

Watt, his literary agent. A very interesting figure in the sad picture is that of the doctor. He was the most intimate and trusted friend of Charles Dickens as he was of Collins, and there were no truer or deeper mourners at the bedside of either than was the wise, sympathetic, and tender old man. The world never knows its great men half as intimately as it would like to, and if ever the doctor writes his memoirs they will be of the deepest interest to all readers of 'David Copperfield' or the 'Woman in White.' Wilkie Collins had never married, and it is understood that the bulk of his property goes to friends for whom he had a close and warm friendship for years."

WEDDING PRESENTS.

There is no custom, good in itself, and, when restricted to its legitimate uses, worthy of general observance, that has opened the way to greater abuses than this of wedding presents. In our own time and country, among even the wealthier classes, it has come to be considered in many instances an unreasonable exaction, while to the poor and the utterly impecunious it is simply an intolerable burden. Two people are about to begin life together, and their near friends and relations wish to mark their interest in the event by bestowing upon them gifts more or less valuable, according to the ability or inclination of the donors. The sentiment is so natural, and at the same time so amiable, that no possible exception can be taken to it; otherwise, those most nearly concerned would feel that an attempt was being made to defraud them of their legitimate privilege. But here steps in the evil. No sooner is the coming event announced and the invitations issued than numerous acquaintances, friends, so called, must begin immediately to cast about in their minds for some suitable offering on their own account. They have been bidden to the wedding feast, and for any one of them to appear thereat without having first sent in his individual present would be as unnatural as for the bridegroom to forget his ring. So ingenuity is taxed, or the account increased, to add one more to the long list of gifts—"costly and useful"—to which he shall see his name, with the names of others, appended. He feels, perhaps, that it is a useless extravagance; that he cannot afford it, and that he has not even the excuse to his conscience of being moved to commit it by an impulse of generosity. Custom demands it, vanity exacts it, rapacity—and there is scarcely any limit to the rapacity and ambition of many a modern bride and bridegroom and their parents or guardians—rapacity extorts it, and he has not the moral courage to resist. So he stifles the voice of conscience and conforms to the usage of the world.

We know of instances were friends, and here I use the word in its highest and truest sense, were prevented from attending the weddings of those in whom they were warmly and affectionately interested by the fact that it was not in their power to purchase a gift such as would be acceptable and would not shame the general display. A modest offering—a trifle made by their own hands or purchased at a nominal cost—they might have managed; but they shrank from having its insignificance exhibited to the amused or contemptuous gaze of the assembled guests, all of whom would, it was reckoned, give something handsome. So they stayed away, with, perhaps, just the faintest little feeling of bitterness rankling in their hearts. Others we know who laughingly say: "If there are many more weddings we shall be bankrupt." And a lady of moderate means complains, with a comical little *moue*, that her friends are always getting married and expecting her to give them presents, though, as she herself is already a wife, she cannot hope for any in return.

It is a two-sided evil, opening up a way to unjustifiable extravagance and false pretention on the part of the giver, and of vanity and unworthy subterfuge on the part of the receiver. What can right-minded people think of parents and friends hiring valuable articles of jewellery and bric-a-brac to be displayed as "gifts," so that the list may be large enough and grand enough to satisfy their ambition. Yet that such is sometimes the case a

New York firm has assured us. Imagine the prospects for honour and integrity of a life begun with a lie like this.

The burial reform question is now forcing itself on the public. Sensible people are beginning to see the uselessness and indiscretion of the glaring extravagance that too often carries itself to the very confines of the grave, nay, even into the grave itself; and those whose means and position would, if in any case, justify a lavish mortuary expenditure, are often to be found identifying themselves with the movement for its suppression, and by their personal example discouraging it.

It is no uncommon thing to see appended to the notice of a death: "Friends are kindly requested not to send flowers." Might not the intimation—"Friends are kindly requested not to send presents," accompany the invitation to a wedding. It would not probably prevent friends who were able and willing from gratifying their inclination, any more than does the obituary notice, when the ties of blood or of affection demand that we be permitted to pay the last loving tribute in the way that seems to us most delicate and appropriate; but it would relieve embarrassment in many cases, and it would be always a standing protest against extortion.

EROL GERVAISE.

A RIFT.

O what a dream I could dream you,
If only the words would rhyme!
But noon and shadow are neighbours,
And sorrow is playmate of time.

How you should loiter forever
Through nights of entrancing May,
Where the hill flowers blow tender
Just on the coming of day!

How you should grow with their growing,
And watch through the underleaves
That old renewal of wonder
The gloaming of dawn unveaves!

Filled with the freshening hours,
There you should wander and muse,
Child of the stars and the uplands
Calm in their twilights and dews.

There in the infinite silence
How we should learn and forget,
Know and be known, and remember
Only the name of regret!

One in that beauty of quiet,
Twain as the beat of a rhyme,
Seeds of a single desire
In the heart of the apple of time.

There you would ripen to harvest,—
Spirit of dream and of dew!—
Breath on the air till the fire
At the core of night burned through

The forest of brown stream waters,
Riving their glooms with gold,
Whereon the white drifts of lilies
Flake upon flake unfold,—

Then with that brow unshadowed,
Turn and remember and smile;
Failure, despairing, and travail
Are dead in the weary while.

So shall regret and long dreaming
Take joy and fulfilment to rhyme,
On the verge of summer and morning
Beyond the borders of time.

Here when the dusk half covers,
And the twilight half reveals,
The clew of a woven shadow
The glare of midnoon conceals,

There springs to the trail, and follows,
The cry of a wild sweet thing—
At last shall desire unravel
The wind in the hollows of Spring!

It hurtles and dies and re-echoes
Abroad on the shallows of night,
Regathers as rapids regather,
Outfleeing the traces of flight.

In the valley of morrow for shelter,
It beats at the goal of the sun;
Almost the veil of remembrance
As a weaving of shade is undone.

Often and often at evening
The woodland curtain swings;
I call you, then—it has fallen!
Only the woodthrush sings.

Over the floor of midnight
Wanders a matchless rhyme,
Blown of the wind asunder—
Out from the echo of time.



AMATEUR SPORTSMAN: Pat, I knocked feathers out of him that time. Pat: Yis, sor, an' if ye'll kape it up ye'll knock 'em all out, an' thin we kin ketch him, sor.

TOMMY: Where is Variance, Mrs. Peck? Mrs. N. Peck: I do not know, Tommy. I never heard of the place before. Tommy: That's funny, for mamma said that you and Mr. Peck were at variance two-third of the time.

GENTLE SARCASM.—"Mrs. Mulligan," said Mrs. Ginty, "is it well yer falin the day?" "Yis, very well." "An' shtrong?" "Yis, quite shtrong." "Then pr'aps it's able ye'd be to bring back the wash-tubs yez borried last Monday."

AN old lady was telling her grandchildren about some trouble in Scotland, in the course of which the chief of her clan was beheaded. "It was nae great thing of a head at the best, to be sure," said the old lady, "but it was a sad loss to him, pur man!"

ENRAGED FATHER: Well, that's the last time I'll ever be fool enough to give any of my daughters a wedding check. Mother: Why, Charles? There's nothing wrong, I hope. Enraged father: Yes, but there is. That fool of a son-in-law has gone and had it cashed.

SOFTPATE: Watcher think of the dawg, Miss Sprightly? Fine dawg that. Miss Sprightly: He is a splendid creature. Softpate: I have refused a cool thousand for him—fact, I assure you. Would it surprise you if I told you that dawg knows as much as I do. Miss Sprightly: Not at all.

PAT WANTED A JOB.—Captain (furiously to stowaway): I've a mind to pitch you overboard to the sharks! Why did you sneak on board my ship? Stowaway: Sure, sor, I wanted to get to London to find a job at my business. Captain: But all London's on strike? Stowaway: Yes, sor; but that's me own line av work!

A NATIVE of Carnwath went to an art exhibition at Glasgow, and seated himself on one of the settees, where he sat patiently for a length of time. At last he beckoned a policeman to him, and then addressed that functionary: "I say, my man, whan's this exhibeeshun gaun to begin? I've been waitin' here an' hoor an' a hauf."

"How are you getting along with your work on the piano?" asked Blinks of a young woman. "Oh, very well; I can see great progress in my work." "How is that?" "Well, the family that lived next door moved away within a week after I began to practice. The next family stayed a month, the next ten weeks, and the people there now have remained nearly six months."

GAZLEY (presenting his card): I represent my friend, Mr. Dolley. You grossly insulted him last night, and he demands an apology or satisfaction, sir. Tangle: I don't remember insulting anybody. Gazley: You told him to go to Jericho, sir. Tangle: Oh, yes, I believe I did. So Dolley feels bad about it, does he? Gazley: Yes, sir. He demands an apology. Tangle: Well, I don't want any ill feeling between us. You may tell him he needn't go.

THERE is a story told of a lady who once went to call on Fuseli, a painter, who, when there was need for it, could express himself with emphasis. Her ceaseless chatter did not even allow him to get in a word edgewise. At last a pause to take breath gave him time to say: "We had boiled mutton and turnips for dinner to-day." "What a strange observation, Mr. Fuseli!" exclaimed the lady. "Why," he said, "it is as good as anything you have been saying for the last two hours."

JOHNNIE'S REWARD.—Little Johnnie Smith is a bright youth, but in the estimation of many friends of the family he is rather too precocious. He is the pride of his father's heart, however, Smith senior being wont to aver that Johnnie is a regular "chip of the old block." Johnnie has apparently caught hold of this expression, for the other night he looked up from his book and remarked: "I'm a chip o' the old block, am I no', father?" "Yes, my son, you are," returned the fond father with pride (he little knew what was coming.) "An' you're the head o' the family, aren't you, father?" was Johnnie's next question. "Yes, my son," replied Smith, still unsuspecting. "Then you're a block-head, aren't you?" concluded Johnnie, triumphantly. Then for the space of fifteen minutes Johnnie's screams disturbed the neighbourhood. And that was all the reward his logic brought him. Poor Johnnie!

TWAS EVER THUS.—He had had his little speech all written out for several days beforehand, and it ran like this: "I have called, Mr. Wealthyman, to tell you frankly that I love your daughter; and I have her assurance that my affection is returned, and I hope you will give your consent for her to become my wife. I am not a rich man, but we are young and strong, and are willing to fight the battle of life together; and—" there was a good deal more of it, and he could say it all glibly before he left home; but when he stood in the presence of Papa Wealthyman, he said: "I—I—that is I—Mr. Wealthyman—I tell you frankly that—that—I—your daughter loves me, and—and—I have called to—to—frankly ask you to—to—to—be my wife—er—that is—I—we—she—er—no—we are willing to fight—that is—we—we are young and can fight—er—no—I hope you understand me."