

URGENT PRIVATE AFFAIRS.

CHAPTER II.

THE FORTUNE AND THE WIFE.

At the first sentence, Nellie had to exert all her strength to prevent herself from springing up from her chair. She felt the words like the sting of a lash. She—she, Nellie Morton had been as good as accused of lying! She! She who had never in all her life been accused of the most trivial moral offence, was as good as charged with subterfuge. She, the integrity of whose honor had never been questioned, was charged, or as good as charged, with the unforgivable baseness of want of candour!

But as the old woman uttered the other sentences, the flush of anger left the girl's heart; and when Mrs. Bathurst, in slow and impersonal accents, finished, Nellie felt as though she should sink through the floor with mingled shame and fear. She could not disclose the encounter with young Chaytor, for she could not explain the circumstance of that meeting without mentioning the unflattering nickname; and although it seemed unlikely Mr. Bathurst's mother, so old a woman and a recluse, should have heard of the nickname, that young man evidently thought she might.

Fortunately for Nellie, the old woman's words did not require a reply. The girl could not deny she was concealing something and could not tell what it was.

Mrs. Bathurst seemed to know by occult means that her guest would make no response.

As Nellie was about to rise, the old woman leaned her elbow on the table and her chin on her palm, and with eyes staring into vacancy said, as though soliloquising: "My son is much immersed in business, and is so busy a man. He is not likely to help you much towards enjoying your visit to Garwood. I predicted to him that you would find this place distasteful; but he said no. You were, he said, his friend's child, and you would be contented with this house as a home until your father's return from Brazil."

Were ever such words spoken by hostess to helpless guest? Nellie thought of rising and saying she would put an end to Mrs. Bathurst's uneasiness on her account by leaving at once. But there was something so impressive and sibylline in the manner of the old woman, that the girl could not do aught but sit and listen spellbound.

Mrs. Bathurst went on after a pause: "My son is forty-two years of age. He is not a marrying man. He will never marry. He has no sons or daughters. He is a great business man. He makes thousands of pounds for men who starve. His whole soul is in his business. He is not popular in the City. His appearance is not progressing. He is called the Crocodile."

The girl fell back on her chair.

Mrs. Bathurst went on: "He suffers from a strange nervous affection. For a long time, for days and weeks, he can preserve an unbroken calm while going through intense mental excitement. Then suddenly, and always close to midnight, he is seized with paroxysms of uncontrollable laughter. Never do these paroxysms come on him until he has gone to his room or is about to go there; never until he has dismissed all thought of business and taken off his mind the great strain under which his affairs in the City now and then place him. All who live under this roof must know of these paroxysms. The secret of them must be kept. Hence we have no visitors. Hence no one is allowed to camp on our grounds. Hence the solitude of this house. My son has been going to the City every day for twenty-five years. He has never been ill. He has never taken a holiday. He is never absent before or after time in anything. He has never set off earlier or later than eight o'clock. He is always in the minute at five. He has never varied once for years. At six minutes past six this evening you will be introduced to him."

A loud, long knock sounded at the front door and rolled in clattering echoes through the house.

With a start the old woman stopped and stared around in horror, as though the ground were splitting and gaping at her feet. She grasped the table in front of her as if drawn towards some awful abyss.

Nellie stood up, trembling, and looked round.

The old woman raised one hand, as if in appeal for mercy, and the other on her hip for silence.

Nellie heard the front door slammed with a bang that made the doors and windows rattle. Then the whole house shook above their heads with a terrible shout of laughter twice repeated. The dining-room door flew open, burst into the room, flung the door to behind him, fell with its broad back against the door, opened an enormous mouth in his parchment-colored face, and uttered a shout of laughter which made the glasses dance and seemed to threaten the very walls of the room.

Nellie's heart stood still, and with a swoon she felt of faintness, she fell back on her chair.

Although, when Nellie Morton fell on her chair, power of motion deserted her, she was not lost to consciousness. She leaned partly against the table, partly against the back of her chair. She was facing the door, against which the ungainly, monstrous figure of the man was propped. She did not hear or see anything. All was dull and blurred as in an indistinct dream.

"William! William! what has done this?" cried Mrs. Bathurst in a tone of surprise, reproach, alarm. She rose laboriously and half crossed the floor towards her son. Keeping her strange weird eyes fixed on him, she said impressively: "We are not alone, William; Miss Morton has come."

She supported herself by putting her hand on the table, turned to the girl saying: "Miss Morton, this is my son William; Mr. William Bathurst, who invests your father's money to such excellent advantage. The girl's appearance attracted her attention. She cried in a tone of relief: "William she has fainting!" Mrs. Bathurst would not summon help. She did not wish a servant to witness this scene. She could not render any aid herself, and until the paroxysm was over her son would be worse than useless.

Her son took his back from the door, thrust his hands deep into his trousers pocket, and bending his whole body double, laughed at the top of his terrific voice, until the glasses on the table rang again, and the windows shook, and the ceiling vibrated, and a long flake of white fell on the table, as though the plaster were coming down.

"What is the matter?" said the old woman more sternly. "Can you not speak, William? What has done this?"

He ceased to laugh and dance, and flung himself into a large easy-chair standing in the darkest part of the room, facing the light. He threw his head back, and gasped for air. His mouth was of enormous size,

and seemed to open at the sides back to the angle of his distended jaws. The skin of his face hung thin and leathery and folded and creased in innumerable small wrinkles.

The perplexity in the face and manner of the mother showed she was wholly unprepared for an attack under existing circumstances. He had never before come home from the City in the middle of the day. He had never before suffered a seizure until close to midnight. Almost invariably the attack came on after retiring to his bedroom. It would have been impossible to drown his shouts or conceal the noise of his tramping. But the servants of that household were all in bed at ten of nights; and when a new servant was in the place and a paroxysm occurred, Mrs. Bathurst said next day that the master had had one of the seizures to which he had been liable all his life, that they were noisy, but not dangerous to himself or any one else, and that it was desired no one should speak of the matter either "in the house or out of it."

But here now, on the day this girl arrives, was her son back hours before his time, taken with one of his worst fits in daylight and in the presence of the stranger too!

"Can you not speak? Can you say nothing to explain this extraordinary occurrence? Speak! You need not mind her; she cannot hear us."

The girl would have all the world to escape from this scene, to show by gesture and tell by word that she was aware of what was going on around her. But she was powerless as the chair upon which she sat, as the painted figures in the pictures on the walls.

With a convulsive motion the man sat up, seized his knees in the long lean hand, which seemed all strenuous fingers, closed his mouth, clenched his teeth, drew back his thin fleshless lips, and rolled his eyes, as if trying to force speech from his labouring chest through his convulsed throat.

"What is it?" cried the old woman in impressive resolute tones. "No one can hear you but me. Speak to me."

Suddenly the teeth snapped open, and from the throat came, in a whiplashed guttural voice, the words: "Ruin! I am ruined! I have lost all!"

Although the last word released some prodigious spring the man flew up out of the chair, bent his head, and laughed with such overwhelming vigour that the old woman started back, raised her hands and uttered a wail. When the lungs of the man were empty he doubled up, glanced wildly right and left, spread out his arms level with his head, spun round on his heel for a moment, and a groan, fell to the floor.

"My child! My son! My pride! Is this the end?" moaned the mother, crying out this once from the secret core of her woman's heart. No paroxysm before had begun so or ended. Through all the years of her life, even to her own voice had never sounded. Hitherto, that woman's voice had been the voice of human wisdom; now for the first time it was the voice of a mother's soul. The brain had spoken all along till now; at last the heart had speech.

With amazing swiftness and agility, she reached the prostrate form. He was lying on his face his arms spread wide. With incredible dexterity and strength she gathered in his outstretched arms and turned him over on his back. Her deft fingers loosed his collar, and she laid his hand under his waistcoat and felt over his heart, and then, in a tone of rapturous gratitude that was a prayer, she raised her eyes upwards and whispered: "Not dead!—not dead! He lives!"

She clasped her hands, and letting them hang down in front of her, sat back on her heels, regarding the dun face of the unconscious man as if it were a beatific vision.

Then placing a hand on the floor at each side of the head, she bent slowly forward and kissed the forehead, whispering in the voice of one whose heart is heavy and rich with possession of a secret treasure: "My child."

She rose briskly, and pushed the thin strands of hair out of his eyes, and fetched it out of the face and chest of the man. She looked around vaguely and passed a feeble, wavering hand over his face. "Mother," he said at length, seeing her standing over him, "what is it?"

"You have had an attack," she said as she replaced the water-bottle on the table.

He scrambled to rise. With nimble strength she helped him, as though she were once again the young matron, and he he blundering, ungainly, sole occupant of the nursery. She assisted him to a chair. He sat facing the light, with his back to the drooping form of the girl.

"This was more than a paroxysm. How came I on the floor?"

"You fainted at the end of the attack."

"Did I faint?"

"You said so, whispered, 'that there was ruin in the City.'"

He groaned. "Yes. Half-a-dozen great houses are gone, and I am pulled down, down, down, mother. You will spurn me. I did not keep to your advice. I speculated. I did not keep with solid things. I hoped to win a fortune in a year. South America has been the ruin of me, as you said it would be of fools who trusted it. I trusted it. All is gone. I am a beggar, and you will cast me off."

"Who cares about the City, since you live? A minute ago I thought you dead."

He took a napkin from the table and wiped his face. He stared at her in amazement. Did his ears hear aright? or was she bereft of reason?

"Drink this wine," she said, holding a glass towards him. He did as he was told, still keeping eyes of unexpressed wonder on her face. She went on as she took the empty glass from him: "When you were in the paroxysm, I told you Miss Morton had come."

"Oh ay," said he, passing his hand across his forehead; "I had forgotten she was to be here to-day. When I found out how things were in the City, I flew home with the money, mother, all your money, and all the money it and your advice helped me to make, are swallowed up. Gone—gone—gone! I shall be posted as a defaulter!"

"Hush!" said the old woman, laying her finger on her lip and pointing with her other hand at the girl. "We are not alone. She has fainted, turned round, and rose. 'She here all the time!' he whispered in dismay."

"Yes. Here unconscious all the time. We must see to her now," whispered the old woman. "You and I can talk over affairs later. All is not lost yet; all may be still saved."

"Nothing can save me!"

"Who knows?"

"What could have saved me?"

The old woman again placed a warning finger on her lip, and pointed at the figure of the girl.

"She!" cried he in a whisper.

His mother nodded, and whispered: "She and Christopher Morton's money."

Mrs. Bathurst poured water into a finger-glass and sprinkled some over Nellie's face. The eyelids trembled slightly, closed for a moment, then opened, closed again, and with a sigh the girl slipped from the support of the chair and slid to the table.

Mother and son bore the girl to a couch, dashed more water in her face, and chafed her hands. Once more the eyes opened, and a weak young voice said: "Such a dream! Horrid dream! Did I faint? Thank you; I am better now."

"You fainted, dear," said the old woman in a tone so gentle and tender, that her son could not believe his ears, and made sure his wife was wandering. Never before had he heard that voice but in cold approval, admonition, or command. "Mr. Bathurst was seized with one of the attacks I told you of, and the sight overcame you. The paroxysm is quite over now; my son is as well as ever; and in a little time you will be all right."

"Have I been long unconscious?" asked the girl. "I had a bad horrid dream, and it seemed days and days long."

The old woman looked at the black marble clock on the mantelpiece. "It is only ten minutes since my son knocked at the door; but in dreams, a moment of real time may seem a day—a year. What did you dream of, dear?"

"Oh, it is too horrible to think of. Pray, do not ask," said the girl, to whom it began to seem that what she now took for a dream might be nothing but a distorted and exaggerated memory of what had really occurred.

She sat up and rose feebly. "I—I think I will go to my room."

"Let me help you," said Mrs. Bathurst, moving to the side of the couch.

"Oh, thank you—no," said Nellie in distress; "you are not strong yourself."

"Not usually. Not at ordinary times," she put her arm round the young girl's waist, drew the slender drooping figure towards her own portly bulk, and led the way out of the room.

William Bathurst for a moment glanced round him, as though expecting to find other marvels in keeping with this sight. Then he threw up his hands in despair of understanding what he had seen, and muttering, "What has wrought this miracle?" dropped into a chair.

Crushed and doubled up, the small man sat in the great chair. Ever since he had been in the City, bent his head, and laughed with such overwhelming vigour that the old woman started back, raised her hands and uttered a wail. When the lungs of the man were empty he doubled up, glanced wildly right and left, spread out his arms level with his head, spun round on his heel for a moment, and a groan, fell to the floor.

William Bathurst for a moment glanced round him, as though expecting to find other marvels in keeping with this sight. Then he threw up his hands in despair of understanding what he had seen, and muttering, "What has wrought this miracle?" dropped into a chair.

Crushed and doubled up, the small man sat in the great chair. Ever since he had been in the City, bent his head, and laughed with such overwhelming vigour that the old woman started back, raised her hands and uttered a wail. When the lungs of the man were empty he doubled up, glanced wildly right and left, spread out his arms level with his head, spun round on his heel for a moment, and a groan, fell to the floor.

William Bathurst for a moment glanced round him, as though expecting to find other marvels in keeping with this sight. Then he threw up his hands in despair of understanding what he had seen, and muttering, "What has wrought this miracle?" dropped into a chair.

Crushed and doubled up, the small man sat in the great chair. Ever since he had been in the City, bent his head, and laughed with such overwhelming vigour that the old woman started back, raised her hands and uttered a wail. When the lungs of the man were empty he doubled up, glanced wildly right and left, spread out his arms level with his head, spun round on his heel for a moment, and a groan, fell to the floor.

William Bathurst for a moment glanced round him, as though expecting to find other marvels in keeping with this sight. Then he threw up his hands in despair of understanding what he had seen, and muttering, "What has wrought this miracle?" dropped into a chair.

Crushed and doubled up, the small man sat in the great chair. Ever since he had been in the City, bent his head, and laughed with such overwhelming vigour that the old woman started back, raised her hands and uttered a wail. When the lungs of the man were empty he doubled up, glanced wildly right and left, spread out his arms level with his head, spun round on his heel for a moment, and a groan, fell to the floor.

William Bathurst for a moment glanced round him, as though expecting to find other marvels in keeping with this sight. Then he threw up his hands in despair of understanding what he had seen, and muttering, "What has wrought this miracle?" dropped into a chair.

Crushed and doubled up, the small man sat in the great chair. Ever since he had been in the City, bent his head, and laughed with such overwhelming vigour that the old woman started back, raised her hands and uttered a wail. When the lungs of the man were empty he doubled up, glanced wildly right and left, spread out his arms level with his head, spun round on his heel for a moment, and a groan, fell to the floor.

William Bathurst for a moment glanced round him, as though expecting to find other marvels in keeping with this sight. Then he threw up his hands in despair of understanding what he had seen, and muttering, "What has wrought this miracle?" dropped into a chair.

Crushed and doubled up, the small man sat in the great chair. Ever since he had been in the City, bent his head, and laughed with such overwhelming vigour that the old woman started back, raised her hands and uttered a wail. When the lungs of the man were empty he doubled up, glanced wildly right and left, spread out his arms level with his head, spun round on his heel for a moment, and a groan, fell to the floor.

William Bathurst for a moment glanced round him, as though expecting to find other marvels in keeping with this sight. Then he threw up his hands in despair of understanding what he had seen, and muttering, "What has wrought this miracle?" dropped into a chair.

Crushed and doubled up, the small man sat in the great chair. Ever since he had been in the City, bent his head, and laughed with such overwhelming vigour that the old woman started back, raised her hands and uttered a wail. When the lungs of the man were empty he doubled up, glanced wildly right and left, spread out his arms level with his head, spun round on his heel for a moment, and a groan, fell to the floor.

William Bathurst for a moment glanced round him, as though expecting to find other marvels in keeping with this sight. Then he threw up his hands in despair of understanding what he had seen, and muttering, "What has wrought this miracle?" dropped into a chair.

FOR THE LADIES.

Love's Pleasure House.

Love built for himself a Pleasure House—A Pleasure House fair to see—The walls were gold, and the walls thereof Were delicate ivory.

Violet crystal the windows were. All gleaming and fair to see—Pillars of rose-stained marble uphold The house where men long to be.

Violet, gold, and white and rose, The Pleasure House fair to see—Did show to all, and they gave Love thanks For work of such mastery.

Love turned away from his Pleasure House And stood by the salt, deep sea—He looked therein, and he flung therein Of his treasure the only key.

Now never a man till time be done That Pleasure House fair to see—Shall with its music merit Or praise it on benediction.

PHILIP BOURKE MARSHTON.

Eternal Vigilance in Mending.

I once knew a large family of romping girls and boys who always looked neat and tidy, although, as I happened to know, they did not have half as many new clothes as a neighboring family who were in rags half the time. I asked the mother of the tidy children, "How do you manage to keep them so neat?" She replied, that aside from her regular weekly mending she went every night after her children were in bed and looked their clothing over, and if there were any torn places in any garment it was mended then; if a button was off, it was replaced by another; if a stocking had begun to be "holy," it was immediately treated. It made me think of that mother's nightly round among her children. Their clothes were common, sometimes almost mean, and without any frills or furbelows; for this sensible housewife preferred that they should be plain and mended rather than ruffled and ragged.

The policy of this wise mother is applicable to other ways. How soon a building becomes dilapidated if one is not constantly on the lookout to make the needed repairs—a broken hinge here, a broken pane of glass there, door-knobs working loose, a patch of falling plaster, paint worn off or grown gray, leaks started which will spoil the plaster and paper unless quickly attended to. Neglect of all these little things soon gives a house a gone-to-ruin look. A few nails, hinges and screws, a lump of putty, a few cans of paint, some varnish and brushes kept on hand and used on the principle of "a stitch in time" will keep the new look on buildings and their surroundings. If the housewife is supplied with paper, paint, varnish, white-wash and brushes, and has the strength to use them, she can keep the inside of the house bright and new looking. Even if she has little strength, she can paste some paper over a torn place on the wall, or a bit of cloth on the back of a torn curtain, tack the drooping fringe upon a chair or lounge, put a patch over a torn place in the carpet, and do a thousand other little things toward mending the interior of the house.

Our body, too, may be kept in repair by attention to little things—needed rest, recreation, pure air and pleasant surroundings. Avoid overwork, stimulants and worry. No doubt many of us might mend our ways with profit to ourselves and others; but on this point I do not feel competent to give advice. You may all go to the Divine Helper for strength and every other aid necessary to improve your hearts and lives. He will never refuse his assistance; He will never guide wrongly.

Handy Working.

Many a farmer's wife is always telling what her husband has and how she has to get along. Because she doesn't have all the modern conveniences, what is the use of dwelling upon it? Are not the women of to-day much better off than their grandmothers were? Let alone a few things, isn't our latest furniture all lighter than sixty years ago? Our tubs may not be set with hot and cold water, but they are not the clumsy affairs I can remember seeing years ago, neither do we use the heavy iron pots or the brass kettles that needed constant polishing if in use. Our salt and spices are all better brought to us before we use them. We know nothing of the mortar and pestle or the coffee mill, which served to reduce the spices so it could be used. How our hands would fall, if not our spirits, if much of our needed clothing lay in a field of flax, to be pulled, pounded, hatched, spun, wove and then whitened, before it was ready to be made into garments. What if your wool was still on the sheep's back and with pulling, picking, carding, spinning and weaving still to be gone through and then clothing to be made without the aid of a sewing machine. And to-day most of the good man's clothes come to us ready made. Then how many more things. The tallow had to be melted and candles run or dipped, while a snuff had to be kept going all the evening, to keep the candle bright. How would one ever get a meal of victuals by a fire-place? Then the work of heating the oven, the long wood to be brought in and burned, the coals to be taken out and the oven swept with the oven broom, then the big baking to be put in. How much work we should find it compared with the present arrangements of the farmhouse. Are all the mechanics? I find it very good rule always to think of those who are not as well off and have not our comforts when I am inclined to murmur, rather than grumble because fortune has not placed me in a better place. A contented mind is a continual feast.—(C. T. D. H.)

In The Drawing-Room.

It has come to be more and more a maxim of good manners, not to mention good morals, that scandal is never to be talked in the drawing-room. So thoroughly is this recognized, that if a woman is heard in good society talking of unpleasant personalities, she is at once set down as an accident of the place, and not as one either to the manner born or who has been long enough with people of good breeding to acquire their repose and taste. Very likely many of these high-bred people in question, who are to the manner born, share gossip and scandal, and perhaps lend to them a too willing ear; but it is in privacy, in the depths of boudoir or chamber, vice paying its well-known tribute there to virtue in the hypocrisy that whispers in the dark, as it were, and will not listen to it more publicly. And it is to be confessed that of the two evils, the indiscriminate encouragement of evil-speaking is the greater, for the hypocrite injures one's self, but the opposite course injures one's self and many others besides.

The forbidding of the enjoyment of scandal in public is, at any rate, an acknowledgment of its vulgarity if not of its wickedness. It proclaims, too, the fact that society thinks well of itself and its intentions, and has a standard of some loftiness to which it endeavours to live, and that it recognizes an interest in the possible ill-doings of fallen mortals as something intrinsically low and

course and calculated to hurt its own structure, an interest in such facts anyway as indicative of an order of taste not to be desired, and its possessor a person not to be associated with. It may be simply as a hygienic precaution, ease and pleasure being so much surer when no uncomfortable suggestion thrusts in an ugly head, that unpleasant topics of a conversational nature are tabooed in the conversation of the finest drawing-rooms. But whether the latter be optimistic, it would believe in no evil and would speak no evil; it has found that the essence of good manners is also the essence of the golden rule, and as the voice of scandal violates all its notions, it has laid upon such utterance within its borders the penalty of ostracism.

Why not a Provident Dress Society?

To girls with slender allowances any sudden emergency in dress occurring just when they have applied themselves with a stock of garments for the coming season is often extremely embarrassing, and I wonder that no one starts a provident dress society, to which members would subscribe a small sum annually, and which would make grants out of its funds on such occasions as having to go into mourning; to go unexpectedly into a climate requiring quite different sort of clothing; to act as bridesmaid; and in some cases marriage, when the relations are unable to provide any outfit; also in the event of a member being suddenly called to enter a new position requiring an immediate outfit on dress. Such a society, well and honorably conducted, would be a help to numbers of people, and would encourage thrift in girls and often prevent them beginning the dangerous habit of running into debt.

Utilize the Waste.

Not every one realizes the value of the kitchen waste in fertilizing the garden. In Eastern Connecticut, where farmers were once compelled to raise crops on a hard, stony soil, and it was necessary to utilize every species of fertilizer, every leaf of the garden, all the kitchen garbage, were made into a vast compost heap, covered up with a few inches of soil at a time, and allowed to become thoroughly decayed. It is easy enough to dispose of the kitchen garbage by burying it when the ground is soft, allowing it to remain for a number of months, when it may be dug up, mixed with soil and used as a fertilizer; it will be found far less disagreeable than most fertilizers, having been purified by the best of all purifiers, the earth itself. If one part of carbonate of soda—the simple sal-soda of the drug stores—be mixed with one part of quicklime and five parts of old bones, horn, old leather, and sufficient water to form an animal nature the whole, in a few hours' boiling it will become a valuable fertilizer. This is a very slight odor to the boiling, nothing in comparison to that of burning leather. This fertilizer would be altogether too strong used as it is, and should be mixed with five parts earth when used. "Any material that gives out the odor of burnt feathers," says an authority on this subject, "contains nitrogen, the most costly of all manure agencies, and should be given to the fields rather than the fire." Dish-water, and above all the suds of the laundry, if applied around the roots of flowers in the garden will produce miracles of bloom. The suds must be put on cold. In a great many houses the first suds of the washing is always used for this purpose. It should of course be applied after sundown or early in the morning at the proper hour for watering the plants, and on no account should it be allowed to touch the leaves or green parts of the plant.

This may seem to be an unpleasant subject to discuss, but a method of dispensing of the kitchen waste and the laundry suds in such a manner as will create beauty and fragrance in the garden is certainly worthy of every good housewife's consideration. There is no real waste in nature, nothing to be destroyed, which will not, if put to its proper use, serve some good and wholesome purpose. The very materials which, if left neglected, are sources of foul disease and death, when put to their proper use become sources of health and beauty. One of the worst cases of black diphtheria was traced by a physician to a pool where the suds from the household wash and dish-water were regularly thrown, keeping a spot moist with this foul water till the microbes of disease were fostered. The family had no idea that they were disposing of this water in an unwholesome manner. Had it been scattered over the garden and mixed with the earth no danger could have arisen.

Domestic Hints.

Cloths dipped in hot potato water and applied to rheumatic joints will ease the pain.

If nuts are eaten by a sufferer from dyspepsia, let him salt them, and the evil effects disappear.

The best way to polish eyeglasses is to moisten them, and dry them with a bit of tissue or newspaper.

Bent whalebones can be restored and used again by soaking them for a few hours in water, and then drying them.

The kitchen table should be high enough that no back aches or stooping shoulders will result from work done there. It should have a drawer for keeping the cooking knives and forks and spoons.

Since the propagation of influenza is known to be promoted by the assemblage of large numbers of persons in a confined atmosphere, it is advisable that when an epidemic threatens or is present unnecessary assemblies should be studiously avoided.

The fashion of seating dinner parties at small tables, introduced in Paris one or two seasons ago, is finding favor in Britain. Hostesses who entertain from 20 to 30 guests at a dinner have discovered that much better social results are secured by this arrangement, and a prettier effect given to the room.

Flow On, Swift Stream.

Flow on, swift stream, amid the flowers,
Flow on and dance with joy,
And tell me of the happy hours
When I was yet a boy.
I watched thee with the loved ones then,
Now all alone I come again
To wander by the river;
And I am old and they are gone.
But unchanged is gliding on
As young and bright as ever.
Unchanged it came, yet who can stay
The water's ceaseless motion?
The little waves of yesterday
To-day have reached the ocean;
Unmarked, unmissed, we, too, must die,
Unmarked, unmissed, we, too, must die,
Where youth, and joy, and love, and strife,
And all the various modes of life,
Flow on unchanged forever.

W. E. H. LECKY.

Prince Victor Emanuel, heir to the Italian crown, is one of the handsomest and most accomplished men of his station in life. Although near 30 years of age and widely traveled, he is yet unmarried. He is liberal in his political views, versed in several languages, amiable and intellectual and generally and justly beloved.

Practical Difficulties of Great Train Speed.

First of all, we must know how long after receiving warning of danger, a train of 350 tons, running a mile in 38 seconds, can be stopped. It is estimated that if running at 60 miles per hour, with the full braking weight of the train utilized, and the rails in the most favorable condition, this train could be brought to a full stop in 900 feet; at 80 miles per hour, in 1,600 feet; at 90 miles per hour, in 2,025 feet; and finally, at 100 miles per hour, in 2,500 feet. These figures at once establish the fact that under the best possible conditions the track must be kept clear of all obstruction for at least 2,500 feet in advance of a train running at the highest limit; but we must estimate the clearance for the worst conditions, such as slippery rails, foggy weather, and unfavorable grades; the personal equation of the engineman must also be considered in a train covering 145 feet each second.

Would it be too much to ask that the engineman receive his warning three-quarters of a mile before he must halt?

The difficulties of arranging for the passage of trains of this character are manifest; but we are not speaking of special trains, but rather of regular trains, running as frequently as may be desired. It should be remembered that, in a two-hour run, the fastest trains of to-day would require a leeway of an hour, and slower ones would have to start proportionately earlier, or be passed on the way.

The most improved forms of signalling and interlocking, be they mechanical, pneumatic, electric, automatic, or otherwise, which are so necessary to the safe movement of passenger trains, may be introduced, but cannot be placed nearer together than three quarters of a mile. The very presence of these signals, while giving the maximum safety, has in practice made prompt movement more difficult. This state of affairs would point to the necessity for an increase in the number of tracks, so that passenger trains could be grouped on the basis of speed just as it has been found already necessary, on crowded lines, to separate the freight traffic from the passenger.—(From "Speed in Locomotives.")

Under the Earth.

The workman in the deepest mines of Europe sweats in almost intolerable heat, and yet they never penetrate over one 7-1000 part of the distance from the surface to the centre of the earth. In the lower levels of some of the Comstock mines the men fought scalding water, and could labour only three or four hours at a time until the San Francisco pierced the mines and drew off some of the terrible heat, which had stood at 120°. The deepest boring ever made, that at Sprenberg, near Berlin, penetrates only 4,172 feet, about 1,000 feet deeper than the famous artesian well at St. Louis. While borings and mines reveal to us only a few secrets relating solely to the temperature and constitution of the earth for a few thousand feet below the surface, we are able by means of volcanoes to form some notion of what is going on at a greater depth. There have been many theories about the causes of volcanoes, but it is now generally held that, though they are produced by the intense heat of the interior of the earth, they are not directly connected with the molten mass that lies many miles below the surface. Volcanic eruptions are the result of volcanic energy. Everybody knows that many rocks are formed on the floor of the ocean, and it has been found that a twentieth to a seventieth of their weight is made up of imprisoned water. Now, these rocks are buried in time under overlying strata, which serve as a blanket to keep the enormous heat of the interior. This heat turns the water into superheated steam, which melts the hardest rock, and when the steam finds a fissure in the strata above it it breaks through to the surface with terrific energy, and we have a volcano. We find that these outpourings that have lain for countless ages many thousands of feet below the surface are well adapted to serve the purposes of man. Many a vineyard flourishes on the volcanic ashes from Vesuvius, and volcanic mud has clothed the hills of New Zealand with fine forests and its plains with luxuriant verdure. The most wonderful display of the results of volcanic energy is seen in the north-western corner of our own land, a region of lofty forests and of great fertility.

Hungarian Women.

The Hungarian women are among the most beautiful in the world. They are not laughing, diaphanous creatures, composed of cobwebs and the odor of musk, with a sickly pallor or a hectic flush in their cheeks. No; erect and straight as a candle hearty and vigorous to the core, they are pictures of good health and alertness. They are gifted with small feet, all arm, plump hands with tapering fingers and wear long braids. The Hungarian woman is not a beauty of classical contour, nor does she, perhaps, frequently present a riddle to the psychologist, and cerebral poets will scarcely find a theme in her for types of mental reverses. She is rather the vigorous embodiment of primeval womanhood. As her exterior, so her whole character is enchantingly fresh and positive. She likes to eat well, is fond of a drop of wine, takes naturally to swimming, dancing, gymnastics, and has not the least objection to being admired. Grace and beauty know no difference between high and low, and often bestow upon a poor, barefooted, short-skirted peasant-girl, which her face framed in a kerchief tied under the chin) the same enchanting form, the same graceful walk the same magically attractive glance, as upon her more favored sister.—(Home Journal.)

The Most Frequently Used Biblical Quotations.

Undoubtedly the favorite Biblical quotation that everybody most frequently uses—being a ready excuse for the indolence of human nature generally—is, that ambiguous saying of Christ: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Running this very closely are the words of Paul, now being old-established proverbs, often expressed, viz.: "Evil communications corrupt good manners," and "Love of money is the root of all evil"; while the wisdom of Peter is often aided in the repetitions of that everyday truth, specially appropriate to modern times and conditions—"Charity covered a multitude of sins." A very commonly-used expression is, "To escape with the skin of my teeth," first uttered by Job, while of the wisdom of Solomon, familiarly known are, "A soft answer turneth away wrath," "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance," and what more common than the saying, "To reap coals of fire upon his head," originally his? "Sowing the wind and reaping the whirlwind" is a popular Scriptural quotation; while, "Tell it not in Gath," is being regularly used as a caution when a secret is required to be kept. Other frequently-used quotations include Cor. xv. 52, "Train up a child in the way he should go"—Prov. xxii. 6; and "There is no new thing under the sun"—Ec. i. 9.