

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE.

Upon the margin of the Sea of Life,
Watching its troubled waves, a young man
stood;
He felt no shrinking from the coming strife,
No fear that time would bring him aught but
good.

For all the future seemed most wondrous fair,
As pictured by his fancy, and he saw
The world all hope, undimmed by grief or care,
And happiness the universal law.

He saw the joys of life on every hand,
Waiting for man to take them and be blest;
He saw mankind one firm united band,
Each striving for the welfare of the rest—

Each laboring in his proper time and place,
With all the power which God to him had
given,
To raise himself, and, through himself, his race,
Higher from out the dust and nearer heaven.

And many dreams of honor, power, and fame
With large ambition fired the young man's
breast.
He thought to build him an eternal name
Before he sought the stillness of his rest.

He longed to stand confessed a master mind,
A teacher of great truths as yet untought,
And, dying, be remembered by his kind
As one who had not lived and died for naught.

But Time dispelled these golden dreams, and
filled
Their place with prospects of a darker kind,
And hard experience all too quickly chilled
The fiery ardor of his youthful mind.

He found men disunited—some pursuing
Their selfish ends in dark and crooked ways,
And others in their thoughtless zeal undoing
The good that had been wrought in former
days.

He found that oftentimes the loftiest place
In men's esteem is gained by shame and
wrong,
The swift being seldom foremost in the race,
The battle seldom falling to the strong.

He saw full many a man of sterling worth
Tolling through life in poverty and pain,
While many a fool achieved by chance or birth
The highest worldly rank that man may gain.

He found the upward pathway hard to climb,
And hardest oft to him who labors most—
That Death destroys the fruits of toil and time,
And fame is seldom won till life is lost.

And, as the days and seasons onward rolled,
And found his golden hopes no nearer won,
He asked himself, as asked the sage of old,
"What is the end of labor 'neath the sun?"

But 'midst the selfish throng at length he found
One heart that was not to be bought and sold—
One gentle tongue that knew not how to
wound—
One friendship unalloyed by hope of gold.

Fair as the heavenly maids whose charms
adorn
The gorgeous fables of the Eastern clime—
Pure as the purest soul that e'er has borne
The stamp of mortal since the birth of Time—

Was she he loved; and 'neath her sunny smile
The weight of disappointment, doubt, and
pain,
Which had oppressed his spirit for a while,
Vanished, and he began to dream again.

He saw her filling to the very brim
His cup of life, with joys as yet unknown,
And, by her sweet example, raising him
To purity as perfect as her own.

She taught him that the failure or success
Of man's endeavors cometh from above—
That Life's great end and aim is happiness,
And all true happiness is born of love.

Thus end full oft the dreams of power and fame
Which fill in early youth man's ardent soul;
But, though we fail to win our chosen aim,
We reach a higher and a happier goal.

PUTTING ONE'S FOOT IN IT.

Reader have you ever "put your foot in it?"
I know you have, some time or another. Every
one must be acquainted with the indescribable
thrill which passes through him on finding that
he has committed himself. You are perhaps
holding an interesting conversation at a mu-
sical party with a young lady to whom you
were introduced a few minutes ago, while an-
other young lady, at the piano, is giving a gen-
eral invitation to the company to "meet her
once again." You remark in an off-hand way,
"Wretched voice that girl's got—pity they let
her sing," when, glancing from the performer
to your companion, you suddenly realize that
they match like two volumes in a set, both
being neatly got up in book muslin and green
trimmings. A shudder passes through you, and
it does not require the lady's distant manner to
tell you that the fair performer is her sister. Of
course, you proceed to talk wildly about nothing
at all, hoping against hope that your remark
is unheard; but the conversation, such as it
is, flags, and you take an early opportunity of
slipping away from the offended sister. Or
perhaps, at another time, while talking to a
friend on amusements in general, you remark
casually that you hate baggammon, and only
play it when driven to do so. It is not until

half an hour afterwards that it flashes across
you that, on the very last occasion on which
you were at this friend's house, you spent two
long hours in rattling the dice and in taking
and being taken up.

Such contretemps as these must at times fall
to everybody's lot, but there is a certain class of
individuals whose fate it seems to be to "put
their foot in it" on every available occasion.
There are some unhappy men who are perpe-
tually floating calmly and unconsciously into
the very midst of a dilemma, and then floun-
dering helplessly about like a fish in a net. Or
else, as some of them do, floating in and out
again with mild complacency, unconscious of
any harm, while every one present tries to as-
sume the same "appearance of happy unconsci-
ousness."

Take young Mr. Chaffinch, for instance. He
would not intentionally say anything personal
for world, and yet he can scarcely open his lips
without committing himself in some way. He
has been within an ace of having his head pun-
ched two or three times by certain irascible vic-
tims of his unfortunate speeches, when all the
time he was under the impression he was say-
ing something very complimentary or very
witty. So sure as there is an opening for Mr.
Chaffinch's special faculty, so sure is he to take
advantage of it. He rather prides himself on
filling up awkward pauses in conversation; and
if he can do nothing better, he will ask a riddle.
Unfortunately, his riddles are generally per-
sonal. Conversation having flagged in the mid-
dle of dinner, Mr. Chaffinch thinks he cannot do
better than set it going again by asking one of
his pet riddles. It so happens that his opposite
neighbor is a lawyer; what can be more appro-
priate, then, than to ask the company general-
ly, and this gentleman in particular, the well-
known riddle about the resemblance between a
lawyer and an uneasy person in bed? Everybody
wonders and looks at the ceiling, and Mr. Chaf-
finch smiles blandly. At last they give it up,
and Mr. Chaffinch, does the same with the an-
swer. Now, the riddle, although it may be a
good one, is hardly complimentary to the legal
profession; so the answer falls flat, and the
lawyer seems to see the joke less than any one.
If a riddle does not happen to strike him, Mr.
Chaffinch makes conversation by saying play-
fully across the table—
"I saw you the other day, Mrs. Macaw."

"Yes?" says the lady, with a sweet smile.
"Where was that?"

"Ah! I wonder where: can't you guess?"
returns Mr. Chaffinch, smiling. "The Miss
Macaws were with you," he adds, as a sort of
assistance to Mrs. Macaw's memory.

"Wherever could it have been? Do tell,"
scream the three Miss Macaws in chorus.

Everybody's attention is now aroused. Mr.
Chaffinch's heart is not adamant; and at last,
as if he were giving an answer to one of his
riddles, he says, "It was at the corner of Tot-
tenham Court-road;" and then he goes on as
if the best part were still to come—"You were
just getting out of a 'bus."

As Mrs. Macaw and her daughters are never
supposed to ride in any more public vehicle
than a hired brougham at least, it is as well for
Mr. Chaffinch's peace of mind that he does not
hear the remarks that are made about him by
the four ladies when they go home.

Although Mr. Chaffinch is always getting into
trouble when he is in company, in his own fam-
ily he gets on smoothly enough. It is only when
he is engaged in making polite conversation
that his mishaps occur, and at home one seldom
is so overwhelmed with a sense of politeness as
to manufacture conversation.

Poor Mr. Jones is the man to put his foot in
it at home. He lives in a state of continual
dread of what his next words may bring upon
him. It is hardly his fault, poor man; as he
is blessed with that most trying of all posses-
sions, a partner of an uncertain temper. Not
that she scolds—oh, no; but she is one of those
ladies who, in their own opinion, suffer a per-
petual martyrdom.

Mr. Jones has been married twice, and, ac-
cording to the present Mrs. Jones, he is always
referring to the deceased in terms detrimental
to his present spouse.

He is a great man for reminiscences, and if
he happens to begin—
"When poor Eliza was alive—"

"There, I'm sure it's a pity I am not in my
grave," breaks in the injured Mrs. Jones. "You
are always talking in that way. I know you
wish I was dead."

"I was only going to say, my dear," remon-
strates Mr. Jones, pathetically, "that when
Eliza was alive, meat was a penny a pound
cheaper than it is now."

"Yes," returns the martyr, not to be pacified,
"and I know you think I have something to do
with the price of the meat. But, never mind,
I shall be gone soon, and you will be able to
have another Eliza."

At this stage Mrs. Jones's feelings are general-
ly too much for her, and she has recourse to her
pocket handkerchief.

On another occasion Mr. Jones happens to
remark, "Isn't this chicken a little tough,
my dear?" his spouse replies with a resigned
air—
"I can never do anything right. I choose
that chicken myself. You are always com-
plaining."

"Oh, I am not complaining," hastily puts in
the meek Mr. Jones. "In fact, I—I rather
like it tough."

One of his friends happened to quote in Mr.
Jones's hearing, the other day, the old prov-
erb—
"Think twice before you speak once."

"Ah!" murmured Mr. Jones, with a sigh, "I
generally think half-a-dozen times, and then
say something wrong after all."

There are some unfortunate individuals who
are always getting into hot water with the
other members of their family, but injudicious-
ly dragging things from behind the scenes
which in reality should remain in the farthest
background. The Tomkineses, for example,
have a brother who means well, and who is old
enough to know better; but he is always
making unhappy remarks.

In the middle of dinner he will call across
the table—
"Oh, Eliza, I took that chig. of yours to the
hairdresser. He says it's all right, and you
shall have it back to-morrow."

Young Mr. Arundel, whom Eliza admires so
much—in fact, she is quietly setting her chig-
non at him—looks aghast, both on account of
the delicate nature of the communication, and
also at finding that the adorable chignon is
false.

Poor Eliza is so overcome that she can say
nothing.

Old Mr. Tomkines is nearly as bad as his son;
and Eliza has hardly ooded from the effects of
her brother's remark, when the old gentleman
suddenly says—
"Why, Eliza, what have you got your best
earrings on for?"

The simple old gentleman has no tact. Mrs.
Tomkines noticed the earrings a quarter of an
hour ago, but said nothing. Was not Mr. Arun-
del's presence sufficient explanation for any
sensible parents?

After Mr. Arundel has gone, Eliza fires up at
her brother.

"Tom, how could you say that about my
chignon before Mr. Arundel?"

And turning to Mr. Tomkines, senior, she
adds, in an injured tone—
"And, papa, I wish you would not make re-
marks about my dress when strangers are pre-
sent."

Father and son look rather sheepish: but
murmur something about not seeing any harm
in it.

Another of those who are always putting their
foot in it, and with whom we have little sym-
pathy, is the would-be funny man. If he only
knew the amount of anything but good wishes
which he almost daily brings down upon his
unconscious head, we think that it would take
all his funniness out of him for the rest of his
days. His wit seldom rises above a pun; but
we will say for him, that he seldom misses an
opportunity of displaying it in this form. Per-
sonal or otherwise, a pun is a pun to him, and
out it must come. If at a friendly gathering
there should happen to be a Mr. Graves present,
our funny man would, without the least hesita-
tion, ask him, in a tone evidently intended for
the rest of the company to hear, whether he is
not a very shy dog.

Mr. Graves of course looks rather mystified,
but says that he does not know that he is.

"Oh! rejoins our friend, "I thought you
must be, because most graves are deep."

Mr. Graves seems to bear out the character
given him, for he certainly conceals his admira-
tion of the pun very effectually.

On another occasion, when his family have
a few friends spending the evening with them,
and when they wish to appear specially gen-
teel, he will shock all their nerves by asking
his daughter Jane whether she buys her plums
by the dozen, as she has put so few in the cake.
Jane, who is not supposed to have so much as
seen the cake till the last few minutes, much
less to have made it, expresses her opinion to
her misguided parent concerning this question
at the close of the evening, in the privacy of his
own family.

It is only a person here and there who has
the peculiar faculty of putting his foot in it in
cases like the foregoing; but there are occa-
sions when even such cautious people as you and
I, reader, are liable to be caught tripping. One
of the most fruitful sources of danger in this
respect, and against which no one is entirely
proof, is the double entendre. We remember
an instance which happened to ourselves. We
were dining out at the time, and had next us
one of those spinster ladies of uncertain age,
who always make a point of enjoying to their
full extent the good things of this life. She had
just been helped to her third glass of cham-
pagne, and while it was still effervescing she re-
marked, with a delightful simper—
"How it froths!"

Wishing to follow up the remark, we said, in
a moralizing tone—
"Yes, but it goes down very quickly."

Now, reader, we have a tender heart, and
would not willingly hurt the feelings of a tad-
pole, so you may imagine our distress when we
observed immediately afterwards the double
meaning of our words.

We always pity those poor men who can
never make the smallest attempt at a speech
without going through a succession of absurd
blunders, chiefly in the shape of doubles en-
tendres. They generally see them themselves
directly they have made them, and the conse-
quence is they are in a perpetual state of cor-
recting and explaining what they said a mo-
ment before. There are few men who, having
committed themselves by any unlucky remark,
are able to withdraw from the dilemma grace-
fully; and as a result of our cogitations on this
subject, we think we may lay down the follow-
ing aphorism, "that the man is well bred who
never puts his foot in it; but he is better bred
who, having put it in, is able to take it out
again with success."

THE INTENDED ELOPEMENT.

Peeping through the leaves of the vine-cov-
ered bower, and watching eagerly the path
through the woods, was a beautiful little mai-
den. An anxious look was in her deep blue eyes
as pressing her hands over her heart as if to
stop its heavy beating, she said—
"Oh, why does he not come? How long a
time! If he had good news, I know he would
come quicker. Oh, I have not a mite of hope!"

The pretty lips quivered then, and she step-
ped back and sank on the mossy seat.
A moment after a sound, slight as the drop-
ping of leaves, caught her ear.

She sprang up, and for an instant a bright
light shone in her eyes, but quickly died away,
as the slow, heavy step came nearer, bringing
to sight a tall, noble-looking young man, whose
face, if less stern, would have been very hand-
some.

Without speaking, he clasped her out-stretch-
ed hand and drew her within his arms, shaking
his head sadly.

"I felt it was so, or you would have come
sooner," the maiden said, resting her head
against his shoulder.

"I had little, if any hope, Susie. I went this
last time because you bade me to."

"What did father say, Frank?"

"Over and over the same old story of having,
since your babyhood, intended you to be the
wife of his friend's son, Oh, if I were wealthier,
it would be all right, I know," Frank said, his
dark eyes flashing.

"Don't talk so, dear, please. I do not like to
hear you impute a wrong motive to my father.
I will never, never listen for one moment to any
words of love from George Forrester, or any
other man but you, Frank. So you may be sure,
if papa will not let me marry you, I will never
marry at all," Susie said, her eyes full of tears,
looking up to his.

"Susie I have made three appeals to your
father during the past year, each time finding
him, if possible, more determined to oppose our
happiness. I will never humiliate myself
again, and he will never yield. Now what will
you do?"

"Wait, hope, and pray; I can do nothing
more," Susie answered, in a tearful voice.

"Yes, Susie darling, you can, and secure our
immediate happiness. You can come with me,
be my own true wife, love."

"No—no—no; I cannot. I should not secure
our happiness. I should be miserable, and make
you so."

"Then I have nothing more to hope for. He
will not give you to me, and you will not come.
Oh, Susie, how can you send me off? You know
you are all the world to me. If I lose you, I
lose everything. I am alone in the world.
There are many loved ones to comfort your fa-
ther, until he comes to his better nature and
calls you back to his heart. Susie, am I to leave
you for ever?"

The beautiful dark eyes were looking into
hers, filled with so much love. How could she
resist?

"No—no; I shall die if you leave me, never
to come again. Oh, what I am to do? I love
you better than my own life, Frank, indeed I
do!"

"But father—how can I desert him? He
loves me more than the other children. I am
the oldest, his first child, and so like what mo-
ther was."

"That is why he loves me so; and now she
has gone, I should stay."

"And break your heart, and mine too, Su-
sie?"

"If I thought, Frank, you would not mind it
very long—"

"You would give me up, and, in time, get
into your father's way of thinking, and end by
marrying the man he wants you to," Frank
said, withdrawing his arm and turning away
with a great sigh.

"Oh, Frank, how can you talk to me so?"

"Well Susie, it is useless prolonging our sor-
row. I had better say good-bye, and go for
ever."

"No—no, Frank, dear love. Oh! what I am
to do?"

"Be happy, my own, and make me so; be
my wife before I return to W—; go with me.
Susie, your mother loved me; I know, if here,
she would plead for me."

"Yes, she loved you; and perhaps, in her
blest home, she will pity me, and win for
me forgiveness, alike from Heavenly as earthly
father, if longer my heart cannot resist my
love," Susie sobbed, dropping her golden head
on her lover's bosom, and promising all he
wished.

"The last night at home," she said; "on the
morrow I must go forth to return no more the
loving, dutiful child. Should he ever consent
to have me come back, I can never be again
what I once was to his heart. I shall have broken
the trust he held in me," Susie moaned.

Tenderly the brother and sister were minis-
tered to, her hand resting on each little head as
their lisping voices followed hers in the evening
prayer.

Willie and Emma rose, their demure faces
lifted to receive the good-night kiss.

But Rosie, the two-and-a-half-year baby, the
dying mother's sacred charge, wound her tiny
arms about the elder sister, and, with baby-like
perversity, hung on, lisping—
"Now Susu pay too; please, Susu, do."

The baby pleaded.

And Susie, raising her eyes to Rosie's, felt
in other, not far away, but near—very near—
and pleading through her child.