

THE STAR.

As Funny as I Can.

I wrote some lines once on a time
In wondrous merry mood,
And thought, as usual, men would say
They were exceeding good.

They were so queer, so very queer,
I laughed as I would die;
Albeit, in the general way,
A sober man am I.

I called my servant and he came;
How kind it was of him,
To mind a slender man like me,
He of the mighty limb!

"These to the printer," I exclaimed,
And, in my humorous way,
I added (as a trifling jest),
"There'll be the deuce to pay."

He took the paper, and I watched,
And saw him peep within;
At the first line he read his face
Was all upon the grin.

He read the next, the grin grew broad,
And shot from ear to ear;
He read the third; a chuckling noise
I now began to hear.

The forth; he broke into a roar;
The fifth; his waistband split;
The sixth; he burst five buttons off
And tumbled in a fit.

For days and nights with sleepless eye,
I watched that wretched man,
And since I never dare to write
As funny as I can.

SEARCHING FOR A WIFE.

I was sitting in one of those crimson plush chairs which adorn the office of the famous St. Nicholas, with my feet upon the iron railing in front of the window, and deeply thinking of the events which transpired in the weeks preceding. I was in a quandary. I had been despatched upon an errand by my considerate father, and had failed to accomplish my mission.

I had arrived in New York that morning direct from Chicago, which latter place I had visited, to try and fall in love with a beautiful young lady, and thereby please my father, who repeatedly asserted that nothing would cure me of my nonsense and make a man of me, except marriage.

You may infer from the above words that I had been, what is commonly termed wild; not so; my only sin was indolence and a love of ease, which is not strange, as I had been reared in the lap of luxury, and indulged to the full extent of my wishes, and in consequence thereof, I, at the age of twenty-five, was a little careless, generally happy, and allowed to nourish the pleasing reflection that I was heir apparent to half a million.

My father, who from his boyhood had rarely known an hour of idleness, looked upon my habits as detrimental to myself and destruction to my prospects, for to use his own expressive phrase, an idle mind is the devil's workshop. In its literal sense this did not apply to me, and he knew it, for I had never given him the slightest cause to reproach me for any untoward act; the only charge he could bring against me, was the one previously referred to.

How to eradicate my laziness and kindle in me some ambition, was a theme that had long occupied his mind. After mature reflections, he arrived at the conclusion that I must be married, and argued that the responsibilities of a home and the influence of a good woman, would arouse my latent spirit, and render me of some account in the world.

Of marriage—strange to say—I nourished a dislike, a settled repugnance which promised to make me a veritable bachelor. I timidly ventured to suggest this to my father, who thereupon became indignant, and informed me that a lone man was the most abject useless thing in the world, and to prove his words, while his voice faltered as he pronounced the name pointed to the life of my mother who had been dead some years, yet the thought of her even then, called the tears to his eyes, and flinging some uncomplimentary adjectives at me for my perverseness, he left the room.

My father's words uttered in his short, hurried though kind way, softened my objections somewhat, and knowing that it was his deep regard and consideration for my welfare that urged him to make the proposition, I followed him into the library and gave my assent.

He appeared much gratified at my decision, and immediately wrote a letter to a friend in Chicago, who was possessed of three lovely daughters. I was at a loss to compre-

hend why I should travel to the far West in search of a wife, and asked him somewhat jocosely, if Massachusetts did not afford sufficient young ladies for a choice?

He nodded assent, and presently informed me that the reason why he desired me to proceed to the West was, that the wife of his friend had been, in years gone by, a bosom friend of my mother, and to impress more fully upon my mind the particular reason why I should woo one of these young ladies, he slowly added—A woman that was a friend of my wife, must have daughters who are in every respect qualified for the noble position of wife and mother.

That was sufficient. When my father spoke in that tone I understood more by it than some men could convey in an hour's speech. Accordingly I immediately began preparations for the journey, and that night left the Modern Athens for the West.

In due time I reached my destination, and was most cordially received by my father's friend, who exerted himself to the utmost to contribute to my enjoyment, and cause me to feel at home.

I experienced peculiar sensations. I did not relish this manner of choosing a wife; it seemed to me like the aboriginal style of the parents of the lover presenting the girl's father with belts of wampum, and then the appropriation of the daughter by the son. I tried to drive this feeling away, reasoned with myself, thought of my father's desires, but despite all my efforts, my repugnance increased rather than diminished.

Unfortunately the young ladies were all blessed with what we are wont to term golden hair and azure eyes, which—unfortunately again—were my especial abomination, as my own hair and eyes are of a similar shade, and as a rule, we all admire our opposite. In consideration of my father's wishes, I endeavored to overcome this objection, and mentally stigmatized it as nonsense; yet all my trying was useless, and I really began to dislike them for that alone, as in all other respects either of them were pre-eminently desirable.

It was useless to struggle against fate, and after a short stay I bade my friends adieu, much to their expressed regret, and started for home.

As I remarked at the opening, I had reached New York, and paused there to consider my position. What should I do? I disliked to return to my father and incur his displeasure. I could not remain there for any length of time without informing him, for that would savor of deception, and that was something which I had never been guilty of with him.

I was perplexed, and as my thought increased, became provoked that I should be dictated when to marry, and who to marry, and to quiet my excited nerves, I drew a Havana from my case, and leaning back in my chair determined to forget my unpleasant position, ignore the subject that annoyed me, and let circumstances develop my action.

As I raised my eyes to the sheet, my glance fell upon a Broadway stage. At the same moment a face therein was turned toward me, and such a face! It caused my heart to beat tumultuously for an instant, and then I again looked up, hoping to catch a glimpse of those transcendentally lovely features, which, like a dazzling meteor, had flown before my charmed and bewildered senses. That, alas was denied me; the vehicle had passed, and like a vision the fair face and its owner had disappeared from view, but not from my mind. In the instant that I had beheld that countenance, the greatest of all photographers—love—had transferred them to, and stamped them indelibly upon my soul. I still saw those rich folds of silken raven hair rolling back in rippling waves from that celestial brow, those deep, languid eyes, which seemed swimming in pensive tenderness, and were the doors through which the pure soul within cast its resplendent rays, those satin cheeks upon which bloomed the rosy hue of health, those carmine lips upon which nature had lavished her choicest efforts, and which defied earth's art to imitate in their matchless chiselling.

All this flashed through my mind in an instant, and leaping to my feet I dashed through the hall to the street, and ran down Broadway with all my speed, vainly endeavoring to distinguish among the sea of stages the one in which I had seen my syren. It was fruitless, however, and with the knowledge that I had made a laughing stock of myself, by knocking down several newsboys in my mad flight, and thereby attracting attention, I turned and walked slowly back to the St. Nicholas, meantime attempting to devise a plan which would enable me to see her once again.

All that day, and far into the night, that subject dwelt in my mind to the exclusion of everything else, but with no beneficial results. I was not much of a detective, and the case which I desired to work up, was extremely difficult. I knew the face but that would afford me no help. I could not advertise because I was unable to describe her dress, and again I did not like the idea, it was too common and liable to misconception. As each suggestion arose in my mind only to be rejected, and those often recurring words—you must find her, echoed from my heart, and made more complicated my situation, I drew a deep sigh, and feeling that love brought with it too many cares, fell into a restless slumber.

The next day I determined to commence my search, but where? I made no answer to the self-imposed question, but leaving my hotel, walked Broadway between Fourteen and Bleeker streets until noon, in the vain hope of feasting my eyes upon the abductor of my heart. With weariness my truant senses returned, and the thought—three hours late—entered my mind, that the afternoon was the time for ladies.

Provoked at my dullness, and fully satisfied that a man in love knows nothing else, I returned to the hotel, and managed to pass away the time until the dinner hour. I had no inclination to eat, and after a light repast, I once more resumed my walk, gazing into ladies' faces, who to say the least, must have thought me very rude—but without discovering the object of my search.

As I neared Tenth Street, a bright idea flew in upon my mind. I would walk through "Stuart's;" it was barely possible that I might meet her there. Elated at the thought, I entered that dry goods palace, and traversed the numerous aisles, impatiently scanning the features of every lady that I passed, and at the same time fancying that the clerks and superintendents were eyeing me very sharply. I might have been wrong in regard to the latter; I think I was; at all events, the feeling grew so strong, that I merely glanced down an aisle instead of entering it, and disappointed and nearly homesick, I turned and left the store. Where should I go next? I knew not, but walked moodily on, the object that I sought growing dearer as success seemed less probable.

At last, I arrived at Fulton Street, and walked briskly on until I reached the ferry. Again I regarded every lady closely, and trespassed upon the cabin devoted to their use for that purpose. Should I ever see her again? Was that face, the only one to which I had ever given a passing thought, to be concealed from my gaze forever? How fondly I hoped not, I cannot tell, and how sadly I recognized the circumstances that seemed to point toward that dread conclusion. My defeats, instead of disheartening me, rather provoked me to new exertions, and during that afternoon I visited Hoboken and Jersey City, but with no better results than attended my trip to Brooklyn, or as it has been jocosely called, "Beecherdom."

Saddened, and very weary, I retraced my steps to the hotel, and seated myself to deliberate upon my prospects, and mature my plans for the morrow's campaign. An hour's reflection which developed nothing but a headache and I determined to drive her from my thoughts. This was very easy to resolve upon but most difficult to carry into action. Indeed I found it was utterly impossible, for every little incident, however trifling, brought those glorious eyes to my mind, and raised that beaming face before my vision. A long evening was before me, and I knew, did I remain alone, a sad one, which would be consumed in perplexing conjectures, vain hopes and unreasonable surmises. Accordingly I left the hotel, and after a short walk reached Wallack's Theatre, and was fortunate in procuring an orchestra chair.

I employed the time before the rising of the curtain in scrutinizing the faces of the ladies through my opera glasses, in the hope of discovering her who only the day before had inspired me with affection. Fortune seemed arrayed against me, and with a sigh I temporarily relinquished my vigilance. Presently the curtain was rung up, and endeavoring to forget my disappointment in the scenes before me, I gave close attention to the play.

While thus engaged, and somewhat interested, my eyes fell upon a form a few seats before me, which caused me to forget the drama and raised hope within my breast. Was it she? There was the same raven braids, and the two curls falling so gracefully over the left shoulder. If she would only turn her head! But no, she retained the same position, and I in a fever of im-

patient excitement, was obliged to wait. The time to the closing of the first act seemed like an age, and then arising I passed into the rotunda, and proceeded to the auditorium, where, unperceived, I could satisfy myself of her identity.

With fingers trembling and heart furiously beating I raised my glasses and directed them upon her. Yes, it was she—I knew it, and her very presence thrilled my being with indescribable emotions, while I blessed the thought that directed my steps hither.

With regenerated spirits, I resumed my seat. I recollected nothing of the play. I only knew that twice during those three hours I beheld that face, which had haunted my mind by day, and hovered over my couch in sweet dreams by night; that face which I so dearly loved, and which it was now the object of my life to possess.

As the act dropped rolled down for the last time, I felt relieved. I desired if possible, to meet her gaze, and ascertain whether or not she would recognize me. In a few moments the audience began to disperse. A moment more and she stood directly before me.

As I lifted my eyes to hers, strange emotions possessed me; my unruly heart dashed against my side so that each pulsation struck plainly on my ear, and my body seemed to tremble. Our eyes met; the rich blood mounted from her delicately-arched neck and suffused the whole of her beautiful face, while her dark eyes drooped, and she appeared confused.

That to me was joy such as I cannot express. She recognized me! One ray of light, one beaming hope streamed out from the darkness and illumined my doubting heart. I sat without moving. In a moment I again glanced toward her.

This time I was riveted to the spot. Perplexity and amazement must have dilated my eyes to double their natural size. Could I believe my senses? Was I asleep or awake, sane or insane? I know not, I only know that my father was my beloved's companion, and she was resting confidently upon his arm.

For a moment I remained in a sort of bewilderment; then I hastily arose and forced my way forward, hoping to intercept them before they could obtain egress, but I was too late, and with my mind in a sort of perturbation, and almost doubting the evidence of my own senses, I walked back to the hotel, and devoted nearly the whole night in vain attempts to solve the mystery, which, however, grew deeper and more complicated upon reflection. The next morning my amazement was increased, and I asked myself the question, whether I was in my room asleep, or at Wallack's the preceding evening? Certainly I had good reason to discredit my senses, for a letter was handed to me, which proved to be from my father, and was dated, as it should be, Boston.

After cogitating upon the peculiar circumstances, and my theories in regard to them which were reconcilable with the existing state of facts, I very reluctantly as well as unwillingly came to the conclusion that I was incorrect in the identity of the person whom I mistook for my father. The adoption of this view of the case, supported as it was by the incontrovertible evidence of my parent's own chirography, served to tear away the cloak of mystery which had shrouded the transactions of the previous evening.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A Leavenworth editor in quest of special attractions for his paper, says: "What we want for this column is personalities as mean as possible. Expense of law-suits to be defrayed by the writer; funeral expenses by us."

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