



A Narrow Escape.

My name is Sarah Blobs. That it is neither beautiful nor euphonious, but has a decidedly plebeian sound, I am willing to admit. However, last summer I came very near changing my commonplace cognomen into that of Mrs. Algernon Montrevor, and this is how it happened. But first let me tell you that I am an old maid, and I intend to remain so. At one time I was very poor, and often did not know where the next meal was coming from, but that was before my Uncle Peter, in California, died and left me sole heir to £20,000. £20,000! Just think of it for a woman who had never known what it was to have twenty thousand pence at a time in her whole life. No wonder it turned my head. To be the mistress of a beautiful home, elegantly furnished, with fine clothes, and a servant to wait upon me, was a new and delightful experience, and for a while I enjoyed it to the utmost. "Sunset Villa" was the name of my new home, and I had hardly got settled before all the village aristocrats—would-be and otherwise—who had scornfully passed me by when I lived in one room of the little red farmhouse, and toiled for my daily bread, hastened to call, and I was invited to their balls, parties, and receptions in the most cordial and effusive manner. It was at a party one evening I first met Laura Morel, a young widow who was boarding in the place. She was a delicate little creature, with crinkly blond hair and innocent-looking, child-like, blue eyes. We immediately became fast friends and were constantly together. One evening the bell rung and the girl brought to me a card. "Algernon Montrevor," I began, just as Laura, who was looking over my shoulder, gave a little scream. "It's Cousin Algy, my own, dear Cousin Algy!" she exclaimed, joyfully, and rushed to the door. While I am about it I might as well tell the whole truth and acknowledge that when Laura introduced me to her cousin, and he clasped my hand and gazed at me with his beautiful, sad, dark eyes, my heart began to thump painfully beneath my pretty Valenciennes bodice, and I felt the hot blood rush to my face. He was a tall, aristocratic-looking man, dressed in the height of fashion, and his hands were white as a woman's. I recall with a thrill of shame how, after he had gone to his hotel and Laura and I had retired to our room, in spite of my forty years, I gushed like a schoolgirl over his handsome, melancholy black eyes and wavy hair, and compared him to a hero of romance and a prince in disguise. For the next two months I lived and went around like one in a dream. Mr. Montrevor spent the greater part of his time with us, and every morning he brought me lovely bouquets, and would sit by my side for hours and read poetry out of a little blue and gold book which he carried in his pocket. The summer days flew by. Caressed and petted by Laura, who called me her "darling Sarah," and her sweetest Sarah," and flattered and courted by Algy, I forgot for a time that I had ever known any other existence, and when one evening he took my hand and told me I was the most beautiful woman in the world to him, and that it was the dearest wish of his heart to make me his wife—I believed every word he said. We were engaged. He bought me a diamond ring, and quoted a verse of poetry as he slipped it on my finger. Laura kissed us both and declared she could weep for joy over the thought that I was to be her own darling Cousin Sarah. Algy begged me to set an early wedding day, and as important business matters called him to his home in London for a few weeks, after much persuasion I finally consented to be married upon his return. Laura urged me to have an elegant wedding outfit, as my lover belonged to a wealthy, aristocratic family which moved in the most fashionable London society. We were very busy planning the details of what Laura called my "trousseau," when she received a letter from her lawyer telling her to come to town at once. So it happened that one beautiful September morning my handsome, devoted lover and his innocent, child-like cousin took the early train together for London. I was sitting in my parlor about a week later, when the door opened, and who should appear but my Aunt Mary Stubbs, my only living relative, who owned a small farm in an adjoining town. Aunt Mary is a little, dried-up old woman, who has a faculty for saying the most disagreeable things in the fewest words of any person I ever met. "What's this I hear, Sarah Blobs?" she quavered, as I hastened to remove her old faded bombazine cloak and battered bonnet. "Tom Jones writ me you was goin' to git married."

"I don't know Tom Jones, but whoever he is he told the truth," said I. "Why, Sarah Blobs, you ought to be ashamed! Tom says the feller is good fifteen years younger than you be—he's seen him in the city—and he's a professional rascal, and this gal you've got ain't his cousin at all!" "Aunt Mary," I answered, in my most dignified tone, "I am about to be married to Mr. Algernon Montrevor, a wealthy, aristocratic young man who cares nothing about my age, and who loves me devotedly, and—" "Loves your catsfoot!" she broke in, sneeringly. "You used to be a smart, sensible woman, Sarah Blobs, and if you believe such stuff as that you must have softenin' of the brain! Handsome, rich young city fellers don't go out into the country and marry fat, homely old maids. Take my word for it, he is a miserable gambler or something, who has heard about you havin' money, and is after it!" "I will pass over your insulting insinuations, aunt," I replied loftily, "and simply remind you that I received my information concerning Mr. Montrevor's honorable character and worldly position not from himself, but from my dearest friend and companion, who has been intimately acquainted with the family for years. Laura Morel is—" "An accomplice, of course!" snapped Aunt Mary. "A pair of 'em, and between the two they'll skin you, hide and taller! You had better be back where you was a year ago, workin' from house to house, than to have your head added in this way. But I've allers heard there was no fool like an old fool. What do you s'pose your poor Uncle Peter would say? Why, the old man would turn in his grave if he thought the money he pinched and nipped to save was liable to fall into the hands of gamblers and thieves." "Aunt Mary, I am surprised to see you so envious and spiteful." "There, there, Sarah Blobs," she croaked, "don't put on airs; you've been glad too many times to get a meal in my old kitchen for that," and she seized her old cloak and bonnet and flounced out of the house in a pet. With a handsome cheque in my pocket, I started next day for the county town to buy my wedding finery. I was determined Algernon and his aristocratic relations should have no occasion to be ashamed of me, and spent money lavishly. For my wedding dress I selected a beautiful pearl-gray satin, with lace trimmings. I also bought a black satin, a garnet silk, a travelling suit, tea-gowns, and hats, bonnets, and gloves too numerous to mention. It was evening, and I was tired and dusty when I entered the station to wait for my train. A glance into a mirror showed me I was looking my worst, so drawing a thick veil over my face, I took a seat in a dusky corner. Heedless of the crowds passing in and out, I sat there building delightful air-castles, until I was aroused to a consciousness of what was going on around by hearing my name spoken by a man and woman who occupied the next seat. "You would never have known old Sarah Blobs if it hadn't been for me," she was saying, "and you'll agree to fork me over five thousand for my share, or I'll go to her and expose the whole thing." "And get your own walking tickets! I've half a mind to throw the game up, anyway," said he. "And lose twenty thousand?" I leaned forward and lifted a corner of my veil. Merciful Heaven! It was my Algernon and his Cousin Laura, whom I had supposed hundreds of miles away. For one moment everything swam before my eyes, and I thought I was going to faint; then with a desperate effort I pulled myself together, and waited to hear my lover reply—"That's it, Laura. Twenty thousand pounds is awfully tempting, and I'm willing to divide the spoil fair, but think of my going back to soft-soap and spoon round that silly old thing a month longer! But once we are married and I hold the swag, I'll soon cut my stick, you bet—and old Sarah Blobs will find herself stranded back in the wilderness where she belongs." The scales fell from my eyes, and hating myself for being such a dupe, I left the station and went to a hotel, where I sat down and wrote the following letter: "Mr. Montrevor,—It will not be necessary for you to soft-soap and spoon round the silly old woman any longer, as in the future old Sarah Blobs intends to stay back in the wilderness where she belongs, and hang on to her twenty thousand pounds like grim death." I never saw either of them again, and as I told you before, I am an old maid, and I intend to remain so.

Pleasing Qualities in Woman. If it were asked what is the quality that renders woman most pleasing to her fellow-creatures, it might be answered: First, pleasure in her fellow-creatures, then pleasure in herself. Individuality has a charm of its own, and beauty lies, to a great extent, in the eye of the beholder. It is within the grasp of all women to seem attractive, and in order to attain this end, good health is a sine qua non, and then a constant attention to the minor details of the toilet will accomplish the rest. The well-groomed, soignée woman's great attraction depends not so much on actual beauty of feature, but on the scrupulous care bestowed on the hair, the hands, and last, but by no means least, the healthy condition of the complexion.

Memory Gems Contest. FIRST PRIZE GEMS. CONTRIBUTED BY MR. HEBBER SHIRREFFS, VANKLEEK HILL, ONTARIO. I. "One smile can glorify a day, One word new hope impart. The least disciple need not say 'There are no alms to give away,' If love be in the heart." —Phoebe Cary. II. Ennobling is our faith in men; It lifts us from the dust. And what we trust a man to be, We make the man we trust. —Aella Greene. III. Grief can take care of itself, but to get full value of a joy you must share it with others.—Mark Twain. IV. Seldom can a heart be lonely, If it seek a lonelier still, Self-forgetting, seeking only Eempter cups of love to fill. V. When God intends to fill a soul, he first makes it empty when he intends to enrich a soul, he first makes it poor; when he intends to exalt a soul, he first makes it humble; when he intends to save a soul, he first makes it sensible of its own miseries and nothingness.—Flavel. VI. I think true love is never blind, But rather gives an added light, An inner vision quick to find, The beauties hid from common sight. No soul can ever truly see Another's highest, noblest thought, Save through the sweet philosophy And loving wisdom of the heart. —Phoebe Cary. VII. 'Tis better to have loved and lost Than never to have loved at all. —Tennyson. VIII. Ah! If we knew it all we should surely understand That the balance of sorrow and joy is held with an even hand. That the scale of success or loss shall never overflow, And that compensation is twined with the lot of high and low. The easy path in the lowland hath little of grand or new, But a toilsome ascent leads on to a wide and glorious view. Peopled and warm is the valley, lonely and chill is the height, But the peak that is nearer the storm-cloud is nearer the stars of light. —Frances R. Havergal. IX. Better a death when work is done than earth's most favored birth, Better a child in God's great house than a king of all the earth. —George Macdonald. X. To endure and to pardon is the wisdom of life.—Koran. XI. Rest is not quitting— This busy career— Rest is the fitting Of self to one's sphere. 'Tis loving and serving The truest and best, 'Tis onward, unswerving, And this is true rest. —Goethe. XII. Is true freedom but to break Fetters for our own dear sake, And with leathern hearts forget That we owe mankind a debt? No! True freedom is to share All the chains our brothers wear, And with heart and hand to be Earnest to make others free. —Lowell. XIII. Help me to-day To bear all patiently, To rest all trustingly, To wait all hopefully, However long. Assured that as I bear, And rest, and wait, He plans the end to crown— A victor's crown. XIV. God give us men! A time like this demands Great hearts, strong minds, true faith and willing hands: Men whom the lust of office does not kill; Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy; Men who possess opinions and a will; Men who have honor, men who will not lie. For while the rabble, with their thumb-worn creeds, Their large professions and their little deeds, Wrangle in selfish strife—lo! Freedom weeps, Wrong rules the land and waiting justice sleeps. —O. W. Holmes. XV. God of our fathers, known of old, Lord of our far-flung battle line, Beneath whose awful hand we hold Dominion over palm and pine, Lord God of Hosts be with us yet, Lest we forget, lest we forget! The tumult and the shouting dies, The captains and the kings depart— Still stands thine ancient sacrifice, A humble and a contrite heart. Lord God of Hosts be with us yet, Lest we forget, lest we forget! Far-called our navies melt away, On dune and headland sinks the fire,— Lo, all our pomp of yesterday Is one with Nineveh and Tyre! Judge of the Nations spare us yet, Lest we forget, lest we forget! —Rudyard Kipling.

CONTRIBUTOR Long life is show that we ha The batt And hea When we These res We pray A little Drink There And dr Let your Let your U N B L VII The proper the grand drift life, is to follow noble spark k us from heaven IX Fame is what taken, Character is give, When to thi waken Then you be A sacred bur ye bear— Look on it, bes stand up and it steadfast Fail not for not for sin, But on ward, the goal ye —Frances X There is nev heart That shall l end If to God we t Him to be friend. — X Great me see that spirit than any mate thoughts rule When life valor to dare C The Fat Throu While I The c And w Sweet 'Tis but That CONTRIBU The n Nor i Is fi The t And Let n Good name Is the imme Who steals 'Twas mine, But he that Robs me of And makes My Su As Go Th Ye