

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

THE story of the bold Sir Bedivere,
Told on a summer night at Camelot,
While a great banquet lay along the hall :

After a hard-fought battle in the west,
King Arthur—having beaten the heathen back—
With the bravest of his knights, a hundred spears,
Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed,
And many a glancing plash and sallowy isle,
The wide-winged sunset of the misty marsh
Glared on a huge machicolated tower
That stood with open portals.

They entered in
And rested ; and the stoutest of them all,
Thereafter having sallied forth, despoiled
The neighboring hen-roosts, while some others found
The goodly cellars of that castle old,
And bore therefrom the wines. And the great hall
Rang with a noise of feasting and carouse.

And some, far spent with utter weariness,
Or reeling from the revel and the wine,
Lay sprawled along throughout the corridors ;
While other of the knights—wine-heated they,
Having made another raid upon the cellar—
Lifting a voice of riotous applause,
Gathered 'round one that smote his harp and sang,
“ We won't go home till morning.”

Apart from these,
Sat Tristram, and Geraint, and Launcelot too,
And a few others, at a quiet game,
Which Tristram had expounded, naming it
Poker. In all such craft well-skilled was he,
For he had gone among the godless host
Of heathens, swarming o'er the northern sea.

And Arthur, coming, saw—nor liked the sight,
For he and Guinevere had prayed the knights
Not to play poker. Chiding them, he spake,
“ Unknightly and untrue ! Full well I know
When that authority forgets the king,
And homage fails the queen, what must come next ! ”

But Tristram, raking in a little pile,
Took the cigar from his mouth, and paused to say,
“ After the King and Queen, my lord, comes next
The Jack. You should read Hoyle.”

Whereon the King
Gazed at him blankly for a time, and passed.

W. J. H.

THE PHILOSOPHY O' THE MITHER-IN-LAW.

THE WAREHOUSE,
April 1st, 1886.

MAISTER GRIP—Did ye ever sit doon an' think oot the philosophy o' the mither-in-law? It's something like this :—When a man marries a bonnie bit lass her laughin' een, her neat ankles, her jimp waist, an' licht airy feeger are a' sae photographed on his mind's e'e, tae say naething o' this heart, that hooever muckle she may change in coorse o' time this photograph is aye the same. A photograph taen by the sun on a caird is naething compared wi' the likeness stampit on the heart by the a' pooerfu' licht o' love. Then again the change is gradual, the bloom o' youth fades frae the cheek, but somehow ye never miss it ; the gracefu' feeger may become angler an' o' a vinegary thinness, or wha kens, very likely develop intill the very stoot mawtron whose greatest trial in life is tae ras doon tae lace her ain shoon. But a this comes on a man as I said afore—gradual—ye grow auld an' ugly thegither, an' by slow degrees. But when without a word o' warnin' the mither-in-law, a full-fledged monster in the iron-gray stage o' a woman's existence, springs oot o' the door o' a hack an' lichts wi' her trunks on the

sidewalk in front o' a man's door like Minerva springin' full-armed frae the head o' Jove—hech, man ! the shock is awfu ! There she is, a byordinar substantial fack, yer wife's mither, no to be explained or argued awa by ony logic, the maist formidable fack yeve ever encoontered in this vale o' tears, an sic a picter o' robust health that ye turn yer face tae the wa', so her sharp een mayna see yer jaw drop in fell despair.

Maister GRIP sic an experience has just been mine. She was fairly sprung upon me, ma mither-in-law—ma very hand shakes an' the great blobs o' prespiration stood on ma broo when I think about it ; an' o' a'e thing, I'm shure, I'll never be the same man again, never as lang as that woman is within the range o' a telescope. Ye see we were sittin' quite cosy at oor denner, me an' ma wife, just like twa doos in a docket, when up drives a hack tae the door an' stops there. I was jist in the ack o' liftin' a bit tawty tae ma moo when ma wife jumps up an' cries, “ Well ! well ! there's ma mither ! ”

“ Yer—wha ? ” says I.

“ Ma mither,” says she, “ she's just come frae Californy.” I canna describe the cauld gruc that began tae creep doon ma back-bane, but wi' that a capawcious teeger appeared at the dinin'-room door, an' after wheezlin an' kissin' ma wife she tuk a bird's eye view o' me frae tap tae tae, includin' the petawty I was still haudin' on ma fork, an' then she says, “ Well, I suppose we'll have to put up with him,” wi' sic an air o' resignation that fairly tuk ma breath awa'. In a half paralyzed condition I laid doon ma knife an' fork an' for ceevility's sake says I, tellin' her a thunderin' lee, “ Yer welcome mem ! ” But when I tuk her hand tae shake it (as a mere maitter o' form) the deevil a shake was in it, it jist lay in ma life as cauld an' lifeless as a dead fish. Noo, if there's onything that chills the life bluid in ma veins a'e meenit, an' then sends it gallopin' wi' indignation tae flare in ma face the next, its a cauld, clammy, heartless hand, a twa fingered hand, it's waur than “ the curse in a dead man's e'e,” an' if there's ony reciprocity in this world it ocht tae be first an' formost in a handshake. Hooever, I conquered masel, she was ma wife's mither after a' sae I says, “ Haul in a chair an' hae a bite o' denner.” “ Hadn't ye better go and carry up them trunks,” she says, “ and put them in the best bed-room, and by the by don't forget to pay the cabman.” I said naething, but I felt something like a Scot's thrussle beginnin' to bristle in ma inside ; nevertheless, there was nae doot that auld woman was accustomed tae command—ye cud see it in her e'e. It cowed me, sae I set ma teeth thegither an' paid the cabman, an' after patiently carryin' five dirty, muddy trunks on ma back up the stair I slippit oot o' the back-door an' awa' tae the warehouse without feenishin' ma denner. The meenit Maister Tamson clappit his e'e on me he cries, “ Why Airbe ! what's up? are you sick? ” “ Yes,” says I, “ I'm sick baith in mind an' body—ma—ma gudemither has come ! ” Weel, Maister GRIP, I never afore got sic sympathy. sic a display o' christian fellow-feelin'. A' afternoon the basement was fu a' clerks sittin roon on packin' boxes wi' faces as lang's an ell, a' condolin' wi' me on the grate calamity that had befa'in me—an' next weck I'll gie ma experience at supper-time wi' the auld leddy.

Yours in great meekness,

HUGH AIRLI

PUT a beggar on horseback, if you haven't got any use for the horse ; but a better scheme is to furnish him with a railway pass to the next town.