



THE LOVERS' PARTING.

A lovely autumn evening. Late; somewhat chilly; not to say damp. The hour matters not; 'twas late, yet not too much so for Argyle Slobbins and Bertruchia de la Humpty to be abroad.

They were lovers, these twain. Those five short words are pregnant with meaning.

He loved her and her loved he. These seven words are even more full of pith than the other five.

The reader must imagine a richly-wooded glade in the ancestral forests around the de la Humpty turretted and castellated mansion.

Proud mansion! recalling the grand old castles of ye days of chivalerie. The de la Humpty affair had been finished the previous spring and commenced in the summer before. The moonbeams glimmer and glint athwart the sombre shade of the newly planted chestnut trees composing the richly wooded glade before referred to: An owl occasionally toots his lugubrious toot from some (imaginary) ivy-clad ruin, to be answered by another of his species who endeavors, in the words of the immortal bard, E. King Dodds, to "toot a little louder." A whip-poor-will, seeing nothing to hinder him, gives vent to a periodical "whishoo-wee," and all things proclaim that it is an autumn evening as before stated.

However, to get on. *Tempus fugit.* (Latin).

The lovers wander on, not saying much. Argyle is not a conversational bird, anyhow, and Bertruchia is busy with her gun. At length he speaks:

"Bertruchia, I am about to ask you to be mine."

"Oh! Argy, don't; I shall scream: besides I really don't know what to say."

"Wait till I ask you, dearest," he replies, coiling his serpentine, lithe, sinewy, muscular, irresistible arm around her belt, "Wait: ere I propound the question bidding you to prepare for the awful doom"—Argyle was a law squirt and had heard judges and such use these words—"which awaits you, I would first ask another."

She was silent.

"Tu-whoo-whoo-who," chanted the mournful owl, "whishawill, whish-a-wee" went 'tother dismal fowl. (Poetry.)

"I would ask you, Bertruchia, here as we stand in the presence of yonder tool-house, whether you—answer me, as the good and true woman I believe you to be, for Cæsar's wife must be above reproach, whether you—"

She was visibly trembling and sniffed a little as the damp struck through the paper soles of her 2 pair for \$3.50's—still she nerved herself for the dread interrogatory, determined to answer it, even though she were compelled to utter fifty falsehoods in doing so. She looked at him fearlessly and there was go-ahead-without-what-you're-going-to-say in every line of her beautiful downturned visage.

She was several inches taller than he. "Then Bertruchia," he continued, "when you are dressing—"

She started and would have fallen but for the deathly curiosity to hear what was coming that sustained her.

"Do you, do you—hold pins in your mouth?"

It was out now.

A leaf fluttered from one of the stately 2 inches in diameter chestnuts and fell at her feet. She stooped to pick it up, whilst Argyle, bracing himself with a strong effort, awaited her reply.

"Argyle," she said, straightening up to her full, proud height, "though I forfeit your love for ever, I will brave its loss and answer truly. I do."

It was evident that the shock was terrible to him: still, like some frowning bluff that repels the seething, foaming wrath of the angry waves, he withstood it before continuing.

"There is yet one more chance"; then he paused again. "Bertruchia, I know the feelings of your sex" (Law squirts make little mistakes of speech when excited or unnerved, as was Argyle). "Answer me yet once more: How many?"

"On an average seven, Argyle,— ("Be the same more or less," he interposed) "and now what would you with me?"

The strong man's agony was fearful to witness. A convulsive shudder ran through the full five feet one comprising Argyle Slobbins' stature as he said:

"Nothing. Had the number been four I had ta'en ye for better or for worse, but seven, never. The contortions of countenance of a woman, aye, though she be gifted with the beauty of a Cleopaterer or a, or a Boadicea—the spasms of visage, I repeat, of a female with seven pins in her mouth I have once witnessed. May I never do so again. All the love I might feel for one before seeing her in the rash act would depart and go out from me for ever after beholding her grimacing with those seven pins. No, Bertruchia, it cannot be." And he covered his face with his shapely fin and wept aloud.

She turned towards the grand old hall without another word.

He gazed after her, heave! a sigh that snapped something, and returned to his hash-house.

WHAT HE LEARNT AT COLLEGE.

NOT ALTOGETHER IMAGINARY.

MERCHANT: So you want me to give you some employment. Well, tell me what you can do, and what you are doing at present. Go on; I won't interrupt you.

APPLICANT: I don't know that I can do anything useful. I went to an English grammar school when I was about eight years old. I was not what is called a reading boy; if I had been I should have learned nothing that could help me now. My belief is that a knowledge of Latin verse would not assist me in my present profession. I am driving a hack for a living at present. When I left school I was in the sixth form; that was the highest. I had not worked hard, but just sufficiently so to keep up with the rest. Our studies consisted of Latin—Cæsar, Horace, Virgil and so on; Greek—Xenophon, Homer, Euripides, and Greek Testament; mathematics, geometry, trigonometry, botany and about a dozen other subjects. The study of French or German was optional and was charged extra; I did not go in for it. I acquired a smattering of the subjects I have mentioned. Am not perfect in one of them. My parents were fairly well off. They urged me to make friends of the wealthier boys and the young noblemen. I was well supplied with pocket money and belonged to the selectest set in the

school. The tradesmen gave us 'tick' to a certain extent; I consider that the habit I have of getting into debt whenever it is possible, was acquired at school. Should estimate that the ten years I spent at school cannot have cost less than £1500 or £2000, or about from \$7,500 to \$10,000. I was considered by the masters a fair scholar when I left school; in reality I did not know a single subject thoroughly. However, I had made numerous friends, or at least intimate companions amongst the young sprigs of nobility. Went to the University: chose Cambridge: I went as what is called a Pensioner: the majority of Cambridge men were Pensioners. Noblemen and Fellow Commoners formed the first grade. Pensioners the next, and Sizarers the third. There was little difference between them as regards birth. The Sizarers were, perhaps, better born than the Fellow Commoners as a rule; the former were usually the sons of clergymen, the latter of rich tradesmen. Sizarers were somewhat looked down upon and dined after the rest had done, with steel forks instead of silver: I have heard their treatment (which I should say the authorities encouraged) called a gratuitous insult; I call it a deuced shame. I could not get out of the same set I had been in at the school. Associated with the first grade I mentioned before. Read moderately hard and paid about £50 a year extra for a couple of private 'coaches' or 'crammers'; in other words a 'coach' is a sort of tutor. University life cost me about £400 the first year. Tradesmen would press me to buy their goods which I didn't want, at long credit; bought several articles I didn't require. When I had been at Cambridge four years my father died suddenly and it was found he was worth nothing. I had to leave the University: I was penniless. I thought some of my noble friends would use their influence and get me something to do; they could have done so without trouble, but they didn't. Some of them are in the House of Peers and I am driving a hack. I think a good many of them are greater blackguards than I. I think I would have behaved differently had I been in their place and they in mine—can't say, though. More than one gave me small sums of money, with cold words enough, and no one twice. Yes, I took an ordinary degree at the University: I read six weeks for it, pretty hard: I read because I had heard that to be a B.A. might help me to something. I consider now that the value of my B.A.-ship was about £4000 minus. I cannot tell what were the subjects for my degree: one never can after 'cram.' Whatever they were they are no use to me now. Deducting all extravagances I don't think my education could have cost less than that sum. I have been a great fool. I never learnt, anywhere, any useful knowledge whatever with the exception of learning to drive at Cambridge: I qualified myself there for my present position. I declare I was rendered fit for nothing else. I landed in Canada three months ago.

MERCHANT: Well sir, yours is only one of many similar cases. But why not try and get on some newspaper staff as a reporter? I should think your education would be of service to you there.

APPLICANT: I have tried, but was told I shouldn't do, and on looking over some of the Canadian papers, I hardly think my style of writing would suit.

MERCHANT: Ah! well then I'm afraid you wouldn't do for Canadian journalism unless you could obtain some position as editorial writer on the *Mail*. Well, I'll see what I can do for you. Call round again in—let me see, yes—call round in the course of six months or so and I may have an opening for you. (*Aside.* It will be winter then and the furnaces will require attending to.)—Good morning, sir.

Good morning.

(Exit applicant.)