FLOUNDER'S QUEST.

Mr. Flounder was a young gentleman of asthetic temperament. He was always in love with some object or other. Sometimes it was a lady that enslaved his affections: it was a lady that enslaved his affections: other times a picture or a piece of sculpture; and yet another time, perhaps, some teapet of faneiful design, or other piece of delf of rare pattern, would absorb all his emotional faculties. At times, however, he would get middled, and could not always tell who or what he was in love with; and in this state he would remain until some circumstance arose which exposed to him the error or absurdity of his situation. He adored the ladies, who petted and coaxed him. But it never came to anything. The girls soon found out the evanescent nature of his professious, and broke with him in time to prefessious, and broke with him in time to prevent talk. This did not matter very much, however, as he had a large and varied stock always in hand to select from. And so he would fall in and out of love in the most

always in hand to select would fall in and out of love in the most serene way imaginable.

Mr. Flounder was five feet eight inches in height His shoulders were a bit narrow and sloped beautifully; light hair, brushed flat; large and full eyes, which, judging from their far-off look, were capable at times of discerning objects at an illimitable distance; the delicate tracings of his eyebrows required a close inspection to appreciate thoroughly their beauty; nose, aquiline; mouth, large, with plenty of upper lip. He were a moustache handsomely cultivated, but cheek and chin—the latter retreating gracefully—were of virgin smoothness. His gracefully—were of virgin smoothness. His long neck, which was fenced round by a very high collar, was just able to support a head of abnormal proportions. Clothes neatly cut, and setting off admirably a somewhat lachrymose expression of counten-

Mr. Flounder's education had been neglected. He knew next to nothing. In short, he was a perfect chaos of ignorance. His only occupation was following the ladies and other things referred to. This, to be sure, was not very remunerative, but, as he had a clear £300 a year of his own it did not occasion him any transmisses.

had a clear £300 a year of his own it did not occasion him any uneasiness.

But things could not go on for ever in this way. So Mr. Flounder thought one evening, as he laid down an article he had been reading—the subject was marriage. In it the writer had clearly proved that it was the bounden duty of a man, if he had the means to search out for a woman whom he could love best, and wed her, always provided that she were willing to have him.

Mr. Flounder had always looked upon marriage in the light of a pastime. He now saw plainly that it was a duty as well, and he entered at once into the writer's views. Stretching out his legs, and placing his feet on the fender—it was a cold night—he lay back this armehair, and, with the pamphlet across his knee, gave hunself up to reflection. But, as his mind reflected nothing, he was sorely put about as to how he should was sorely put about as to how he should proceed. Just then his eye caught sight of his walking stick standing in a corner. A gleam of intelligence lighted up his face. Getting up, he returned with the stick, and reseating himself with the crooked end of the stick in his mouth, felt that he was now

The great question was now before him, viz.,—whom should be marry? If among his own female acquaintance, he was mable his own female acquaintance, he was unable to fin! one with whom he could mate, then it was his kuty to extend his search until he came across one who would suit.

Ile now proceeded to bring the whole force of his mind to bear on the knotty problem. As he slowly and solemnly sucked the end of his stick, preparatory to bringing his mind to a focus, he felt delicious influences stealing over him while the muscles of his neck re over him while the muscles of his neck re-laxed, an, with his head gracefully inclined to his shoulder. Mr. Flounder yielded to the soft embrace, and failing asleep, passed into the land of dreams.

The sound of the clock in the ball strik-The sound of the clock in the hall striking 9 reminded him that he had accepted an invitation to Mrs. Brown's party that very evening. Hastily putting on his dress things he was soon on the way to his destination. Mrs. Brown was famous for collecting all the pretty and fascinating girls to her parties, and Mr. Flounder had ample scope in his metale new his hearing an his metale now he became extreme being on his mettle now, he became extreme tidious, with the result that he returned to his lodgings with the conviction that Mrs.

Brown was not able to produce a woman worthy of his love.

worthy of his love.

The next night found him in the theater. While the audience attended to the performance, Mr. Flounder scanned the sea of faces about him in the hope that he would find the object of his desire. From his place in the pit-stalls he carefully scrutinized each individual lady in the boxes. But she was not there. Then his eyes swept the different circles with like avail. The dress circle absorbed the greater share of his attention. Feeling that he should leave no stone unturned, his gaze soared even to the "gods," in case the one flower he sought should have perched so high. But no! He then relieved the strain on his neck by examining the females perched so high. But no! He then relieved the strain on his neck by examining the females in his immediate vicinity, but no one came up to the mark. His love put in no appearance, and Mr. Flounder at last fall his eye-glass just as the curtain fell on the final scene, and he turned to his lodgings, his future wife still to be discovered. Nothing daunted, however, he pursued his search day after day, but with like result. He tried all the houses at which he was accustomed to visit, but not one girl of

was accustomed to visit, but not one girl of his acquaintance came up to his ideal, and he saw that he must only extend the search outside his own circle, as the writer had stated in the pamphlet. At the time that he came to this conclusion he was scated as usual in his armehair before the fire. He as usual in his armehair before the fire. He had no intention of giving up the search without first trying overy available means in his power. He began to revolve in his mind what plan he ought to pursue in order to compass his ends, when he heard a timid knock at his door. In response to his "come in," the door slowly opened, and, to his great surprise, he beheld a lady, richly but quaintly dressed, advancing toward him with a slow and graceful motion. Mr. Flounder is slow and graceful motion. Mr. Flounder was quite taken aback for an instant by this very unexpected visit. Ladies had never very unexpected visit. Ladies had never before visited him at his lodgings. But his natural gallantry and ease of manner re-turned at once. Removing the crook from his mouch, he got up, and, advancing to meet his visitor, conrecously requested her to be seated, placing a chair for the purpose. As the lady sat down she slowly lifted her ceil, exposing to Mr. Flounder's enraptured gaze a face of such unrivalled beauty, and an expression so mournfully sweet, as deprived

expression so mourning sweet, as deprived thim of all power of speech and motion. Fixing her beautiful eyes on his, the lady said, in tones that thrilled his every nerve, "Mr. Flounder, I am your true love." Then—he knew not how—the lady was gone, and Mr. Flounder awoke.

could scarcely believe that he had been dreaming. Everything—the party at Mrs. Brown's, the theatre, other places, and last of all, the beautiful lady—had seemed so vivid and lifelike, bore such an impress of reality that he felt almost inclined to regard then as so many solid facts, and not as the outcome of an overwrought imagination.

outcome of an overwrought imagination.

Dream or no dream, on one point he was certain, that he had seen this beautiful visitor before at some period of his life, but when or where, and under what conditions, his memory failed to answer. He was also equally certain on another point, which was that he was violently in love with her. She said she was his true love, and he believed her. What greater proof could he have that she was the woman be sought? As he picked up the pamphlet from the floor and went to bed—it was long after midnight now—he vowed to seek her out, or else perish in the attempt. in the attempt.

Full of his resolution Mr. Flounder arose betimes in the morning and after breakfast commenced to think what course he ought to pursue in his investigations. What if he pursue in his investigations. What if he ould insert an advertisement in the agony

edition of the Times something like:
"If the lady who appeared last night in a dream to Mr. Flounder at his lodging at—, will communicate with that gentle-

man, either in person or by letter, an arrangement may be effected."

No, that would never do. It might only bring all the girls down to his lodgings, in a body, and they would remain, blocking up the street until he gave satisfton. He must try some other way. Why not apply to Scotland Yard for help? Detectives were up to that sort of thing. Mr. Flounder gave up that idea also. Such a course might involve the lady appearing in the Hue and Cry among a lot of others "wanted" or a drawing of her, taken from his description, might embellish the police.

uewspapers, with his own portrait alongside. The idea gave Mr. Flounder a turn.
He broached several other plans, but they
all fell to the ground. Finally, he came to
the conclusion that the responsibility rested
entirely with himself, and that he must only
prosecute his inquiries in person. Stupendous as the undertaking seemed, it afforded
him the unalloyed satisfaction of being the
sole repository of his own secret. de repository of his own secret

Lighting a cigarette, he sallied forth to get a little fresh air before commencing active operations. He felt a bit fuddled with the unusual strain on his mental faculties, and required an interval to restore them to their normal condition. But as he wended their normal condition. But as he wended his way along the streets he could not keep his mind off his lovely visitor. She fixed his entire attention, making him totally oblivious of the noisy humaround him. He did not even return the salutes accorded him by many lady friends, who passed him on foot or we corriger, but to this held held. foot or in carriages, but steadily held his way, avoiding all obstacles and dangers of toot or in carriages, survey, avoiding all obstacles and dangers of traffic by a species of inner consciousness. The accidental knocking of his stick, however, against some projection roused him from his reverie. Looking up he found himself in front of the national portrait gal-

lery.
The rain was commencing to fall, partly to avoid it, partly because he didn't exactly know what to do, Mr. Flounder entered the building and wandered from room to room in an aimless manner.

to room in an aimless manner.

A little knot of people standing round one particular picture attracted his attention.

Crossing over, Mr. Flounder looked.

1: was a painting of some beautiful lady, quaintly clad—"perhaps, a fancy-dress ball costume," he thought. But it was the face which absorbed all the faculties! So beautifully calls but only the lange of these states. which absorbed all the faculties! So beautifully calm, but, oh! how ead were those divine features. There was a statelmess blended with softness that charmed him. Spell bound, he gazed, and, as he looked, strange memories drifted through his brain. As the lady's eyes looked down on him with a sad, mournful expression, her lips seemed to part as if about to speak, and Mr. Flounder, entranced-like, waited for the music of her words. And, while he waited, his visitor of last night once more took shape and, slowly unfolding on the canvas before him, merged into and became one with the beautiful lady painted thereon. Once more there ful lady painted thereon. Once more there fell on the enraptured listener's cars the words! "Mr. Flounder, I am your true

Not until the last echoes of those thrilling

Not until the last echoes of those thrilling notes had died away in his ears did Mr. Flounder rouse from his trance, and he looked about him with a bewildered air.

All the people had gone away from the picture, and were scattered about. It was some time, however, before he realized how matters stood. At last a look of relief and triumph passed over his face. He ead discovered the portrait of his true love. He was on the track at last. He could easily find out whose the portrait was, and then all he had to do was to find out her address and go and throw himself down at her feet. and go and throw himself down at her feet. A few simple questions and it was done. His bosom heaved at the thought.

Looking round, he espied an official of the lace. Crossing over to him, Mr. Flounder sked, with bated breath, whose portrait was yonder.
"Mary Queen of Scots," was the laconic

reply.

A thrill of happiness and pride combined pervaded Mr. Flounder. His aspirations had not soared to the majesty of a crown. Visions of himself and his love scated on a throne rose before him as he inquired where A thrill of happiness and pride combined pervaded Mr. Flounder. His aspirations had not soared to the majesty of a crown. Visions of himself and his love scated on a chiral throne rose before him as he inquired where she lived.

"Live!" echoed the official, roused from his apathy; "she doesn't live at all! She's dead, man!"
"Though?" the constant of the inquired where the lived.

"The constant of the inquired where the inquired where the lived.

"The constant of the inquired where the i

"Dead?" It seemed to Mr. Flounder as in a strong if he had heard his own knell, and his visconial perceptibly lengthened as he asked with his book how. "Let me see," said the other in a hold in heth

daisical voice, and referring to a look, which he held in his hand, "to the Stheet" February, 1587."

Mr. Founder's crossfilled to Traine as

ne next inquired in tono in any fa-tion, what sho disposed in any fa-isho didn't dino dd. Undan official, looking had you o exactly. He was a fit official, toomas, white or constitution of the huskily U

nowwaide

ain't up in these things. I suppose whoever cut it off thought she had it on long enough, anyhow. That's all I know about the lady,

sir."
Thanking the official for his information in a voice that was barely audible, Mr. Flounder moved slowly away.

As he crossed over and gazed on the picture for the last time he realized the gulf between him and his decapitated adored. But he could not help thinking how different things might have been but for that obstacle. things might have been but for that obstacle. And, as he sadly retraced his steps homeward, he felt aggrioved. He felt that his ancestors were to blame; that they had done him an irreparable injury in not having hirrard him into existence three centuries earlier in the world's history.

The Cowboy's Sermon.

The Jowboy's Scrnon.

Champaign County Herald "Lots of folks that would really like to do right think that servin' the Lord means shout's' themselves hearse praisin' His name. Low I tell you how I look at that. I'm workin' for Jim here. Now if I'd set round the house here tellin' what a good feller Jim is and singin' songs to high, and gettin' up in the nights to screnade him when he'd rather sleep, I'd be done just like lots of Christians do but I wouldn't suit Jim and I'd get fired mighty quick. But when I buckle on my chaps and rustle among the hills and see chaps and rustle among the hils and see that Jim's herd is all right and ain't sufferm' for water and feed and bem' run off the range and branded by cow theves, then I'm servin' Jim as he wants to be served. And if I was ridin' for the Lord I'd ride out in the raying of darkness, and the hills. ravines of darkness and the hills of sin and keep. His herd from boin' branded by the devil and run off to where the feed was short and drinkin' holes in the creek all dry, and no cedars and pines for shelter when the blizzards come.
"I don't see how I'd be helping the Lord

out if I jest land round the ranch eatin' up the grub I could git, and gittin' down on my prayer bones and taffyn' the Lord up and askm' for more. The Bible says someand askin for more. The Bible says somethin somewhere—I've got the place marked—about how people serve the Lord by feedin and waterin and lookin after the herd, in' and waterin' and lookin' after the herd, and I think it would do lots of people good to read it over. When a crittur has had his moral natur starved ever since he was a calf, and been let run a human maverick till the devil took pity on him, jest cause nobody else didn't look after him, and put his brand on him so deep that even in the rpring, when the hair's longest and it's no trouble to tell to whose herd he belongs to, it shows mighty plain that the cowpunchers it shows mighty plain that the cowpunchers of the Lord has been huntin' salary harder than they've been huntin' souls."

Threads of Truth.

Life is too short to spare even the stormy

nys. The true birds of the air always fly with

their own wings.

A shadow is always darker and larger than the figure that makes it.

Flattery is but the condoling of our fail-ures rather than a true estimate of our mer-

In accordance with the ancient reason, he who would accumulate it for the We might take lessons for of the children was that enviable art of being his Worth