

at once the father's stricken heart. He had delayed too long to chastise his wayward son, now gliding into ruin. It must be done, hard though the thought should be. He awoke his wife, and suppressing her reproaches with an iron will, related the story of her depraved child. "Henceforth," he said, "I must be magistrate and mother instead of you! Robert, come dress yourself!"

He thrust the frightened mother back. The boy fell on his knees, but could not speak one word, so large the knot that gathered in his little throat, so resolute the startled, fawn-like eyes, as if agony and perversity worked together to make him obdurate. Down the stairs and into the orchard, away from sight, the father bore his child, and making him kneel upon the grass, struck hard and slow with a switch of the apple-tree, telling his boy to confess; yet dumb as Isaac upon the altar beneath his father's knife, the shrinking childhood of the boy received his hard chastisement. Carried back, all trembling as with a chill of death, to the house of mourning, the little boy was laid in his bed, still frozen tight of speech, and only the ointment of a mother's tear fell on his tortured back and famine-narrowed shoulders; but his large eyes turned to a little box that he kept his treasures in, and they placed it in his bed, where he lay all day sighing from his inarticulate soul.

The father's heart was wrenched to think of such a frail, dear son persisting in his wickedness, and turning from repentance. He sat by his side all that afternoon demanding his boy to confess and save them both the pain of another chastisement, which else he would feel required to enforce next day. The boy trembled, but did not speak, and put his arms around his little box as if it was his brother.

The long night through a sigh went through the chamber ever and anon from those suffering lips. Neither man nor woman slept. At early day the anguished father felt that the stern punishment must be meted out again, unless his boy spoke and repented. He rose and passed into the chamber where the son lay in his lowly bed, all strewn with his little drawings, and his arms around his box. He sighed no more but seemed asleep. Under his face a color paler than the snowy sheets extended. Another guest was in the bed; the guest that cometh like a real thief in the night.

"Mary," cried the father, "Mary, my wife, come here! Robert is dying."

The mother came on feet of doves' wings. She raised her son upon her breast. The little lips unclosed and spoke the last forever to this world.

"I love my papa. Mamma, I only wanted his pencil, not his money. Dear God, let papa love me!"

And so, among the little drawings he had been working at every dawn, till his pencils were worn to the wood and he would have borrowed his papa's noiselessly, whose sharpened pencil was in his waistcoat pocket, the little artist yielded up his broken heart. Only the room resounded with a childless father's cry:

"O! had I my son again, even though he were a thief!"
—Johnny Bouquet, in *N. Y. Tribune*.

A SHORT SERMON ABOUT MATRIMONY.

Dedicated to Young Women who want Husbands.

Girls, if any of you have made up your minds that you "wouldn't marry the best man that ever lived, there!" skip this little sermon, because it will have no interest for you.

Men will shut their ears if they have a spark of delicacy, for every word of this is *private and confidential*.

MY TEXT.

The text, or rather the occasion for what I am about to say on the subject of marriage was this:

About a week ago, a young woman of twenty-six (she said twenty-six, so I am sure about her age); came to me in regard to her health; and after our professional conversation we fell into a general and pleasant chat. She was delightfully frank, and said, while we were discussing the ever fruitful subject of matrimony:

"I wish I was little."

"That is too bad," I replied. "I have been admiring

your grand, queenly proportions ever since you entered; and now you spoil it all by showing that you are not grateful."

"I can't help it; I wish I didn't weigh more than eighty pounds, and wasn't more than four and a half feet high."

"I am shocked! Do tell me why you wish that."

"To be frank, the reason is just this: men are so fond of saying, 'My little wife.'"

I laughed, thinking it was intended as a bright speech; but her flushed face assured me that she was uttering her very heart. "Go on," I said, "tell me your thoughts."

"My thoughts are just these; and I believe they are the thoughts of all unmarried, marriageable women. I long for nothing this side of Heaven so much as to bury all my uncertainties and anxieties in the love of a husband. Eagerly would I make any sacrifice to secure this precious treasure. But I fear there is nothing left for me but to be sneered at as an old maid. So, while I might otherwise be grateful for what you choose to call my queenly proportions, I can only wish I was one of the little women whom men fancy."

"I will not repeat any more of this conversation, and my lady friend will excuse this, as it furnished a text for my little sermon. Only she and I will know to whom it refers."

I wonder if it is improper to speak plainly about that of which so many are thinking. I will venture a little. My hair is of a color which might introduce me to you in the character of a father. I shall speak very plainly. It cannot compromise anyone, for as I told you, this is all *private and confidential*.

YOU WANT HUSBANDS.

Don't deny it; it is silly. It is like the earnest declaration of the mother who is managing her daughters through Saratoga, Newport and an endless round of parties, but who constantly declares, in the most earnest way, that she has no more girls than she wants, that she could not consent to lose one of them, and who, at length, when pressed to part with dear Arabella, gives a reluctant and painful assent, and who may be seen on the wedding day penetrated with inconsolable grief at parting with that dear child. Girls, don't join in this farce. You think of them by day and dream of them by night. You talk of little else. Think on and dream on. Even if you never get them it will make you better and nobler to think about them. On our side of the house we are all thinking and dreaming of you, and, although we may never marry, our hearts will be warmer and purer for having been filled with thoughts of you.

WHY MEN DO NOT PROPOSE.

In entering upon this most important and delightful relation, we men are expected to take the overt initiative. You are perplexed and grieved that so many of us hold back, and wander about, homeless bachelors, all our lives, leaving you to die old maids. Let me whisper in your ear. *We are afraid of you!*

As I am out of the matrimonial market I will let my friend Robert, who is in said market, explain. Robert is a splendid fellow, and anxious to have a home of his own. He declared in my parlor the other evening that he would prefer ten years of happy married life to fifty years of unmarried.

"My wife said: 'Well, Robert, if you cannot find a wife, you had better give a commission to some one who can.' With a flushed face, he replied:

"See here, Mrs. Lewis; I am a banker; my salary is two thousand dollars. I cannot marry a scrub. I must marry a wife of culture and refinement. My mother and sisters, to say nothing of myself, would break their hearts if my choice were below their idea. Just tell me how—with such a wife—I could pull through on two thousand a year? Why, her dress alone would cost half of it. Board for the two would cost at least fifty dollars a week, and even with that, you know we should not have first-class board. And then come the extras,—the little trips, the lectures, the concerts, the opera, etc.; one cannot live in society without a little of such things."

"Oh, no, unless I first make up my mind to rob the bank, I cannot think of matrimony. If I had five thousand a year I would venture; but with two thousand,—well, I am not quite a madman, and so I stay where I can pay my