A Martyr to Style.

I despise this way of wearing
Gowns that trail into the dust,
But the other women do it,
And so I suppose I must.

It is neither neat nor nobby
To be wiping up the street,
And the only ones who like it
Are the women with big feet.

If I only had the courage
To endure the scornful smiles
Of my fellow female creatures
I would cling to olden styles.

I would always have my dresses
Short enough to miss the dirt,
And I wouldn't wear mud ruffles
On the bottom of my skirt.

But I am too great a coward
A decided stand to take,
So, with all the rest I follow
In a foolish fashion's wake.

And my newest gowns I'm making
With a hateful, horrid dip,
Over which some luckless mortal
Will, some day, be sure to trip.

But, I hold I am a martyr
Almost worthy of a crown,
For my meek and mild adoption
Of the now prevailing gown.

—*Susan M. Best.*

TWICE MARRIED.

At a late—very late breakfast, the morning after the Shirley ball, the Smiths were assembled with the exception of Blanche, who had entreated to be left undisturbed, since she must sleep or die, and Percival, who had breakfasted sketchily on scraps and confectionery, hours before, and was away in the woods with his gun.

The mail, always deposited in a little heap beside the general's plate, had been distributed. There was very little—two newspapers, a couple of letters for Nesbit Thorne, and one for Norma from a New York friend, claiming a promised visit, and overflowing with gossip and news of Gotham, full of personalities also, and a faint ladylike suspicion of wickedness—a racy, entertaining letter.

"Mamma," observed Norma, glancing up from her letter, "Kate says that Cecil Cumberland is engaged, or going to be engaged, I can't exactly make out which. Kate words it a little ambiguously; at all events there appears to be considerable talk about it. Kate writes: 'Cecil looks radiantly worried, and sulkily important. His family are ranged in a solid phalanx of indignant opposition, which, of course, clinches the affair firmly. Eva Cumberland was here this morning in a white heat of passion over it; and I believe apoplexy or hydrophobia is imminent for the old lady. The fact of Mrs. ——.'" Norma's voice trailed off into an unintelligible murmur, and she read on silently.

"Mrs. — who, my dear?" questioned her mother, with lively interest. "Is Cecil going to marry an objectionable widow?"

"Wait a moment, mamma. Katie writes so indistinctly, I'll be able to tell you presently." There was a shade of reserve perceptible in Norma's voice.

"But why do the family oppose it?" persisted Mrs. Smith. A warning look from her daughter admonished her to let the matter rest; that there were facts connected with Mr. Cumberland's marriage, the investigation and discussion of which had better be postponed. Mrs. Smith's tongue burned with inquiries, but she bravely held them back, and sought to produce a diversion by idle conjectures about Percival.

Thorne presently followed her and established himself opposite. He was great friends with Norma; once in the days before his marriage there had appeared a likelihood of their becoming more than friends. All that had been forgotten by the man; the woman's memory was more tenacious. They were wonderfully good friends still, these two; they never worried or jarred on one another.

Thorne, having no special desire to read his own letters, lighted a cigar, stirred the fire to a glorious blaze, and waxed conversational. The topic he selected for discussion was the topic introduced and interdicted at the breakfast table a few moments previously—the debatable engagement of their New York acquaintance. On this subject he chose to exhibit an unusual—and as Norma felt, unnecessary, degree of curiosity. He cross-questioned the girl vigorously, and failing to elicit satisfactory replies, laughingly accused her of an attempt to earn a cheap notoriety by the elaboration of a petty mystery.

"I wish you'd stop trying to put me on the witness stand, Nesbit!" she exclaime d in vexation; "why don't you read your own letters? One is from Ethel, I know. See what she says."

Thorne took his wife's missive from his pocket, opened, and glanced through it hurriedly; then turned back to the first page, and re-read it more carefully, the expression of his face hardening into cynicism, slightly dashed with disgust. The letter was penned in a large running hand and covered eight pages of dainty cream-laid paper. It was rambling in phraseology, and lachrymose in tone, but it indicated a want, and made that want clear.

It was—divorce.

Mrs. Thorne gave no special reason for desiring release from her marriage vows; she dwelt at length on her "lonely and unprotected" condition, and was very sorry for herself, and considered her case a hard one; suggesting blame to her husband in that he had not taken the necessary steps for her release long before. She intimated that he had been selfish and lacking in proper consideration for her in leaving it to her to take the initial steps in the matter. He should have arranged about the divorce at the time of the separation, she said, and so have spared her annoyance. As he had not done so, she hoped he would show some consideration for her now, and help her to arrange the disagreeable business as speedily and privately as possible. He really owed her indulgence "after all that had passed"; the last words were heavily underscored.

"Read that!" he said, and tossed the letter into Norma's lap. While she was doing so, he broke the seal of the other letter which proved to be a communication from a firm of solicitors in a small town in Illinois, in whose hands Mrs. Thorne had placed her case. It was delicately and ambiguously worded, as became the nature of the business, and contained simply a courteous notification of their client's intentions.

Norma had been prepared for Mrs. Thorne's letter by that of her friend Mrs. Vincent; and perhaps also by a secret hope on which she had fed for years—a hope that this would happen. She read the letter therefore without emotion, and returned it without comment.

"Well?" he queried impatiently.

"Well!" she echoed.

"What do you think of it?"

"I think that Mrs. Thorne wishes to marry again."

"No!—do you?" The tone was thoughtful; the interrogation delivered slowly. The idea was a new one, and it put a different complexion upon the matter, because of the child; there were still several years during which the personal custody of the boy was the mother's of right. It behooved him to look into this matter more closely.

"Yes, I'm sure of it," responded Norma; "its town talk. See what Kate Vincent says about it."

She handed him her letter folded down at this paragraph: "People have been mildly excited, and the gossip tongues set wagging by a rumor which floated down from the Adirondacks last summer, and has been gaining body and substance ever since. You remember how Cecil Cumberland philandered after a certain lady of our acquaintance last winter, and how unremitting were his attentions? Friendship, my dear! Harmless friendship of a pure platonic platform; you understand—*honi soit qui mal y pense*. Well, this autumn the plot thickened; the platonism became less apparent; the friendship more pronounced. Nothing painfully noticeable—oh no; the lady is too clever—still, the gossips began to take a contract, and work on it in slack seasons, and latterly with diligence. It is openly predicted that madam will seek a divorce, and then!—we shall see what we shall see. Cecil looks radiantly worried and sulkily important. His family are ranged in a solid phalanx of indignant opposition, which of course clinches the matter firmly. Eva Cumberland was here this morning in a white heat of passion over it, and I believe apoplexy or hydrophobia is imminent for the old lady. The fact of Mrs. Thorne's being still a married woman gives the affair a queer look to squeamish mortals, and the Cumberland women are the quintessence of conservative old-fogyism; they might be fresh from the South Carolina woods for all the advancement they can boast. It's wicked, and I'm ashamed of myself, but whenever I think of Ethel Thorne trying conclusions with those strait-laced Cumberlands, I'm filled with unholy mirth." Then followed belated apologies for this careless handling of a family matter, and copious explanations. Mrs. Vincent was a wordy woman, fond of writing, and apt to be diffuse when not pressed for time.

Thorne returned the letter to his cousin, and announced his intention of returning to New York immediately.

"By using dispatch I can catch the boat at Wintergreen this afternoon," he said. "I wish you'd tell your mother, Norma, only your mother, please; it will be time enough to acquaint the others when the whole affair is out."

Norma gave the required promise willingly. She, too, objected to this affair obtaining publicity. While Thorne sought her father to explain a sudden call to New York "on business," she communicated the contents of Mrs. Vincent's letter to her mother, and informed her of Thorne's determination.

CHAPTER XII.

Norma was exultant. The thing she had longed, thirsted and well-nigh prayed for, was coming to pass. Thorne would be a free man once more, free to come back to her, free to bring again the old sweetness to her life, free to renew the spring of years ago. Sitting by the library fire in the gloaming after her cousin's departure, Norma dreamed dreams and was happy—her eyes softened, and her lips smiled. Then her face darkened slowly, and the hands in her lap clinched themselves. In her fierce joy in the possibility of her reward coming to her at last, was mingled a dread that the cup might be dashed from her lips a second time.

During the year which had elapsed since Thorne's return from abroad, Norma had contrived to establish considerable influence over her cousin. She studied him quietly, and adapted herself to his moods, never boring him with an over-display of interest, never chilling him with an absence of it. Her plan was to make herself necessary to him, and in part she succeeded. Thorne, lonely and cut adrift, came more and more frequently to his aunt's house and exhibited more and more decidedly his preference for his cousin's society. The thin end of the wedge was in, and but for the move to Virginia, and its ill-starred consequences, the inevitable result must have followed.

She also decided that it would be better to accept Mrs. Vincent's invitation, and return to New York for a while. She knew very well why the invitation had been given, and saw through the shallow manœuvres to win her acceptance of it. Hugh Castleton, Mrs. Vincent's favorite brother, was in New York again, and she had not abandoned her old scheme of a match between him and her friend. Norma felt quite competent to foil her friend's plans in the present as she had foiled them in the past, so had no hesitation, on that score, in accepting the invitation. It would be better to be in New York—on the spot, while thismatter should be pending. Thorne might need advice, certainly would need sympathy and petting; he must not learn to do without her. Even if he had only been amusing himself here, after his reprehensible wont, her presence in New York could do no harm and might be productive of good.

CHAPTER XIII.

One afternoon, several days after Thorne's departure, Norma donned her warmest wraps and set out for a walk over to Lanarth.

Pocahontas, duly notified of Norma's approach by the vigilant Sawney, met her guest at the door and drew her in with words of welcome and praises of her bravery in venturing abroad in such gloomy weather. The girls did not kiss each other—as is too much the custom with her sex. Pocahontas did not like effusive embraces; a kiss with her meant a good deal.

When the two girls, in dressing gowns and slippers, sat over the fire in Pocahontas' room, brushing out their long hair, Norma found the opportunity for which she had lain in wait the entire evening.

After some idle conversation, she deftly turned the talk upon New York, and the life there, and rallied all her powers to be picturesque and entertaining. She held her listener entranced with rapid, clever sketches of society and the men and women who composed it, drawing vivid pictures of its usages, beliefs, and modes of thought and expression. Gradually she glided into personalities, giving some of her individual experiences, and sketching in an acquaintance or two, with brilliant, caustic touches. Soon Thorne's name appeared, and she noticed that the listener's interest deepened. She spoke of him in warm terms of admiration—dwelt on his intellect, his talents and the bright promise of his manhood; and then, observing that the brush had ceased its regular passes over the bright brown hair, and that the gray eyes were on the fire, without pause or warning she spoke of his hurried courtship and sudden marriage. She winced involuntarily as she saw the cold, gray pallor creep slowly over the girl's face, and noted the sudden tremor that passed through her limbs; but she steeled herself against compassion, and proceeded with her brushing and her narrative like one devoid of sight and understanding.

"I can not expect you, who know Nesbit so slightly, to be much interested in all this," she said, watching Pocahontas through her lashes; "I fear I only bore you with my story, but my mind has been so excercised over the poor fellow's troubles again lately, that I must unburden it to some one. You have no personal interest in the matter, therefore you will forgive my trespassing on your courtesy—especially when I tell you that I've no one at home to talk to. Nesbit wishes particularly that his story shouldn't get abroad here, and if I should revive it in Blanche's mind, she might mention it to others. Mamma would not; but unfortunately mamma and I rarely look at a thing from the same standpoint. It's been a relief to speak to you—far greater than speaking to Blanche." "Blanche is so excitable."

Yes; Blanche was excitable, Pocahontas assented absently; she was bracing her will, and steeling her nerves to endure without flinching. Not for worlds would she—even by the quivering of an eyelash—let Norma see the torture she was inflicting. She felt that Norma had an object in this disclosure, and was dimly sure that the object was hostile. She would think it all out later; at present Norma must not see her anguish. A woman would sooner go to the stake and burn slowly, than allow another woman, who is trying to hurt her, to know that she suffers.

Norma continued, speaking gently without haste or emotion, telling of the feverish brightness of those early days of marriage, and of the clouds that soon obscured the sunshine—telling of the *ennui* and unhappiness, gradually sprouting and ripening in the ill-assorted union—shielding the man, as women will, and casting the blame on the woman. Finally she told of the separation, lasting now two years, and of the letter from his wife which had caused Thorne's precipitate departure the day after the Shirley ball.

But of the divorce now pending she said never a word.

"Have they any children?" questioned Pocahontas steadily.

And was told that there was one—a little son, to whom the father was attached, and the mother indifferent. It was a strange case.

Again Pocahontas assented. Her voice was cold and even; its tones low and slighty wearied. To herself it appeared as though she spoke from a great distance, and was compelled to use exertion to make herself heard. She was conscious of two distinct personalities—one prostrate in the dust, humiliated, rent and bleeding, and another which held a screen pitifully before the broken thing, and shielded it from observation. When Norma bid her good night she responded quietly, and rising accompanied her guest to her room to see that every arrangement was perfect for her comfort.

Far into the night she sat beside her dying fire trying to collect her faculties, and realize the extent of the calamity which had befallen her. The first, and for the time, dominant emotion was a stinging sense of shame, an agony of rage and humiliation which tingled hotly through her, and caused her cheek to flame and her body to writhe as from the lash of a whip. She had been degraded; an insult had been put upon her. Her eyes blazed, and her hands clinched. Oh, for strength to hurl the insult back—for a man's arm and a man's power to avenge the foul affront! He—a married man—to come, concealing his bonds, and playing the part of a lover free to woo—free to approach a woman and to win her heart! The proud head bent to meet the hands upraised to cover the pale, drawn face. She loved him and he was unworthy. He had deceived and lied to her if not in words, then in actions; knowing himself bound to another woman, he had deliberately sought her out and made her love him. It was cruel, cruel! All along she had played virgin gold against base metal, and now she was bankrupt.

As she raised herself up, her eyes fell on the little box lying on her desk in which she had placed the fragments of the cup they had broken between them—the cup that her old play-fellow had used on that last evening. With the impulse of habit and association, her mind turned wearily to Jim. He was so true; he had never failed her. Had he suffered as she was suffering? Poor Jim! Was this ceaseless, gnawing agony that had usurped her life no stranger to his? If so—God pity him!—and her!

CHAPTER XIV.

On the way up from Virginia, Nesbit Thorne ran over in his mind the possibilities opened by this new move of his wife's, and on the whole he was satisfied. The divorce had become as much an object with him as with her, and if she had remained quiescent in the matter, he must have moved. He was glad to have been spared this—very glad that the initial steps had been of her taking. It put him in a good position with himself. The manes of his mother's scruples would be satisfied, and would never cause him discomfort since the fault did not rest with him. And then the boy—never could his son cast word or thought of blame to the father who had behaved so well; who had given every chance, foregone every advantage; acted not only the part of a gentleman, but of a generous, long-suffering man. Thorne felt a glow of satisfaction in the knowledge that in years to come his son would think well of him.

But this supposition of Norma's in regard to a second marriage put the whole matter in a new light in regard to the child. If such a change should be in contemplation, other arrangements must be made about the boy; he could no longer remain in the custody of his mother. His son could not remain under the roof of his wife's second husband during his own lifetime. The line must be drawn somewhere. It did not occur to Thorne that his wife with equal justice might raise similar objections.

He determined to see Ethel at once and discover whether or not there was a truth in the reports that had reached him anent Cecil Cumberland. If there should be, he would bring such pressure as lay in his power to bear on her, in order to obtain immediate possession of the boy. The child was still so young that the law gave the mother rights which could only be set aside at the expense of a disagreeable suit; but Thorne thought he could manage Ethel in such a way as to make her voluntarily surrender her rights. He knew that her affection for the child was neither deep nor strong.

He ascended the steps of his own house and rang the bell sharply. It was answered by a strange servant who regarded him with interest; evidently a gentleman caller at that hour of the morning was unusual. Was Mrs. Thorne at home? The man would inquire. Would the gentleman walk in. What name should he say? Mr. Thorne—and his business was pressing; he must see her at once.

The man opened the door of the back parlor and stood aside to let Mr. Thorne pass; then he closed it noiselessly and proceeded up-stairs to inform his mistress.

Thorne glanced around the room curiously; it was two years since he had seen it. On the marble hearth burned a bright wood-fire, and the dancing flames reflected themselves in the burnished brasses. The tiles around the fireplace were souvenirs of his wedding, hand-painted by the bevy of bridesmaids to please a fancy of Ethel's. Norma's was in the centre—the place of honor. It was a strange thing that Norma had selected to paint; heavy sprays of mingled nightshade and monkshood on a ground the color of a fading leaf; but, strange as it was, it was the most beautiful of them all. There were flowers in the room and the perfume of heliotrope and roses filled the air. The piano was open and on it one of the popular songs of the day; a loud, jarring thing. Ethel liked what she called "bright music," on the keys lay a tumbled lace handkerchief, and on the floor, close to the pedal of the instrument, was a man's driving glove.

Over the piano hung the portrait of a lady with soft, gray hair, and the expression of purity and love which medieval painters gave to their saints. It was a picture of Thorne's mother and it hurt him to see it there. He determined to have it removed as soon as possible.

The door opened and Mrs. Thorne entered, feeling herself terribly ill-used and persecuted, in that her husband had elected to come to her in person, instead of availing himself of the simpler and more agreeable mode of communication through their lawyers. It was quite possible that he would make himself disagreeable. Mrs. Thorne shrank from anything disagreeable, and had no tolerance for sarcasms addressed to herself. She would have refused the interview had she dared, but in her heart she was dimly afraid of her husband.

Thorne bowed coldly, and then placed a chair for her on the hearth-rug. "Sit down," he said, "I want to talk to you," and then he seated himself opposite her.

For a while he did not speak; somehow the words he had come to say stuck in his throat; it was so cold-blooded for them, husband and wife, to sit there beside their own hearth and discuss their final separation. A log, which had burned in half, fell and rolled forward on the marble hearth, sending little puffs of gray smoke into the room. He reached past her for the tongs and laid the log back in its place, and the little action seemed to seal his lips more closely. The tiny clock on the carved oak mantle chimed the hour in soft, low tones; he counted the strokes as they fell, one, two and so on up to twelve. The winter sunshine streamed in between the parting of the curtains and made a glory of his wife's golden hair.

Ethel was the first to speak. "You got my letter?" she questioned, keeping her eyes fixed on the fire.

"Yes; that is the reason I'm here.

The broken log was blazing again quite merrily, the two ends far apart.

"Why not have written instead of coming?" she demanded, as one who protested against some grievous injury; "it would have been far pleasanter for both. There's no sense in our harassing ourselves with personal interviews."

"I preferred a personal interview."

Ethel lapsed into silence; the man was a hopeless brute, and it was useless to expect courtesy from him. She tapped her foot against the fender, and a look of obstinacy and temper disfigured the soft outlines of her face. The silence might remain unbroken until the crack of doom for any further effort she would make.

Thorne broke it himself. He was determined to carry his point, and in order to do so strove to establish ascendency over his wife from the start.

"What's the meaning of this new move, Ethel?" he demanded, authoritatively. "I want to understand the matter thoroughly. Why do you want a divorce?"

Mrs. Thorne turned her face toward him defiantly.

"Because I'm tired of my present life, and I want to change it. I'm sick of being pointed at, and whispered about, as a deserted wife—a woman whose husband never comes near her."

"Whose fault is that?" he retorted sharply; "this separation is none of my doing, and you know it. Bad as things had become, I was willing to worry along for the sake of respectability and the child; but you wouldn't have it so. You insisted on my leaving you—said the very sight of me made your chains more intolerable. Had I been a viper, you could scarcely have signified your desire for my absence in more unmeasured terms."

"I know I desired the separation," Mrs. Thorne replied calmly, "I desire it still. My life with you was miserable, and my wish to live apart has only increased in intensity. You never understood me."

Thorne might have retorted that the misunderstanding had been mutual, and also that *all* the wretchedness had not fallen to her share; but he would not stoop to reproaches and vituperation. It was a natural peculiarity of her shallow nature to demand exhaustive comprehension for quite commonplace emotions.

"It's useless debating the past, Ethel. We've both been too much to blame to afford the luxury of stone-throwing. What we must consider now is the future. Is your mind quite made up? Are you determined on the divorce?"

"Quite determined. I've given the matter careful consideration, and am convinced that entire separation, legal as well as nominal, is absolutely necessary to my happiness."

"And your reasons?"

"Haven't I told you, Nesbit?" using his name, for the first time, in her anger, "Why do you insist on my repeating the same thing over and over, eternally? I'm sick of my life, and want to change it."

"But how?" he persisted. "Your lite will be the same as now, and your position not so assured. The alimony allowed by law won't anything like cover your present expenditures, and you can hardly expect me to be more generous than the law compels. The divorce can make little difference, save to diminish your income and deprive you of the protection of my name. You will not care to marry again, and the divorce will be a restricted one." Thorne was forcing his adversary's hand.

"Why will it be restricted?" she demanded, her color and her temper rising. "It shall not be restricted or hampered in any way, I tell you, Nesbit Thorne! Am I to be fettered and bound and trammeled by you forever? I will not be. The divorce shall give me unlimited power to do what I please with my life. It shall make me as free as air—as free as I was before I married you."

"You would not wish to marry again?" he repeated.

"Why not?" rising to her feet and confronting him in angry excitement.

"Because, in that case, you would lose your child. I neither could nor would permit my son to be brought up in the house of a man who stood to him in the relationship you propose."

"You cannot take him from me," Mrs. Thorne retorted in defiant contradiction; her ideas of the power of men and lawyers hopelessly vague and bewildered. "No court on earth would take so small a child from his mother."

"Ah! you propose having the case come into court then? I misunderstood you. I thought you wished the affair managed quietly, to avoid publicity and comment. Of course, if the case comes into court, I shall contest it, and try to obtain possession of the boy, even for the time the law allows the mother, on the ground of being better able to support and educate him."

"I do not want the case to come into court here, Nesbit, and you know that I do not! Why do you delight in tormenting me?"

"Listen to me, Ethel. I've no wish to torment you. I simply wished to show you that I would abide by my rights, and that I have some power—all the power which money can give—on my side. Our marriage has been a miserable mistake from the first; we rushed into it without knowledge of each other's characters and dispositions, and, like most couples who take matrimony like a five-barred gate, we've come horribly to grief. I shall not stand in your way; if you wish to go, I shall not hinder you. This is what I propose: I'll help you in the matter, will take all the trouble, make the arrangements, bear all the expense. It will be necessary for one of us to go to Illinois, and see these lawyers, if the divorce is to be gotten there. It may be necessary to undergo a short residence in the State in order to simulate citizenship and make the divorce legal. I'll find out about this, and if it's necessary I will do it. After the divorce I'll allow you the use of this house, and a sufficient income to support it; and also the custody of our son as long as you remain unmarried. In return, you must waive all right to the boy for the years you can legally claim him, and must bind yourself to surrender him to me, or any person I appoint, at least a month before any such marriage, and never, by word or act, to interfere in his future life, or any disposition I may think best to make of him. I should also strongly object to any future marriage taking place from my house, and should expect legal notice in ample time to make arrangements about the boy."

"Would you allow me to see the child whenever I wished?"

"Certainly. I'm no brute, and you are his mother. I shall only stipulate that the meetings take place in some other house than yours. You are at liberty to visit him as often as you like, so long as you are faithful to our agreement and leave his mind unbiased. I will never mention you unkindly to him, and shall expect the same consideration from you. When he is old enough to judge between us, he will decide as he thinks right."

"Suppose you marry again, yourself. What about the child then? You are very hard and uncompromising in your dictation to me, Nesbit, but I can have feelings and as well as you."

Thorne was startled. He considered that he was behaving well to his wife. He wanted to behave well to her; to let the past go generously, so that no shadow or reproach from it might fall upon the future. Her tart suggestion set the affair in a new light. It was an unpleasant light, and he turned his back on it, thinking that by so doing he disposed of it. There was the distance of the two poles between Pocahontas Mason and Cecil Cumberland. He surely was the best judge of what would conduce to the welfare of his son.

"We were discussing the probability of your re-marriage, not mine," he responded coldly; "the reports in circulation have reached even me at last."

"What reports?" with defiant inquiry.

"That you are seeking freedom from your allegiance to one man, in order to swear fealty to another. That your vows to me are irksome because they prevent you taking other vows to Cecil Cumberland. I pass over the moral aspect of the affair; that must rest with your own conscience," (it is astonishing how exemplary Thorne felt in administering the rebuke); "the reports with your conscience," he repeated, "and with that I've nothing to do. The existence of such reports—which lays your conduct as a married woman open to censure—gives me the right to dictate the terms of our legal separation. I'm obliged to make plainly, Ethel. You brought about the issue, and must abide by the consequences. I've stated my terms, and it's for you to accept or decline them."

She signified her acceptance of his proposal in a few brusque, ungracious words, for she considered it due to her dignity to be disagreeable, in that she was acceding to terms, not dictating them.

CHAPTER XV.

Thorne had even less difficulty with his legal arrangements than he had anticipated. He had almost relegated the subject of divorce to the limbo of things as little thought and spoken of as possible by well-bred people. He knew nothing of the *modus operandi*, and was surprised at the ease and celerity with which the legal machine moved.

Thorne walked in the direction of his hotel in a state of preoccupation. He was sore and irritated; he disliked it all intensely; it jarred upon him and offended his taste. Over and over he cursed it all for a damnable business from beginning to end. He was perfectly aware, reasoning from cause to effect, that the situation was, in some sort, his own fault; but that was a poor consolation. That side of the question did not readily present itself; his horizon was occupied by the nearer and more personal view. He loathed it all, and was genuinely sorry for himself and conscious that fate was dealing hardly by him.

As he turned a corner, he ran against a tall, handsome young lady, who put out her hand and caught his arm to steady herself, laughing gayly: "Take care, Nesbit!" she exclaimed, "you nearly knocked me down. Since when have you taken to emulating Mrs. Wilfer's father, and 'felling' your relatives to the earth?"

"Why, Norma! is it really you?" he questioned, refusing to admit the evidence of sight and touch unfortified by hearing.

She cheered Thorne wonderfully, for she seemed to bring Virginia and the life of the last few months nearer to him—the peaceful life in which new hopes had budded, in which he had met, and known, and loved Pocahontas. Norma did him good, raised his spirits, and made the future look bright and cheerful; but not in the way she hoped and intended. She had come North with the hope of furthering her own plans, of making herself necessary and agreeable, of keeping the old days fresh in his memory. And she *was* necessary to him, as a trusted comrade who had never failed him; a clever adviser in whose judgment he had confidence; a charming friend who was fond of him, and who had, but now, come from the enchanted land where his love dwelt. Of her plans he knew nothing, suspected nothing; and the days she brought fresh to his thoughts were days in which she had no part.

In a little while he went West, and there was a period of uneventful waiting, after which Norma received a Western paper containing a short and unobstrusive notice of the granting of a divorce to Nesbit Thorne from Ethel, his wife.

She bore it away to her room and gloated over it greedily. Then she took her pen, and ran it around the notice, marking it heavily; this done, she folded, sealed and directed it in a clear, bold hand—General Percival Smith, Wintergreen Co., Virginia. It would save elaborate explanations.

CHAPTER XVI.

Spring opened very late that year in Virginia—slowly and regretfully, as though forced into doing the world a favor against its will, and determined to be as grudging and disagreeable over it as possible. The weather was cold, wet and unwholesome—sulking and storming alternately, and there was much sickness in the Lanarth and Shirley neighborhood. The Christmas had been a green one—only one small spurt of snow on Christmas Eve, which vanished with the morning. The negroes were full of gloomy prognostications in consequence, and shook their heads, and cast abroad, with unction, all sorts of grewsome prophecies anent the fattening of the church-yard.

All through the winter, Mrs. Mason had been ailing, and about the beginning of March she succumbed to climatic influences, backed by hereditary tendency, and took to her bed with a severe attack of inflammatory rheumatism. Pocahontas had her hands full with household care and nursing, and perhaps it was as well, for it drove self into the background of her mind, for a part of the time at least, and filled with anxiety the empty days. Grace, living five miles away and loaded down with family cares and duties of her own, could be of little practical assistance.

When at length the news of Thorne's divorce reached them, she warded off with tender consideration all remark or comment likely to hurt the girl, and gave straightforward, hot-tempered Berkeley a hint which effectually silenced him. In sooth, the honest fellow had small liking for the subject. He bitterly resented what he considered Thorne's culpable concealment of the fact of his marriage. He remembered the night of the ball at Shirley, and the memory rankled. It did not occur to him that the matter having remained a secret might have been the natural result of an unfortunate combination of circumstances, and in no sort the consequence of calculation or dishonor on Thorne's part. Neither did it occur to him, large-minded man though he was, to try to put himself in Thorne's place and so gain a larger insight into the affair, and the possibility of arriving at a fairer judgment. Berkeley's interest in the matter was too personal to admit of dispassionate analysis, or any impulse toward mercy, or even justice. His anger burned hotly against Thorne, and when the thought of him rose in his mind it was accompanied by other thoughts which it is best not to put into words.

During Mrs. Mason's illness, little Blanche was unremitting in her attentions, coming over daily with delicacies of her own concoction, and striving to help her friends with a sweet, unobtrusive kindness which won hearty response from both ladies, and caused them to view Berkeley's increasing attentions to the little maid with pleasure. They even aided the small idyl by every lawful means, having the girl with them as often as they could and praising her judiciously.

With her winsome, childish ways and impulsiveness, Blanche formed a marked contrast to grave, reserved Berkeley Mason, and was perhaps better suited to him on that account. When their engagement was announced, there was no lack of congratulation and satisfaction in both families. The general, as he gave his hearty approbation to her choice, pinched her ears and asked what had become of her objections to Virginia; and Percival tormented her unceasingly, twitting her with her former wails of lamentation. Blanche did not care. She took their teasing in good part, and retorted with merry words and smiles and blushes. She had made her journey to the unknown, and returned with treasure.

Mrs. Smith, in her chamber, smiled softly, and thought on muslin and lace and wedding favors.

(To be continued.)

Cities as Summer Resorts.

It is odd that people who live in country towns, while as eager for a change during the hot weather as their city cousins, do not oftener come to the city for it. This fact is not such a compliment to rural charms as it seems, for, owing to the fact that the beauties of summer in a city have not been well advertised, country townspeople seldom go anywhere during the warm spell.

New York, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco—all the large cities are natural watering places. New York, for example, is surrounded by water, and is so near the ocean that excursion steamers to Rockaway go out of sight of land to lengthen the trip. People hear of the stifling city streets—but the streets of New York are far breezier than those of many an inland town which boasts of its shade trees and its sprinkling cart.

From every other pier in New York steamers put out for a half day's trip on the Hudson, down the bay, up the sound and beyond Sandy Hook. Central Park offers its hundreds of acres of woodland and meadow, a row on the placid Harlem is a treat, open street cars afford a breezy and luxurious ride through odd corners of the town, and the roof seats of the Fifth avenue stage give every man a triumphal chariot.

Because "Drake's Magazine" lives in New York I have kept the New York's advantages a little entirely to myself. Every city is one, more or less.

Come to the city in the summer for your outing, you who live in country towns. Start the ball a-rolling.—*Pikestaff in Drake's Magazine.*

Lady Macdonald as an Author.

Just before her bereavement Lady Macdonald, widow of the late Sir John Macdonald, completed her first ambitious literary effort in a series of articles for the *Ladies' Home Journal*, the first one of which will appear in the August number of that periodical. Last summer Lady Macdonald, with a party of friends, travelled in her private car through the most picturesque parts of Canada, and in a delightfully fresh manner she describes her experiences on this trip in these articles, to which she has given the title of "An Unconventional Holiday." A series of beautiful illustrations, furnished by Lady Macdonald, will accompany the articles.

An Example for William.

Buffalo *News*: The Queen Regent of the Netherlands and her daughter declined the offer of a public reception during their recent visit to Amsterdam. They requested the city officials to use the money collected for the reception in feeding the poor. Consequently more than 30,000 poverty-stricken creatures received presents of food and money and 35,000 school children were provided with a breakfast.

In a Practical Age.

"Don't you think I am doing well in drawing, papa?" said Maude.

"Splendid!" said Mr. Calliper, proudly, as he looked over the drawing which she had submitted to him, "but I don't think this corkscrew is quite perfect, is it?"

"Why, papa!" said Maud, "that isn't a corkscrew! That is a drawing of a gimlet!"

An Eye to Economy.

Buffalo *News*: "If you must know, ma'am," said the doctor, "your husband won't live 24 hours."

"Goodness gracious!" ejaculated the heart-broken woman, "and here you've gone and prescribed medicine enough for five days."

Among the passengers who arrived at New York on Monday on the steamship Arizona was the well-known rough-coated St. Bernard, Prince Regent. The Prince is a grandsire, and is the father of most of the prize-winners of late years.

No flowering plant has been discovered within the Anarctic Circle; within the Arctic Circle 762 different species have been classified.

Miss Tait, the daughter of the late Arch bishop of Canterbury, devotes her whole life to the poor of London, making her home in one of the poor streets in the vicinity of the ecclesiastical palace.

Mayor Holmes, of Kansas City, has been formally censured by resolutions of the barbers for having been shaved in a shop on Sunday.

—The friendship of the bad is like the shadow of an overhanging bank, ready to crush him who sits beneath.

"German Syrup"

Here is an incident from the South—Mississippi, written in April, 1890, just after the Grippe had visited that country. "I am a farmer, one of those who have to rise early and work late. At the beginning of last Winter I was on a trip to the City of Vicksburg, Miss., where I got well drenched in a shower of rain. I went home and was soon after seized with a dry, hacking cough. This grew worse every day, until I had to seek relief. I consulted Dr. Dixon who has since died, and he told me to get a bottle of Boschee's German Syrup. Meantime my cough grew worse and worse and then the Grippe came along and I caught that also very severely. My condition then compelled me to do something. I got two bottles of German Syrup. I began using them, and before taking much of the second bottle, I was entirely clear of the Cough that had hung to me so long, the Grippe, and all its bad effects. I felt tip-top and have felt *that way* ever since." PETER J. BRIAIS, Jr., Cayuga, Hines Co., Miss.

Kissing and Smiling Preachers.

How Able and Experienced Men Are Humiliated.

Toronto *World*: The Methodist Church is forever being confronted with the proof that its system of supplying ministers is faulty. However that system may on the whole compare with the various other plans in use, it is certainly far from perfect.

The latest instance of this occurs in the Davenport Church on the western skirts of Toronto. This church has been long established and once flourished, but of recent years the congregations have fallen away, and the collections and other sources of revenue dwindled to insufficiency. New churches have arisen near by and prospered, and the more the leading members of the Davenport flock looked about the more regularly did their eyes revert to their pulpit and their hearts declare that a young minister must be secured. Their especial need was a young man, one who could smile as well as pray; who could entertain and retain the living as well as shrive the dying; who would be as handy at a picnic as a prayer-meeting, and in his vigorous humanity prefer a marriage to a funeral. This opinion was arrived at last year, and a memorial was forwarded to Dr. Pirritte, President of the conference [and formerly a resident of Hamilton], asking that the request be impressed upon the Stationing Commitece. In the original draft of stations Rev. Mr. Wellwoods was allotted to Davenport, and this suited the congregation to a nicety. Presumably he is a good hand at a wedding and a cordial smiler. At any rate this is what they demanded in their new parson, and they were suited with him. Rev. Dr. Pirritte, retiring president of the conference, was billeted for Orillia in the first draft of stations, but the Orillia people presumably wanted a parson who could put up swings at a picnic if need be and go with zest into his sacred function of stealing first kiss from the bride at marriages, so they sent word that Dr. Pirritte would not do. Thereupon the Stationing Committee transposed Messrs. Wellwoods and Pirritte. The Davenport people held an indignation meeting and refuse to accept Rev. Dr. Pirritte as their minister.

Rev. Dr. Pirritte is placed in a most humiliating position. After years of valuable services to the church he is sent to one station after another and told that he is not wanted. Last year he was exalted by his fellow-clergymen to the presidency, and that should, if it does not, attest his attainments as well as his virtues of head and heart. A system that can subject such a man to such humiliation is a poor system and has lived too long.

The introduction of fiddles and operatic solos and bun-struggles and collections to get into church and collections to get out again—this style of thing is bearing fruit everywhere. The preacher nowadays requires to be a Napoleon of finance and play the arts of a confidence man in filling his pews: In hiring him the congregation bargains for a broad smile and a wife who will meekly be bullied by every woman on the circuit. The Stationing Committee should secure a list of those churches that demand circus attractions in the pulpit, and those other churches that insist upon having a minister who can turn handsprings, and has a hereditary disposition to shake hands. In this way it might save ministers grown old in the service, but none the less sensitive, from humiliation they can never quite forget in this life.

"How are you?"
"Nicely, Thank You."
"Thank Who?"
"Why the inventor of
SCOTT'S
EMULSION
Which cured me of CONSUMPTION."
Give thanks for its discovery. That it does not make you sick when you take it.
Give thanks. That it is three times as efficacious as the old-fashioned cod liver oil.
Give thanks. That it is such a wonderful flesh producer.
Give thanks. That it is the best remedy for *Consumption, Scrofula, Bronchitis, Wasting Diseases, Coughs and Colds.*
Be sure you get the genuine in Salmon color wrapper; sold by all Druggists, at 50c. and $1.00.
SCOTT & BOWNE, Belleville.

"MEMS" FOR MADAM.

Scraps for the Housewife's Commonplace Book.

Ground coffee sprinkled on a shovel of hot cinders is a good disinfectant.

It is said that flowers, carefully packed in air-tight boxes, will keep as long as ten days.

The handles of stocking-darners make good glove-darners, as they are just the right size for slipping up the fingers.

A very good cement to fasten on lamp-tops is melted alum. Use as soon as melted, and the lamp is ready for use as soon as the cement is cold.

If matting, counterpanes or bedspreads have oil spots on them, wet with alcohol, rub with hard soap, and then rinse with clear, cold water.

New lamp-shades made of deep-green tissue paper, slightly crinkled, are cut to represent the drooping foliage of a palm-tree, and are very effective.—*Housekeeper's Weekly.*

Fresh and Vigorous.

On a fine morning and a fine road, what is more invigorating than a spin on a cycle? When it comes to a race, the suggestion of Mr. George Phillips, Sec'y, Leinster Cycling Club, Dublin, Ireland, has force: "I have found St. Jacobs Oil an invaluable remedy for strains and bruises, and so have several members of our club." This ought to be borne in mind.

A Few Sensible Remarks.

But what's a diploma? It shows what you have been. It is no pass