

"They will come to you immediately," said my mother. "but you were not expected so soon, and you know, George, that ladies of a certain age cannot bear to be caught *en dishabille*."

"A certain age!" said I. "Oh, yes: Matilda is five years older than I."

And presently down came Matilda, the widow, a lady of forty five, who, by dint of overmuch rouge, overmuch black front, and eyebrows artificially arched and blackened, had contrived to make herself appear fifty at the very least. It was not the Matilda I had left twenty years before; there was not the slightest resemblance; face, figure, manner, voice, all utterly unlike my sister "Matty." I saw it,—I felt it. The meeting gave me not the slightest pleasure; on the contrary, it was more painful than I can describe, particularly when I perceived that she never would have recognized me.

But I have not done yet. Presently appeared the older of the two old Maids, aged forty-five; she had never been the least good looking, and had, therefore, I suppose, relinquished all matrimonial views earlier than many women, and was now what my mother hinted at as "rather serious," and what the widow had openly declared to be "very methodical." She was as neat as possible, as mild as milk, and I thought as cold as an icicle. She was soon followed by the youngest spinster (of forty three), who was always called by the other two "child." She was pretty—very much so I thought, when I left home—and she now, I suppose, might be said to have "traces" of beauty! but not a glimpse of my own girl sister Mary! She wore what, to my mind, on a woman's head, is the gratest of abominations—a wig. A male wig is to my fancy a bad business; it never makes any body look younger or better than he would look without it; it deceives nobody, and yet every body who wears one flatters himself that not one in a hundred discovers his secret. When a man above forty is pointed out as good-looking, he is invariably the man without the wig; but a female wig is a hundred times worse! a wig with a long tail, which is twisted up to act as a wig with a flower stuck in it. It is like a garland on a tomb-stone, for a wig, after all, is but a memorial of departed youth! and such a wig was my sister Mary's, with a bit of lily of the valley hitched under one of the curls. I longed to snatch it off and throw it into the fire, but thought perhaps that might not be taken in good part, and I desisted.

I felt miserably out of spirits, woefully disappointed, and I could not tell one of the family the cause of my depression. I felt relieved when it was time to take my candle and go to bed, and, after so long a journey in the open air, I soon fell fast asleep. The next morning I awoke by no means a giant refreshed; my wetting of the previous day had given me a lumbago and pains in all my limbs, and when I entered the breakfast-room, with my back bent, and one leg following the other with considerable difficulty, I saw clearly that my mother and sisters looked at me with compassion, and considered me a premature Methusalem.

There was, however, an old gentleman standing by the fire to keep me in countenance, and by his side a remarkably fine young man, who, on turning round at my entrance, displayed the very face of my elder brother, just as I had left him twenty years before. I hurried up to the lad without an instant's hesitation, and, calling him by his name, caught him in my arms; to my surprise the young man laughed good-humouredly, but as it appeared rather with a feeling of awkwardness, and, without by any means reciprocating my endearments, walked away to the window. The elderly gentleman, however, endeavoured to make amends; he shook me most paternally by the hand, and apologised for my nephew's coldness. My nephew! yes, he was born two years after I left England! and there was my brother, who, having now been married nearly twenty years, and possessing moreover a numerous family, had left off being a young man, and might, as the phrase goes, be "taken for any age."

Some men leave off being young much earlier than others; a great deal depends upon the constant habit of making up to go into society. By making up, I by no means infer the use of cosmetics, dyes, &c.; but merely the very innocent endeavour to make oneself "look one's best." When once this habit is given up, whether from ill-health or the withdrawing from society, there's an end of the matter—there's no returning it; look in the glass, and the elderly man stands before you!

Here was another disappointment, and a bitter one; however, I made the best of it. I took a great fancy to my nephew, perhaps because I found in him the sole representative of the bloom which time had so ruthlessly wiped away from all the rest of the family. He seemed to take to me too, and my spirits began to rise; but accidentally, as I left the room, I heard him say to my sister, "I say, aunt, what can we do to wause the old gentleman!" and that was a damper!

My disappointments were many, but to describe them in detail would be tedious. At balls I found that nobody expected me to dance, unless indeed there happened to be a lack of beaux, and then my "good nature" in standing up was remarked, or some port girl said, "What! you figuring away!"

I was advised by all my family to marry, by all means the very thing I wished; but I never dreamed of proposing for any woman that was not young and and pretty; I did propose for one that was decidedly both, and was rejected.

And had I spent the twenty best years of my life, incessantly toiling to obtain wealth, in order that I might return home to enjoy myself? and had I returned at last only to discover that the season for enjoyment had passed away? So it would appear; but I had committed one great error, and these little confessions of an elderly gentleman may prove a warning to others who are similarly situated.

Let no one dream of "beginning life at forty;" were I to start again at the age of nineteen, to play the same part, on the same stage, I should know that on that stage my scene of youth must be enacted, and there the heroine of my love-story must be won. If it be your lot to pass so many years in a foreign land, that land must be the scene of your hopes and fears—your joys and sorrows—your loves—your friendships—your associations. Toil and climate may thin the hair and tan the cheek, but the married man and the father is not expected to turn unchanged—he has assumed a new character; while one who, like myself, returns at the end of twenty years *en garcon*, to dance quadrilles and look for a wife, will find that, in his matrimonial researches, it behoves him not be over particular.

T. H. B.

COLONIAL.

EXTRAORDINARY PHENOMENON.—We have received a description, from a friend who has returned from seeing the effects of a most extraordinary phenomenon, which took place in the township of McNab, by some unaccountable effort of nature. The letter is dated some weeks ago, and has only now reached us. The cause of this delay, we do not know.

There has been about eight acres of land suddenly removed from its pristine position, and thrown almost into a compact body into a large bay, of the Madawaska river, most of the trees standing in their natural position and now forming an island, the distance which it was removed being half a mile. The breach or chasm from which it was thus violently removed, is about one hundred and fifty feet deep, quite perpendicular, and represents a semicircle,—the shock was altogether local, but so powerful as to cause the fish to be thrown out of the river, high upon the bank. It was not occasioned by the action of water, the soil being perfectly dry, and no appearance of moisture of any kind; neither was there any earthquake. But on coming within twenty yards of the lower extremity of the chasm, a strong sulphuric flavour proceeded from it, but it is not so palpable on getting a few yards within the breach; this has been remarked by several people. Considerable damage was done to timber that was lying in the bay.—*Bathurst (U. C.) Courier*.

Light Houses are about to be erected on the Islands of Antigua and Barbadoos, where they have long been wanted.

A CHALLENGE.

To the Religious Teachers of the City of Saint John.

GENTLEMEN:

Since my arrival in this City facts have reached me, which compel me now publicly to address you. Passing by the idle and unsupported rumours of the day as unworthy of notice, it is with regret that I learn from unexceptionable authority that you have given the influence of your names against those disciples of Christ, in this city, who assume no name but Christian, no leader but Jesus, and no creed but the Bible, by denouncing them from your pulpits as Socinians, Arcans, Infidels, Sustanics and Heretics. Having at present too high an opinion of you as Religious Teachers and

and Gentlemen, to believe that you would prefer charges so grievous, against any body of professing Christians without sufficient testimony and they through me pleading not guilty to the above charges, it is to be hoped that you will agree to meet me before the public in some convenient place, and endeavor to substantiate the above charges, or we shall be compelled to regard you as false accusers. With all due respect for your character, and official standing

I am Gentlemen,

Your friend for the truth's sake.

WILLIAM HUNTER.

P. S. An acceptance of the above by any or all of the religious teachers of this City, reaching me at Mr. Barry's Kings Square, before Wednesday July 22, shall be respectfully attended to.

W. H.

[British Colonist, N. B.]

CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL, &c.

The Subscriber having been appointed agent for the above literary work, is now ready to receive subscribers for this excellent Weekly Miscellany. The Numbers can be furnished from the commencement of the work in February 1832, down to April 1835, together with its appropriate companions,

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May 27.

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REMOVAL.

THE Subscriber has removed from the Royal Oak to the premises which he formerly occupied, two doors west of this Office, where, by strict attention to the accommodation of customers, he hopes to receive a liberal share of public patronage. June 20th. VARNAL BROWN.

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ANY person desirous of subscribing for the New England Farmer, can be furnished with a copy, commencing with Vol. 14th No. 1, dated July 15th, 1835, by applying at this Office. [August 1st.

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