

The Story of a Hotel Bill.

We find this amusing story in the New York correspondence of the Boston Herald:—

We are quite familiar with the extortions practised by hotel keepers in this country upon those of their patrons who, it is supposed, will endure anything. Not long ago a young lady, who had come here from New England with her mother, with a view to taking lessons in music, went to one of the up-town houses to stay for a week or two, until she could board in a private family. The morning that she was to leave she sent for the bill for herself and mother—a lady of nearly sixty, who occupied a room, No. 45, adjoining that of her daughter. Miss—was amazed to find that her bill amounted to \$175, because she knew it ought not to be more than \$60 or \$70 at the outside. As no items were given, she returned the accounts to the office, with the request that the items should be inserted. The bill went back with two or three specifications, and the "sundries" set down at \$70. Once more she returned the bill, demanding to know what the "sundries" might be. The clerk explained, through the servant, that "sundries" was the polite term for "drinks," which so enraged the young lady that she demanded to see the extraordinary accountant in person. He made himself visible in due season, and the delicate, spiritual-looking girl confronted him by asking him if he supposed she had drunk, in eight or nine days \$70 worth of liquor. As may be imagined, he was somewhat abashed and said, with confusion, "I beg pardon, miss; it's a mere clerical error. This is 44; the drinks should have been charged to 45—the next door, you see—a room occupied by an old fellow who drinks like a fish." "Permit me to introduce to you the old fellow," replied Miss—, pushing open the door, standing ajar, and revealing to his confounded gaze one of the gentlest and saintliest looking old ladies he had ever beheld. The clerk said nothing, but dashed down the stairs and in a minute a receipted bill once more returned with the "sundries" omitted.

Matrimonial Superstitions.

In olden days, June was held the most propitious month in the twelve for marriage, a happy result being rendered doubly certain if the ceremony was timed so as to take place at the full moon, or when the sun and moon were in conjunction. That unimpeachable authority, the registrar-general, tells us that May is in these latter days a favorite marrying month in England, so that one matrimonial superstition has gone the way all such fancies are doomed, sooner or later, to go; for May used to be as much avoided by persons about to marry as June was favored, that merry month being supposed to be specially under the influence of malignant spirits delighting in domestic discord. "The girls are all stark naught that wed in May," is the verdict of one old saw; another declares—

"From the marriages in May
All the bairns die and decay;"

a third pronounces, "Who marries between the sickle and the sythe will never thrive;" while a poet, complimenting the month at the expense of what should be the ruling passion in marriage-minded folk, sings—

"May never was the month of Love,
For May is full of flowers;
But rather April, wet by kind,
For Love is full of showers!"

But if old sayings ruled the world, there would be no marrying at all, for a very old one avers that no man enters the holy state without repenting his rashness before the year is out; unless, indeed, everybody determined, like the old Norfolk farmer, to cheat the adage by wedding on the 31st of December. In times gone by, candidates for connubialty were obliged to study times and seasons. The Church would not allow them to marry just when they felt inclined. "Marriage," says the register of Norton, "comes in on the 13th of January, and at Septuagesima Sunday it is out again until Low Sunday, at which time it comes in again, and goes not out till Rogation Sunday; thence it is forbidden until Trinity Sunday; from thence it is unforbidden till Advent Sunday, and comes not in again until the 13th of January." That those concerned might better remember the rules, somebody put them into rhyme, running thus—

"Advent marriage doth deny,
But Hilary gives thee liberty;
Septuagesima says thee nay;

Eight days from Easter says you may;
Rogation bids thee to contain,
But Trinity sets thee free again."

It was considered improper to marry upon Innocents' Day, because it commemorated the slaughter of the children by Herod; and it was equally wrong to wed upon St. Joseph's Day. In fact, the whole season of Lent was declared sacred from the intrusion of Hymen's devotees. "Marry in Lent, and you'll repent;" and there are good people among us still who, if they do not believe that bit of proverbial wisdom to be prophetic, undoubtedly think Lenten wedders deserve to find it so. We may possibly be doing a service to some of our readers by informing them (on the authority of a manuscript of the fifteenth century, quoted in the "Book of Days") that there are just thirty-two days in the year upon which it is unadvisable to go into join-hanc—namely, seven in January; three each in February, March, May and December; two each in April, June, July, August, September and November; and one in October; so that January is the worst and October the best month for committing matrimony; the actual unlucky days being these:—January 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 7th, 10th, 15th; February 6th, 7th, 18th; March 1st, 6th, 8th; April 6th, 11th; May 5th, 6th, 7th; June 7th, 15th; July 5th, 19; August 15th, 19th; September 6th, 7th; October 6th; November 15th, 16th; December 15th, 16th, 17th. As to which is the best day of the week, why—

"Monday for wealth;
Tuesday for health;
Wednesday the best day of all;
Thursday for crosses;
Friday for losses;
Saturday no luck at all."

Friday is generally considered an unlucky day in England; but in France the country lasses look upon the first Friday in the month as peculiarly favorable, if not for the actual ceremony, at least for determining who will be one of the principal actors in it. Before getting into bed the curious damsel raises one leg, and plants it against the foot of the bed, hoping by this simple action to induce the patron of bachelors good St. Nicholas, to show her in her sleep the counterfeit presentment of her destined husband.—*Chambers' Journal.*

THE VALUE OF TIME.—The secret of leisure is occupation. Have eight hours a day entirely devoted to business, and you will then find you have time for other pursuits. This for some time to come, will seem to you a paradox, but you will be one day convinced of the truth, that the man who is the most engaged has always the most leisure. And remember, it is only Brahmins and Rajahs who think that they must move with head erect and uplifted gaze in order to govern men. To be a man above the world, you must, in every signification of the word, begin by being a man of the world; to have weight and influence with the people, you must understand them. We hear so much of *la haute politique*, of the dignity in history. A perfect simplicity is often the greatest refinement of diplomacy. All youth is arrogant, but arrogant above all youth is political or diplomatic youth.

GOOD ADVICE.—The following hint to young artists, by Sir Walter Scott, is invaluable; it is at once a guide, a warning, and a stimulative:—"I have rarely seen," he writes, "that a man who conscientiously devoted himself to the studies and duties of any profession, and did not admit to take fair and honorable opportunities of offering himself to notice when such presented themselves, has not at length got forward. The mischance of those who fall behind, though flung upon fortune, more frequently arises from want of skill and perseverance. Life, my young friend, is like a game of cards—our hands are alternately good or bad, and the whole seems at first glance to depend on mere chance. But it is not so; for, in the long run, the player predominates over the casualties of the game. Then do not be discouraged by the prospect before you, but ply your studies hard, and qualify yourself to receive fortune when she comes in your way!"

When you see a young fellow standing on a corner with a far-away look in his eyes, and a bit of yarn on the last two fingers of his hand, you may be tolerably sure that he has just begun keeping house, and that he is muttering to himself—"Chopping bowl, eggs, clothes line—that's the thumb and first two fingers. Now, what did she want on the other two fingers?"

Auncle Tom's Department.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES,—What has happened! Have you forgotten your dear, old uncle, or has he offended you by not inserting your puzzles. We have received such generous aid in our puzzle department that it would be impossible to insert all. However, we endeavor to select the best. Perhaps, some of you find it to difficult to answer, our correct answers this month being much less in number. Or, may I console myself with the idea that my little nephews have been too busy to write, for there is so much for their little, industrious hands to do in the early spring. I remember my sister always wanted a good deal of help with scraping and cleaning up the door yard, also with digging the flower beds, and pruning the rose bushes and shrubs. But where this was accomplished she took charge of the flowers for the remainder of the season herself. Then I had my own part to attend to, which was the vegetable department. It always pleased my mother to have plenty of early vegetables, which I endeavored to excel in, not disliking them myself. It is a good plan to work in the garden the first thing in the morning, before being called away to the fields to perform harder labor. My sister always preferred gardening in the early morning when pleasant and cool. Oh! such lovely flowers I recollect she had. We used to get the finest of manure; old, decayed chips will make the flowers glow luxuriantly. I tell you, my little nephews, many a bouquet I have proudly taken to my friends, which my sister has gathered and arranged for me. What can we give prettier or more acceptable. Try it, my little friends. Now, I have not said one word to my nieces about the puzzle question and mystery, but suppose we must imagine that they are busy making their spring costumes, so many frills, tucks, puffs and bows (beaux) to attend too, besides the the house cleaning. Really, I had almost forgotten that, I suppose, important and necessary pleasure. Nevertheless, it makes a comfortable home for an old, fidgety customer like your uncle during the procedure, though he admires the sun shining in upon everything which looks clean and bright. Now, my little nephews and nieces, we hope the busy season will be over ere next month, and that you will all find time to answer this month's puzzles, and add one or two for our June issue.

UNCLE TOM.

PUZZLES.

64—NUMERICAL ENIGMAS.

I am composed of eleven letters:
My 3, 4, 6, is what you often see after rain.
My 2, 4, 11, 9, is disagreeable in summer.
My 3, 8, 5, 11, 1, is what should be in every town.
My 7, 10, 8, 11, 9, is what housekeepers use.
My 6, 8, 9, 1, is a foreign fruit.
My 11, 4, 5, is what we like to see every day.
My whole is an author's name.

HARRY HUSBAND.

65—I am composed of twenty-two letters:
My 15, 6, 7, 13, signifies pain.
My 16, 22, 4, 9, is a blood-vessel.
My 7, 11, 19, 3, is to insinuate.
My 6, 7, 17, 12, 20, 14, 15, is a lady's under-garment.
My 8, 10, 6, 7, is a disease of the skin.
My 18, 1, 11, 21, 5, 2, is celestial beings.
My whole forms a proverb. KITTY LOWE.

66—BURIED RIVERS.

1. I saw a bird flying in the air.
2. Mother was kind and patient.
3. While we were walking Nathan came.
4. We will be even with you.
5. It was but a trifle, Amy.
6. Lillian took the prize.
7. Amos, quit ordering us around. BESSIE.