

The scent of the pinks came in the window, and she noticed that. "How real it all is!" she thought. "But I shall wake up before long." It was like one of those dreams in which one clings staunchly to the consciousness of the dream, and will not sink beneath its terrors.

When Lawrence Thayer entered she seemed to wake violently. She half rose from her seat, then sank down again. Her mother screamed.

Lawrence Thayer stood by the parlor door, where everybody in the two rooms could hear him. His gentle, bearded face was pale as death, but the pallor revealed some strong lines which his youthful bloom had softened. He was slender, and stooped a little naturally; now he was straight as a reed. He had a strange look to these people who had always known him.

"Friends," he began, in a solemn, panting voice, "I have asked you to come here on the anniversary of the day on which Delia Caldwell and I were to have been married, to make to her, before you all, the restitution in my power. I don't do it to put myself before you in a better light; God, who knows everything, knows I don't; it's for her. I was a coward, and mean, and it's going to last. Nothing that I can do now is going to alter that. All I want now is to make up to her a little for what she's been through. Two years ago to-day she stood before you all rejected and slighted. Now look at me in her place."

Then he turned to Delia, with a stiff motion. It was like solemn formal oratory, but his terrible earnestness gave it heat. "Delia Caldwell, I humbly beg your pardon. I love you better than the whole world, and I ask you to be my wife."

"I never will," it was as if Delia's whole nature had been set to these words; they had to be spoken. She had risen, and stood staring at him so intently that the whole concourse of people vanished in blackness. She saw only his white face. All the thoughts in her brain spread wings and flew, swiftly circling. She heard what he said, and she heard her own thoughts with a strange double consciousness. All those days came back—the sweet old confidence, the old looks and ways. That pale speaking face was Lawrence's—Lawrence's; not that strange other's who had left her for that pink-faced girl. This revelation of his inner self, which smote the others with a sense of strangeness, thrilled her with the recognition of love. "A coward and mean." Yes, he had been, but—Yes, there was some excuse for him—there was. Is not every fault wedded to its own excuse, that pity may be born into the world? He was as honest in what he was saying as a man could be. He could have had no hope that she would marry him. He knew her enduring will, her power of indignation. This was no subtle scheme for his own advantage. Even these people would not think that. They would not, indeed, believe him capable of it. The system of terrible but coolly calculated ventures for success was one with which this man would not be likely to grapple. He was honest in this. There sat all the Thayers and Cawdells. How they would talk and laugh at him!

Lawrence turned to go. He had bowed silently when she gave him her quick answer. There was a certain dignity about him. He had in reality pulled himself up to the level of his own noble avowed sentiments.

Delia stood gazing after him. She looked so relentless that she was almost terrible. One young girl, staring at her, began to cry.

Mrs. Erastus Thayer sat near the door. Delia's eyes glanced from Lawrence to her face. Then she sprang forward.

"You needn't look at him in that way," she cried out. "I am going to marry him. Lawrence, come back."

Parlor Magic for the Boys.

AQUATIC BOMB.

Drop about two grains of potassium into a saucer of cold water. It will immediately burst into flame with a slight explosion, burn vividly on the surface, and dart about with great violence in the form of a red-hot fire-ball.

THE DOUBLE MEANING.

Place a glass of any liquid on the table, put a hat over it, and say that you are able to drink that liquid without removing the hat. Go under the table and knock, then ask the company to look under the hat; when they lift the hat you instantly take the glass and drink the liquid.

TO TELL THE DISTANCE OF THUNDER.

Count, by means of a watch, the number of seconds that elapse between seeing the flash of lightning and hearing the report of thunder. Allow somewhat more than five seconds for a mile, and the distance may be ascertained. In a French work it is stated that if the pulse beat six times, the distance of the thunder will be about 30,000 feet or five miles and a-half, thus recovering five thousand feet for each pulsation.

Minnie May's Dep't.

MY DEAR NIECES:—

What a vast amount of sighs and regrets are wasted over the "long ago"—"the good old days," as they are called. But we as women have little to regret that they are gone, and not a chance of returning either, for, as women, we were but little considered, socially or otherwise.

Why should we sigh for the return of semi-barbarism? Our grandmothers can tell us what woman's work was in those days, and the hardships they endured in the daily discharge of their household duties. Then there were no baby carriages to ease the aching back and arms of the mother, no nurses to be had, no help to even give the rudest assistance. All the cooking was done before a blazing fire, in a hearth about ten feet wide and four deep; and heavy pots had to be lifted on a crane and swung over the fire, when filled, and emptied, when cooked, in the same laborious fashion. All the meat had to be baked before the blazing fire, and basted while baking, with no shelter for the poor face of the cook—often with the result that the cook was almost exhausted when finished. All the bread was baked, one loaf at a time, in a Dutch oven, with live coals kept on the lid as well as under it until done.

Ale was brewed at home by the women. All the meat had to be salted, dried and smoked by her, and even the much-talked-of fire of blazing logs had oftenest to be built by the woman of the house. Many of the logs, weighing over one hundred pounds, had to be hoisted on the huge "dogs" with a poker as large as a sleigh-stake. If her children got sick, the responsibility of making them well fell upon her, and home remedies were all she had to resort to. What woman can wish for a return of such savagery?

True, there were periods of recreation; but, I will ask, were they enjoyable as they might be, had so much coarseness not mingled with it? The days of old were as well as they could be with all the disadvantages that had to be contended against, but let no woman let herself be heard sighing for the return of those days. There may be more conventionalities now-a-days, but there is more respect for women—a truce for such gallantry as would prompt a man to kiss a lady's hand and then stand by while she drugged like a slave for his comfort, or took his wife for a sleigh-drive and got beastly drunk before he returned, or used blasphemous language in her presence. Compare our home life with that of fifty years ago!

My dear girls, sigh not for the days gone by, but thank your lucky star that you were not born then, but live in the present age of civilization and enlightenment; and the work of our homes is now just what we make it, and there is no evil we complain of that we cannot remedy ourselves, if we only make the effort.

MINNIE MAY.

P. S.—Minnie May offers a prize of \$2.00 for the best essay on "How to spend Sunday," all communications to be in our office by the 18th February. Also a prize of \$2.00 for the best essay on "The policy of tongues, or how we should govern our speech," all communications on this to be in our office by the 10th of March. To those who have been unsuccessful in winning a prize I would say, try again, for sometimes it has been very difficult to decide upon the best, and only after reading and re-reading by competent judges can it be done.

MINNIE MAY.

Fashion Notes.

SKIRTS.

The new skirts are invariably in a bell shape, but it is not to be supposed for that reason that the foundation skirt is entirely done away with. On the contrary, many bell skirts are still mounted on foundation skirts of silk from the belt, in order to make them hang more gracefully, and it is somewhat easier for an inexperienced dressmaker to make them up in this way than simply to line them with silk. The back part of all bell skirts is now interlined with foundation muslin, in order to make the pleats set firmly and smoothly. For those who do not know how to cut a bell skirt, we give the following simple directions:

Take a piece of cloth about a yard and a-half wide and three yards long, fold it in the center lengthwise, find the length of your front on this fold, and use this length as a radius to form the quadrant of a circle. You have now barely outlined the bell skirt. On the top edge of your fold of cloth, at the top of your quadrant is the back seam of the skirt. The tip, or point, of the quadrant must be cut off enough to fit the skirt into a belt and form the waist line. The curved edge of the quadrant forms half the bottom edge of the skirt. When the fold of cloth is spread out, after it is thus cut, it will be found to be in the form of a semicircle, with a second tiny semicircle cut out where the waist line comes. Thus a complete bell shape is formed where the back seam is sewed up. Three or four little gores, about four or five inches long, must be taken out at the top of the skirt, to fit it around the hips, and a cluster of thick pleats must be pressed in and held in place by elastics, to give a graceful, fan-like sweep to the back breadth and hold the skirt smoothly down at the sides and in front. The skirt must be trimmed off around the bottom in such a manner as to make it hang evenly. If it is to be a trained skirt, the back seam must be lengthened.

For ordinary street dress, the preference is for a skirt with many gores rather than for the bell skirt, which is especially suitable to house and elegant dress, though it has been worn on the streets during the summer. Moreover, the use of a bell skirt on the streets necessitates a train, and the best-dressed women of our large cities refuse to be chained down to such an incumbrance in walking costume. The skirt with six gores offers an excellent model for street dress. It has a narrow front breadth, gored on either side, two breadths on each side, and a narrow back breadth, gored up the edges.

Tomato red is the newest color.

The divided skirt is recommended for wear beneath the bell-gored skirts.

Feathers are abundantly used in all millinery, and are always pretty and becoming.

Fringes never were prettier or more elaborate than now, and promise to have a long run of favor.

Rose color, in its numerous delicate shades, is seen in many of the latest silk and woollen gauzes and satins.

A new sleeve, called the "Amy Mossart," promises to be becoming and popular; the lower part fits neatly to the arm, and the top has a large soft puff.

Cloaks, coats, wraps, ulsters and circulars can be worn with good taste, for all are in vogue. Some are trimmed elaborately, while others are finished with two rows of stitching, some are edged with fur or feather trimming, and some have nothing but a bright colored lining, which often shows as the arms are moved or the breeze turns up one end of the front, and real jaunty and natty it looks.