

A Contented Old Bachelor.

I am threescore and ten, and am hearty and hale,
Never walk with a staff, and am straight as a rail;
I'm a bachelor too, which is better than all;
And a snug, cosy place is my bachelor's hall.
The Benedicts tell me I ought to have wed Ere old Father Time set his mark on my head;
But I slyly retort, "There are few married men
Have as little to growl at at threescore and ten."

I sleep in the morning as long as I please;
Then, slipped and wrapped, I break fast at ease—
No madam to pout as she pours out my tea,
Or hint at late rising while glancing at me.

I dine at the club or at home, as best suits
And then take a snooze on the lounge in my boots;
A piece of indulgence but few married men
Are prone to indulge in at threescore and ten.

In my snug little parlor, a choice cup of tea
At evening exhales its rich fragrance for me;
The nectar I sip in a well-cushioned chair,
Nor envy the married their joys or their care.
I wheel to the fire, give the Lehigh a poke,
Then, lighting my pipe, am soon lost in the smoke;
And here let me hint that but few married men
Care to play at that game, e'en at threescore and ten.

Having finished my meerschaum, I put on my hat,
With no one to frown or take umbrage at that,
And repair to the lodge, or call on a friend
And perhaps a late hour brings my call to an end;
Then home and to bed, after something to take,
Sure that no curtain lecture will keep me awake—
A pleasant exemption, that few married men
Can truthfully boast of at threescore and ten.

Although on occasions things go rather rough,
I am more than contented, and that is enough.
With none to reproach me, whatever I do—
And mostly my conscience is lenient too—
I take the world easy and don't break my shins
Over other men's foibles or crotchets or sins
I try to keep square and at peace with all men,
As should any old graybeard of threescore and ten.

Some views of true wedlock are all 'very fine;
But lotteries never were much in my line,
And, deeming it rashness to play for a stake
Which might prove an eel or turn up a snake,
I opened and furnished my bachelor's hall,
Where Benedicts all are invited to call,
And learn this one fact—that but few married men
Have more to give thanks for at threescore and ten.

Trust Her Not.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.

[CONCLUDED]

As she leans upon his arm she makes him understand that life will be a wilderness to her until she has the right and power to so lean always. He has his own views about short engagements—he disapproves of them—but he thinks that her sweet soul trembles at the prospect of ever so brief a separation from him, and he believes it—good young priest as he is.

Then it had better be soon, he says eagerly. Why he says it he can't exactly define, but he gathers up impressions that it had better be soon, and speaks from the impulse they give him.
Oh, if you wish it!
Of course he wished it. Suddenly he found himself wishing it very much, and feeling that all his pre-conceived ideas on the subject were utter folly and empty humbug. Minnie would be a crown of honor to a husband, and he, Edward Boughton, would crown himself as soon as possible.

She is very full of the pride of her success as she steps out from the shade of the wood on to the open green. Her head settles back into a satisfied wobble as she sees aunt Catherine approaching them.

Miss Paulett comes towards the pair in the dim light, and as she comes on it is made manifest to her, even in the dim light, that something has happened.

Chapter II.

For four days Minnie has been very happy and very amiable. Edward Boughton manages to make duty and inclination agree wonderfully well. When he goes abroad on missions of mercy Minnie accompanies him—a fashionable looking angel in different colored cambrics,

Her aunt, Kate Paulett, has been told the great news and has been cordial and cheery. His aunt, Miss Boughton, has been told and has been morose and gloomy. Minnie is not one bit disturbed by either woman's state or expression of feeling. She merely remarks to Edward—

Your aunt looks so sour about it that one would think it was a crime to love you, as if I could help it.

Minnie means marriage as soon as possible, and on the evening of the fourth day of her engagement, she is feeling a little annoyed and perplexed because the time is not definitely fixed yet.

You might speak to him, aunt Catherine.

About naming the day? No, my dear, it's for him to speak to you about that.

But what's the good of waiting? What are we waiting for? Minnie pouts.

You haven't waited long, Kate reminds her.

No, and I don't mean to wait long, that's another thing; we shall not know each other a bit the better whilst he is down here and I'm going on with that horrid, horrid teaching. I don't see why we need wait.

You can hardly be the one to suggest a speedy marriage, Kate says dryly; but I have no doubt, when Mr. Boughton realizes that you consider your present one a life of slavery, he will speedily rescue you from it.

Minnie flushes. I don't want him to know anything about my present life, she says, with an effort to seem at ease.

Kate flashes up a glance from the preserving-pan over which she has been bending assiduously over the conversation.

You don't mean to say that you haven't told him?

I have not. Why should I? Men are quite apt enough to think they confer a favor on a girl by proposing marriage. If the girl's a governess they know they confer a favor by taking her out of bondage.

He ought to know it; if you don't tell him I will, Kate says, skimming off the skum vigorously.

Don't be malicious and spiteful because you have failed to get him yourself, says Minnie.

You'd serve your own ends (I know what they are, Minnie), better by telling him a truth that is honorable to you; but rest assured that I will never interfere between you after that—that very coarse cruel speech.

It is settled by the lovers soon that they are to marry in a year. By that time Minnie will be twenty-one and he will have a suitable home to receive her in. This delay will enable him to settle his aunt elsewhere. She broke up her home to come down here with me, he explains.

She'll be desperately fussy about a house. I know she will keep you unsettled as long as she can.

His greatest comfort (he is dreadfully in love) when Minnie is gone is to go to her aunt Kate and talk about her. Kate is merciful enough to let him maunder on uninterruptedly, as a rule, but one day she does hint to him that Minnie is but mortal.

Minnie can ill bear stagnation and suspense, she says. I shall be glad when you can take your holiday and go and see her. You'll go soon, won't you.

Something in her tone sets him thinking. It does not exactly alarm him, but it startles him.

Is she ill? Have you heard—but Miss Paulett interrupts him impatiently before he can say a word more—

Ill? Oh, no! If there were anything the matter my sister would have written for me to go and help to nurse her. I rarely hear when she is well.

'Twere long to tell and vain to hear, about all he does in order to get a free week from his parish. He will not drop a single service, but he must see Minnie.

Eventually one of the reserve foremen—a curate unattached to a cure at present—comes for a consideration and takes charge of Binham for a fortnight, and Edward Boughton goes up to town by the express to surprise his loving, loyal Minnie.

Surprises are odious things under the most propitious circumstances. He no sooner is across the threshold of the earthly paradise than he feels that it would have been better far if he had notified his coming to the presiding Peri.

Mrs. Ward, Minnie's Mamma, lives in lodgings in Vansittart Terrace, Kensington. Vansittart Terrace is more than rather out of the way, but when you have wriggled yourself into the right path that leads to it, it is pleasant enough.

Minnie's teaching is in the neighborhood. She gets home generally about six o'clock. For several days she has had an escort home—a soldier cousin of the girls whom she is instructing.

When Edward Boughton is announced, Mrs. Ward falls into a paroxysm of bewilderment. Minnie's lover, and there's nothing ready for dinner! And Minnie may arrive at any moment, sus-

piciously attended; and—oh! what shall she do?

Mr. Boughton asks one or two awkward questions. Mrs. Ward evades the questions—parries them—answers them deftly and sweetly. Presently there is a knock at the front door, and as Edward goes to the window Mrs. Ward gets herself out of the room, to see about tea.

Minnie comes in to the hall radiant; an enamored young man follows her, and Mrs. Ward meets them with despair printed on her matronly brow. She whispers to Minnie, and Minnie is staggered. For a moment only though; at the end of the moment she whispers to Mr. Gascoigne and dismisses him.

Edward Boughton, standing at the window, sees the handsome young soldier officer walking away; that he does not for one moment associate that son of Mars with the fresh, fair creature who presently bounds into the room and seeks to make him believe that she is grateful that Heaven has made her such a man as he is.

Up to the present moment Mr. Gascoigne, though he is on the brink, has not taken the plunge. He is rapidly preparing to fall at her feet, but he has not fallen yet. Therefore, if Edward Boughton has come to plead for an earlier wedding day, Minnie will be fidelity itself to him.

She manages very cleverly, she considers, during Edward's visit. She writes a pretty note of apology to her employer, pleading a bronchial affection as the cause of her non-appearance. She writes a pathetic little note to her martial adorer, telling him that for a time, at least, it is better that they should not meet—a note which is worded in a way that leads him to suppose that his mother has been interfering, and to vow that he will propose to the sweetest, jolliest little girl in the world the next time he sees her.

Minnie holds Boughton's heart in the hollow of her little unscrupulous hand. She does not spare him a single look, word, that may allure him on to love her more and more. She is full of coaxing, pretty, carressing ways, and these she plays off upon him as pertinaciously as Kathleen played hers off upon St. Kevin. He is desperately in love with her. Not a doubt of her being to the full as desperately in love with him has even clouded his mind for a moment. He goes back to Binham at the end of his holiday, a happy man. For three days after his return from that sojourn in Paradise he hears regularly from Minnie.

The fifth and sixth mornings are blanks. He begins to look worn and anxious.

On the morning of the eighth day he gets a letter in the well known dearly loved hand-writing, and when he had read a few lines of it, his face, which had been pale before, becomes ghastly white. But he says nothing to his aunt, who is watching him pitifully, and her prophetic heart tells her that he has got a blow from that girl.

A letter goes from him to Minnie by return of post, such as might melt a stone. But it is powerless to melt the heart of a heartless girl. Then he waits for three days in silence, with such wounded feeling, such passionate love preying upon him that he gets to look so miserably ill that every one in the place calls on Miss Paulett in the hope of hearing that the lovers have quarrelled.

On the third day he has another letter from Minnie, a conclusive letter. A letter that shocks all hope out of his heart and all belief in the good, pure love of a woman out of his mind.

It is the topic in Binham for nine days, for it leaks out, as such things invariably do. At the end of nine days people cease to look as if they are thinking about it when they meet him.

The aunt and niece cross swords by post and wound each other freely. Minnie is to be Mrs. Gascoigne in a week or two, and Garrison town life will suit her much better than prancing through the parish, she says.

But in spite of this deprecatory speech Mrs. Gascoigne feels a sore pricking at her heart when two years after she achieves her own destiny, she reads that, old Aunt Catherine and Edward Boughton are married.

The Sailor's Revenge.

The "Tiger" was homeward bound, after a voyage of many months, during which time, matters, with some exceptions, had gone forward quite pleasantly. The credit of this evidently did not belong to the captain, for he was a surly, drunken brute, and had amused himself, during much of the time, by approaching the men unawares, giving them a violent kick, striking them with his rattan, and sometimes with some heavier implement. But the sailors did not resent even this treatment; and, for the sake of the second mate, who was a great favorite with them, they bore it in silence.

Among the crew there was a young man, by the name of Ben Banley. He was a noble fellow, a good sailor and a general favorite with all except the captain, who appeared to feel an especial

spite against him, simply because he was a true man.

One day Ben was seated below, when one of his favorites, by the name of Joseph Metcalf, approached him and said:

Well Ben, the voyage is nearly over. By to-morrow night we may expect to see land.

Yes; and thank Heaven for it.

Why do you speak so earnestly, Ben? I want to leave the ship.

I didn't think you were in such a hurry.

But I tell you I am. I have long felt inclined to throttle that devil; and when I saw him strike you to-day, Joe, I could scarcely restrain myself.

Oh, I don't mind that. He's a drunk-en beast and not worth minding, considering that everything else goes on so pleasantly.

I can't look upon it in that light. He is a prominent officer, and ought to be a gentleman. If he should strike me, I—

Oh, it is not very likely he would strike you.

I think it is very likely.

Why so?

I couldn't help but frown to-day, when the wretch struck you. He observed it, and although he didn't see anything at the time, I could read his intention at a glance.

Suppose he should strike you, Ben?

I believe I would hurl him to my feet, and place my heel upon his cowardly neck.

Then you'd swing from the yard-arm.

I know it.

It would be hard to die for such as him.

True. Well, I don't know how I should act in case of a blow. I never have received one and I hope I never will. I could not endure the degradation. Why, Joe, I really believe that if I were to be flogged on shipboard, it would render me a raving fiend for the remainder of my life, if it did not kill me on the spot.

At that moment Ben was summoned to the deck. He quietly obeyed, and set about performing the duty devolving upon him with an alacrity and cheerfulness in keeping with his character. He had glanced quickly around, but the captain was not to be seen.

Suddenly Ben felt a violent blow upon the head. He staggered and fell to the deck. But his senses did not forsake him. He was satisfied from whence the blow came, and looking up he saw the captain standing near him.

For a moment Ben had not the power to move, or he certainly would have leaped upon the captain like a tiger. As it was, he could but exclaim:—

Oh, you accursed brute, but I will be even with you.

This was enough. A guard of marines were instantly called up, and in a few moments Ben found himself in irons, and a fast prisoner below. He knew his fate now—flogging. Boy and man he had been a sailor for twenty years, and had never received a blow. But now his hour had arrived, and he must submit to that which he had always believed would be death to him.

The night passed slowly away. Morning came, and the hours of day rushed on. Towards evening the crew were startled by the dread summons of the boatswain and his mates at the principal hatchway—a summons that always sends a shudder through every manly heart in the frigate.

All hands to witness punishment ahoy!

The cry appeared harsh and unrelenting. It pierced every part of the ship, and not a heart but felt its dismal echo, was there to be found, save he who claimed to be the master there.

In a short time the crew had crowded around the mainmast. All must come. All wore sad faces.

Soon the officers were arranged on one side, and the captain, taking his place among them, cried:

"Master-at-arms, bring up the prisoner."

All were silent as Ben was brought on deck, guarded by marines and placed upon the gratings.

The captain began:

You, Ben Banley, are about to be punished for using disrespectful language and threats towards your captain. Have you anything to say?

I have used no disrespectful language, replied Ben, in a firm voice. What! cried the captain, did you not call me an accursed brute?

I did.

And what language do you call that?

Respectful to you.

How?

It is complimentary, for you are worse than a brute.

The captain could scarcely suppress his rage, but he did so, for he felt that his revenge was to come. So he asked,

Did you not threaten me?

I do not recollect that I did.

Did you not say that you would be even with me?

So maddened was I by the blow you

gave me, that I might have said such a thing. If I did, I repeat it now, I swear before my Maker, that I will be avenged for the first blow you gave me, and for every one I receive now.

Boatswain's mate, do your duty! yelled the captain.

Stop an instant, said Ben, calmly. Then he continued:

Mate, I can't blame you for striking the blows, because you must. Let me say in advance, that I forgive you for it. But to you, captain, I say once more—stop this work, or you will find it the bitterest of your life.

Lay on, mate; yelled the captain.

My last warning.

Lay on, mate.

The keen scourge hissed through the air, and fell with a cutting, wiry sound upon the mark. Ben trembled visibly, but his teeth were set, and no sound escaped him. The first blow barely left a mark, but as the successive ones fell, red ridges began to appear, livid lines of bruised and mangled flesh were drawn, the muscles rose in knotted cords, and the whole of the naked body showed a livid and purple color.

Sixteen—seventeen, and the ridges broke, the blood streaming down upon the deck. Twenty and a groan, the first, escaped Ben. Then he cried, although the voice seemed faint:

Farewell, messmate, farewell.

Twenty-two, Ben sank, only sustained by the rope attached to his thumbs. Twenty-three and twenty-five, did they not fall upon the back of a corpse?

Cut him down, growled the captain, as he turned away.

The order was obeyed. Every one expected to see Ben fall upon the deck, lifeless. But not so. No sooner were his hands free, then he bounded up, and leaped toward the captain like a tiger. That officer drew his pistol as he detected the movement, but he was not quick enough. The weapon was dashed aside by the frantic man, and the wretch clutched by the throat. Then Ben lifted him from the deck as if he had been a mere child.

Nearly every officer rushed to the rescue of the captain, but it was of no avail. Over the bulwark into the sea went Ben and his persecutor, the wronged sailor still retaining his grip upon the throat of his foe.

A fearful wail escaped the captain. Efforts were made to save him, but the crimson that now floated on the surface, where the two men had disappeared, proclaimed all effects useless.

The brave sailor felt that he could not live after such a humiliation. He resolved that the villain captain should die with him.

They died together.

MARRYING MONTHS.—May is considered an unfortunate marrying month. A Yankee editor says that a girl was asked not long since to unite herself in the silken tie to a brisk lad, who named May in his proposals. The lady tenderly hinted that May was an unlucky month for marrying. Well make it June, then, honestly replied the swain, anxious to accommodate. The damsel paused a moment, hesitated, cast down her eyes, and said, with a blush, Wouldn't April do as well?

A FASHIONABLE mamma's advice to a married daughter, "Never take your husband to an evening party; there is nothing that is always so much in the way."

It is said of Greeley that once at the marriage of two favorite young acquaintances of his, in his congratulations he honestly said he hoped all their troubles would be little ones.

A VAGABOND, seeing the motto, "Opportunity makes the thief," said, "Not always. I found a big anchor and chain cable on the pavement the other night and didn't touch it; and there was nobody about neither."

The best humor is that which contains the most humanity, that which is flavored throughout with tenderness and kindness.

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