forgot for the day,
In their innocent way,
Believe accepted a "Bull" in the City.
Fred hadn't a cent but his pay.

But I know when I nursed him through fever
Down in dull Baltimore,
How he'd rave, and implore
One word from his "darling deceiver,"
And pray to behold her once more.

And I know, death her silks and her laces,
And "cloud" of soft wool,
On a heart of love full,
Lies a locket in which there a face is
That bears no resemblance to Bull.

TAF.

IN LOVE WITH A MANIAC.

"Mr. Penblot."

"Yes, sir."

"Will you kindly go up to Stockton to-morrow and stay a week at the asylum?"

The request appalled Mr. Arthur Penblot, who had the honour of being myself. However, there was a stipend of thirty dollars a week depending upon obedience to the city editor's orders, and I remarked:

"Yes, sir."

"Here is a letter to Doctor Osborn, the assistant-superintendent in charge, whom, I believe, you already know. He will look out for you, and I want you to send us some realistic sketches, a little hash of romantic mania, queer delusions and that sort of thing."

"Yes, sir."

And the afternoon train took some Chronicle copy paper, some lead pencils and myself to the city for sloughs and moonlight.

The Stockton Asylum is a queer place. It is queerest to that class of individuals who imagine, through their experience in church, society or journalism, that they can tell a maniac when they see one. After a dusty ride in a bob-tailed car I entered a tree-hung gate and found myself in a large and well-kept area of flower-grown and tree-filled garden, and was advancing along a gravelled walk to the main door on the right, when I saw a gentleman in black, with a venerable and benevolent face, stooping over a rosebush. With that lady-like deference which always veils the true journalistic cheek, I said:

"Pardon me, sir, but can you tell me where I can find Dr. Osborn?"

He looked at me searchingly and gravely said:

"Must you see him?"

"Yes, sir, on particular business."

He hesitated a moment and said:

"I am sorry; but Dr. Osborn is not visible except to relatives. Daily contact, you know, with the poor unfortunates here has affected him, as it affects many, and he is now under treatment. If you have any business I am the person to consult."

I bowed deferentially and asked the favour of a few minutes conversation, as I had some credentials to present.

"I will see you shortly," said he. "I am waiting for the Czar of Russia, who sent me a note this morning. If he brings Bismarck this trouble can be adjusted. And it must be fixed soon. Oh, if it isn't! But stay; I know who you are. If you represent England, say so frankly," taking me by the lapel of the coat.

"I represented the Chronicle, however," and for a moment indignantly contemplated hanging the diplomat, with a section of adjacent garden hose. Then I abruptly left his Majesty, who I afterwards learned was Napoleon III. and rang the bell.

Dr. Osborn received my bewildered self graciously and laughed over the harangue of the parlour boarder. We talked of insanity, and

drank a little choice Clos Vougeot. We finished the bottle, a fat, historic looking one, but only uncorked the subject. He assured me that I could not tell a lunatic when I saw one. I said I could, whereat he smiled and said: "Wait and see." Then we went on the rounds.

The yard was a great, bare, hideous arena of dethroned reason. The moment we left the door I was surrounded by a group of half a dozen tattered maniacs in dull blue rags, who placed their faces as near to mine as they could, and looked squarely into my eyes with that motionless, unflinching, unwinking, cast-iron stare that is so trying to sensitive nerves. The feather man picked all the feathers off my coat; the peg-top spun for me until he whirled himself off into a corner and went to sleep on the ground; the reader read an editorial from an old paper in the guttural, senseless, yet strangely connected gabble which might be expected of a complaisant and talkative gorilla; and the long, low, iron corridor of the mad-house disclosed its strapped, naked and snarling human beasts. Then we went through the female wards.

I had looked forward to these eagerly, and I was dreadfully disappointed. The women were unanimously old, fat and homely, and were not crazy enough to tear their clothes off—an eccentricity which I deplored, and yet, with psychologic perversity, rather desired to behold. Their hair was combed straight back. They were dressed in ungraceful calicoes and I voted them a bore. Being full of Clos Vougeot, I told the doctor so. His eyes all of a sudden twinkled as with an idea, a sudden inspiration. Knowing him well, this would ordinarily have made me suspicious, but it did not then. I wish it had. He said:

"There is one patient, who superintends 'ward 19.' That I should not show you, but as you are interested in insanity in all its various phases, I will. But you must be careful. She is young, belongs to a wealthy and very estimable family in Grass Valley, and is so sane on all subjects but one that we have given her charge of the ward. You may, perhaps, see much of her during the week, and if I introduce you, you must promise one thing: never to make love to her in word or act, as it is an unrequited affection that brought her here, and we are strenuously endeavouring to keep her mind from romantic thoughts."

I promised. I was introduced. I went down at the first fire.

The brown eyes had an irresistible quality of intelligence and appreciation. The dark brown hair surmounted so pretty the oval of the face and the Grass Valley peculiarity of full and rounded contour was so deliciously evident under the clinging folds of the hospital wrapper that I made up my mind on the spot that it would require two weeks at least to do justice to the asylum.

The doctor whispered to her some words that in my confusion I did not catch. Afterwards, long afterwards, they took definite shape in my memory, and I think they were: "Interesting case—thinks he's a journalist—don't talk newspapers."

She dined at the doctor's table. I pitied her intensely. She was so bright, so appreciative, and worded her ideas in so clear and sympathetic a voice. And her eyes, when she regarded me, had a pity mingled with reserve, that moved me potentially, despite my knowledge of her condition. Her lunacy endowed her with some naivetés that I could not understand. Once when I mentioned the Chronicle she hastily changed the subject to the eccentricity of one of the women patients, and I thought that the doctor looked at her approvingly. At another time when I said I had been writing for three years she had a sort of a dull, apathetic look, as if what I was saying did not appear to interest her and she did not enjoy it. I was fairly puzzled by it all, but too much interested in the beautiful phenomenon to stop to penetrate the vapour of mystery.

She talked as all bright women talk—discursively, though not flippantly. Finally, she touched upon a marriage, the local sensation of the week in Stockton, and spoke quietly of the parties, their long and mutual love and the roses and raptures before them. I felt very bad, as I was afraid the topic would affect her, and looked gravely at the doctor, whose brow was troubled as he looked at me. When I interrupted her hastily and began to talk of balloons and their dangers, she appeared surprised, and glanced at the doctor, who nodded and coughed. At least, I think he coughed, as he hid his mouth for an instant in his napkin. I suspected nothing, for the doctor was an old friend and ally.

That night I dreamed of marrying a brown-eyed maniac and raising a family of lunatics, and strangely enough, when I lay awake and thought of it, it did not seem so terrible. I rose early, for a journalist, and found her in the garden. We had an hour's talk before breakfast. It was strange and so pitiful. Lovely and intelligent as she was, her mind was most interested, in a modest and non-sentimental way, on topics of love and marriage. Oftentimes I had to turn the conversation abruptly to horse-cars, or the grain product, or the weather, or anything prosaic, and when I did so she would look in a very kindly and sympathetic way at me and keep still while I talked on. So, also, whenever I spoke of my business, and tried to get some information to write about, her insanity shone forth and she turned the conversation in an abrupt and erratic way to something else. As a matter of course, I did not mention her misfortune to her, but my pity and growing platonic

affection for her were as apparent in my looks and my manners as they were repressed in my conversation.

So passed three delicious days and evenings. My letters were written with difficulty, as brown eyes disturbed thought as they got between me and the pages, and dark hair metaphorically clogged my pen. Finally Friday evening came, the last night of my stay. I had smoked my cigarette on the vine-bordered veranda, and then went up to her room, where she sat on the sofa at twilight, looking at the still, beautiful world of shadows. Through the open door we could see a she-lunatic or two in the corridor, but I had lost all interest in that class, save in the one nearest me. Slowly the light faded. From out the garden rose the scent of flowers, of the trees and of the earth, in faint, dreary, delicious fragrance on the dew-moistened air. Now and then I looked at her face in profile, looking at her with that nagging, itching desire to throw my arms around her—a desire the more irresistible since I knew, by subtle telegraph of love, that she would not resist. My hand accidentally touched hers on the window-sill. It was cold, and I carelessly touched the wrist-artery to find it throbbing quickly and hotly.

I left my seat and walked up and down the room.

Still she sat by the window, looking out into the night. I could not keep away from her. I went up, stood silent by her side for some moments, and said:

"I am going away to-morrow, M—, I want you to sing my song once more."

She arose without a word, and, without looking at me, went to the piano in the shadow. I leaned against the end. How she found the keys I know not; but in a low, heart-felt voice she began the passionate words of that sweetest of songs, "Let me Dream again."

There was a tremor in her voice, and her heart was on her lips. Never have I heard, or will I hear, a song that approached it. I forgot she was a maniac, I forgot my promise. I forgot everything but her. I gripped the rosewood in my hand to relieve the tension on my nerves, till there stole forth so sadly and sweetly the finale:

Is this a dream,

That, waking, will be pain?

Oh, do not wake me—

Let me dream again.

She stopped; my arms clasped her; her head fell upon my shoulder in passionate, self-abandonment, and there, in the darkness, our lips found each other in a kiss; a first kiss; a dream that entirely may dissolve, but time never can; the ripe blossoming of a love that cast all sober thoughts to the winds.

We heard coming steps. I loosed my hold. Dr. Osborn came in with a light. He set it down in time to receive her in his arms, as she burst into a frenzy of tears and said: "Oh, doctor, I'm so sorry for him."

I started as if shot. Then I attributed this unasked-for pity, this conversational bombshell to her mania. I said:

"Doctor, I have acted inexcusably. I cannot ask you to forgive me. I was fool enough to forget this lady's unfortunate condition."

She jumped out of the doctor's arms, electrified. Her tears dried like a shower at Yuma.

"What unfortunate condition?" she imperiously demanded.

Overwhelmed with sorrow, I looked at her, and unconsciously and slowly shook my head, as I murmured: "My God, what a pity!"

A ringing box on my ear dazed me. She was intensely indignant. Like an enraged tragedy queen she flashed forth:

"You are out of your head, sir."

A suspicion as big as a mountain rose before me. I turned quickly to the doctor.

His infamous self was rolling around on the sofa, shaking like a dish of blanc-mange and indulging in a spasm of repressed laughter that gave way to the healthiest and heartiest roar on record.

The sell was too cruel, both on her and my self. I had no words for my indignation, and I could not strike a man who was fast laughing himself to death. She had disappeared. I rapidly sought my room, packed my valise and walked to town. And as I lay awake all night at the Yosemite, anathematizing the doctor, maniacs in general and myself in particular, I desired only one boon of the Almighty—that I might control that asylum for a week and have Dr. Osborn for a patient.—*The Wasp.*

SOCIETY AT LARGE.

THE Three Mackerels at Dover, where Jack Brag slept, is now turned into a milk-shop. This circumstance ought to gladden the heart of Sir Wilfrid Lawson.

THE statutes of Wadham College require any person elected warden to take the degree of Doctor of Divinity within a year after his election. None but clergymen can, of course, take this degree. But the Fellows, being clever, casuists, have devised a means of evading this restriction. They intend, it is said, to elect Mr. Thorley, who is a layman, and when, at the end of the year, he is forced to vacate his office by failure to comply with the statute, they will elect him anew for another year, and repeat the process *ad infinitum*.

It would be difficult to conceive anything more cruel than the dog-racing—we cannot call

it coursing—that took place recently at Kempton, in England. Many of the hares had been on the ground but a few hours, and, consequently, knew nothing of their surroundings; while they were still and cramped from their confinement during a long journey by rail. The ground was so narrow that they had no chance of escape. Consequently, on the first day only two hares were not killed by the greyhounds, and they were afterwards found dead.

Two prisoners were brought up lately at one of the London police-courts charged with exchanging sentences of imprisonment by each answering to the other's name. This is not an uncommon thing in India, where, indeed, a native gaoler has been known to allow a prisoner to go out of gaol to get married, and spend his honeymoon in the city, so long as he found a friendly substitute willing to endure incarceration in the meantime.

A MONUMENT has been erected in Haslar Cemetery, Gosport, to the memory of those lost by the capsizing of the *Eurydice* off the Isle of Wight in March, 1878. The memorial is ten feet high and twenty-three by seventeen at the base. It is of novel design, representing a rough rock with seaweed thereon, and the sea pouring over it; whilst the original anchor and chain of the ill-fated ship surmount the whole. The stonework is of polished granite and Portland stone.

NORWITHSTANDING the Irish dictator's ukase against hunting in Ireland, the members of the Ward Union, the famous Leinster Hunt, intend to have a "good try" whether or not the tenantry of the home counties will accept the Land League decree. Some people wonder why Mr. Parnell, who is something of a huntsman, declines to hunt this season. He has not declined; he merely changes his game, and intends to spend his time running landlords to earth.

TROUBLE is expected in Rome in the days between the 12th and 17th of October. The Italian Catholic pilgrims will then be "manifesting" in favour of Leo XIII.; and Menotti, son of Giuseppe, is gathering his clans for a vigorous pronunciamento. This is the news from Rome, with this addition, however, that the King's Ministers are making elaborate preparations for the prevention of disorder, and that only on the Royal undertaking to that effect has the pilgrimage been definitely arranged.

A WRITER in the *Observer*, in a brief notice of Richard Person, the great Greek scholar, who had been dead, it seems, just seventy-three years on that day, states that he was the original Thackeray's Doctor Silenus. We are very possibly wrong; but we can call to mind no Doctor Silenus. We remember very certainly rich and prosperous Silenus, who gave splendid banquets at his club, at which he delighted in making a certain poor and hungry old gentleman drunk. But surely there lies no parallel between such a man and Richard Person, who was never rich nor prosperous, though very frequently drunk. Perhaps Bardolph, when old Spec and little Grig met at the Cave of Harmony, might be nearer the mark.

BY the unwritten yet immutable laws of the Spanish code no one but a Spanish physician can attend a Queen of Spain. When the illness of the late Queen Mercedes became desperate her doctors called in their German colleague in consultation, but told him he must prescribe for Dona Mercedes without seeing her on their report of the symptoms and condition only. Dr. Kibbert declared that it was essential for him to examine the patient before he could indicate what remedies would be efficacious. That however could on no account be permitted. He then suggested that he might be allowed to see her through some open door or window without approaching her or even entering the sick-room. That concession too was refused. "Then, gentlemen, I can do nothing," was the reply. "I am willing to prescribe, but I can hardly do so with good effect without personally inspecting the patient." He wrote a prescription and left the palace. Three days later the fair young queen was dead, but the laws of Spanish Court etiquette remained intact.

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

MR. TENNYSON has just written a new play for Henry Irving.

CLARA LOUISE KELLAND is growing stout, but looks younger and prettier than ever.

SINTIA GRISI, when asked for her autograph, once wrote, "I am a sound, and as the echo of a sound alone I live in the memory."

THE Mapleson Opera Company will begin its season at the New York Academy of Music on Monday, October 17, with Miss Minnie Hauk as prima donna and Signor Campanini as primo tenore.

MR. MAPLESON has offered Mme. Adeline Patti £1,000 sterling a night for twelve performances of opera in New York, but Mme. Patti has for the present declined that sum.

MR. EDGAR BRUCE, the lessee and manager of the Prince of Wales Theatre, has been honoured by their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales by a request to take his company to Aberystwyth Castle, and give a private representation before the Royal Family and their guests.

HANS MAKART, the celebrated Austrian painter, has designed Minnie Hauk's costumes for *Schnee (Africaine)*, and they promise to be the finest and most picturesque which have yet been worn in that opera. Mr. Mapleson had to pay a bill of over 3,000 francs for them in Paris.