

Perhaps it was to give her convincing proof of this Fritz encircled her with his arm, and drew her towards him.

"How did you discover that thieves were in the house?" she asked, as she bashfully disengaged herself from the embrace.

"I am a light sleeper at all times," he explained, "and had been awakened by some noise too slight to have kept me from turning round, and going to sleep again, if it had not been followed by a faint cry. I jumped out of bed directly, slipped on my clothes, aroused Graydon, and got here just in time to see you in the villainous hands of that—scoundrel. It's well I didn't kill him. I longed to do it!" he added, frowning and panting with ire at the recollection.

Nelly shuddered.

"It was a horrible moment. I shall never forget it, nor the unspeakable relief it was to see your kindly face. Indeed, Mr. Meryon, I am so grateful that I cannot find words that are sufficiently expressive to tell you what I feel."

"Poor Nelly! You overrate the services Graydon and I have rendered. I wish you would fetch me a handkerchief to tie round my arm," and for the first time she noticed that her gallant preserver looked pale.

"Have you hurt yourself?" she asked, anxiously.

"Not much—a mere flesh wound—but it bleeds tremendously. One of those rascals drew a knife upon me, and I suppose I should have had an inch of steel in my side if I had not contrived to ward off the blow and receive it just above my wrist instead."

Nelly's cheek lost its colour; her lips quivered and grew pallid, too; and her head was sinking upon the young man's shoulder, when the sound of approaching footsteps revived her. It was Mr. Graydon with the policemen; and, glad to avoid another glimpse of the ruffians, she stole back to her sister, and sent cook to bandage the arm of the brave Australian whom she was exclaiming into a hero.

No one thought of courting sleep for the remainder of that night. When a bustling Inspector had been over the premises, and heard as coherent an account of the affair as the sisters and Fritz could give him, he went away with his prisoners; and cook lighted a fire, around which they all gathered, wearied and silent, but utterly thankful. And very much refreshed by the strong coffee she hastened to prepare.

Just as morning began to dawn, and the good woman, not much interested in the desultory conversation kept up so languidly by her companions, was nodding in her chair, a thundering rat-tat at the outer door aroused them all.

"The police have caught John, and have come to tell us so!" suggested Grace, who wonderfully revived during the last hour, and cook declaring that nothing would please her better than to hear this, bustled away to ascertain whether it was the case.

There was a long parley, and then two voices were heard uttering exclamations, of which the only ones audible were: "My poor girls!" and "Where are they?"

"Papa! Tom!" cried Grace and Nelly both together; and the next moment they flew into the loving arms extended to receive them.

"It's Tom's fault, and yet it isn't," cried Mr. Derville shaking his head at the tall, sunburned young man who had accompanied him. "He ought to have come straight home, and he didn't. Don't tell me of pretty widows, indeed!"

"She's an angel, father," interposed Tom, colouring and laughing, "and she won't be a widow long if I can help it, so don't abuse your daughter-in-law elect."

"Hold your tongue, sir, and let me tell your sisters how, while you were philandering with the lady, you heard that we were at Anderson's, and came across country, never dreaming that Grace and Nelly were awaiting you here."

"I should have hurried home as soon as I learned this," said Tom, taking up the story; for I knew that I was behaving rudely to the good friends I had left in the lurch; but there was no train till the night one, in which my father and I have travelled, bringing Mr. Anderson and Belle's pressing entreaties that the whole party will return with us. Graydon, you know my father already. Fritz, let me have the pleasure of introducing you to him."

"And now, Tom dear, you may as well introduce Grace and me to these gentlemen," said Nelly, with one of the quizzical looks that had already puzzled Fritz. "At present they only know us as Mr. Derville's little hand-maidens."

"Nay," said Mr. Graydon, "I was mystified at first, especially as Miss Nelly here called her sister Prue; but within the last hour or two the truth has dawned upon me, and I have recognised"—here he took the hand of the blushing Grace—"a dear friend, who will some day, I hope, give me leave to call her by the yet dearer name of wife!"

"Been masquerading, then—eh, girls?" Mr. Derville demanded, when he had answered the shy look of entreaty his elder daughter gave him, by kissing her heartily, and shaking hands with Mr. Graydon.

"No! intentionally, papa. Misted, I suppose, by our caps and aprons. Mr. Meryon took us for your servants, and we did not think proper to undeceive him till Tom arrived."

"It was a foolish mistake, sir," interposed Fritz, shaking off the stupor into which the *clairsement* had thrown him—"a mistake for which, Miss Nelly has already revenged herself by roasting me most unmercifully."

"Then, as she has taken your punishment upon herself, I shall have nothing to do with it," said Mr. Derville. "I should think your gallantry of last night must have atoned for all past offences."

"Has it, Nelly?" whispered Fritz following her, as she fitted into the adjoining room, ostensibly to assist cook in preparing breakfast. "Will your consciousness that I would lay down my life for your dear sake, make you look leniently on my blunders, my stupidity, my want of polish?"

But Nelly would not let him say more.

"Don't exaggerate, Mr. Meryon. You really are not more disagreeable than your sex in general."

"Thank you for that concession."

"You have been horribly impertinent."

"Not intentionally," he pleaded.

"And sadly forgetful of the difference between your position and that of the little maid you condescended to be so civil to."

"I'll not confess to that," said Fritz, sturdily. "I came here and found myself domesticated with a charming little creature, who alternately teased and delighted me. I saw her intelligent, affectionate to her sister, lady-like and refined, even in her merriest moods; and I challenge her to mention a single act of mine that gave her cause for annoyance. It is true that I pressed her hand last night."

"Hush!" said Nelly, trying to make her escape.

"And that my arm stole round her this morning."

"Will you be silent?" she cried, hiding her face with her hands.

"Yes, if you will acknowledge that you are not angry at my boldness."

"Not very," she murmured.

"And that you have quite forgiven my little mistake?"

"Quite," said Nelly, looking up to smile at him.

"And that we are to be friends from henceforth and forever, in token whereof—"

But, as if deeds were more binding than words, Fritz stopped here, and finished his sentence by putting his lips so close to her blushing cheek, that Tom Derville, coming suddenly into the room, exclaimed, "Hallo, what's this?"

Nelly rushed away; but Fritz contrived to explain matters to the satisfaction of his friend.

And they all kept Christmas together at Mr. Anderson's, very amicably and very merrily; the mystification of the last two days affording plenty of fun for everyone but Grace and Mr. Graydon, to whom, somehow, more indulgence was accorded.

When the whole party had gathered after dinner round the easy-chair of Mrs. Anderson, who was well enough to join them in the drawing-room, Fritz contrived to edge his seat near that of Nelly's, whose white dress, after much meditation as to the propriety of the act, had been adorned with the crimson ribbons he had chosen for her.

Taking heart of grace from his token of good-will, he whispered a saucy speech in her ear:

"Cook has promised that I shall not be disappointed of the pudding—our pudding, Nelly. She will take the greatest care of it, and it shall be cut—"

"When? next year?" she asked, innocently.

"No, dear—at our wedding."

And Fritz Meryon kept his word. When he did return to his Australian home—which was not till after the long-trying affection of Grace had been rewarded by her union with Graydon, and Tom had married the charming widow—he carried with him an English bride. In that far off land they too will make merry at this season of peace and good-will, although it will be under the hot sun of summer, instead of our wintry snows. But the same love, the same faith, still unites them with those whom they have left behind; and so, to our reasonable wishes wafted across the sea to Fritz and his Nelly; earnestly praying that to all those dear, if unknown, friends who read this Journal, the Christmas hours may be fruitful ones; and yet more—that the coming year may bring them the great blessings of health, prosperity, and hearts full of grateful love for the Giver of all the good we enjoy!

The Lime-Kiln Club.

"A leetle money will buy wood an' 'taters an' bacon, an' shoes an' cloze," began the old man as the meeting opened. "Lots of money will buy silks an' satins an' jewelry an' white houses. De man with a leetle money seems to believe dat de man with lots of it am takin' all de comfort. I used to have dat ideah, but I've got ober it. It am my solumn belief dat de man who sots down befo' his own fire, with his wife on de right an' his chill'en on de left an' de ole cat an' a pan full o' apples in de middle, am in posishun to take jist as much comfort as if he lived in a house wid golden stairs. Take de world frew an' you'll fin' dat de humblest homes am de happiest. De man who has steady work, a savin' wife an' healthy children wouldn't be a bit happier if he was to draw \$30,000 in a lottery. If he don't take comfort it's his own fault. It's her own fault if his wife isn't happy. Sometimes my ole woman gits de blues an' blows aroun' kase she sees odder folks ride out in deir kerridges an' dress up in deir satins; but I build up a good fire, git out de apples, cider an' pop-corn, draw up de big rockin' cheer, an' she can't stan' it ober ten minits. De blues begin to fly away, an' she pats de bald spot on my head an' says: 'We has a cabin of our own, plenty to eat, a leetle money in de bank, an' I spects we kin sot down an' take as much solid comfort as if you war Guv'nor, an' I had ten silk dresses.' He who makes de most of what he's got am fittin' himself to enjoy better. No situashun but what could be made worse. Ebery dollar made by honest work ought to bring two dollars' wort of solid comfort. Wid dese few remarks, called forth by overhearin' Samuel Shin growlin' aroun' bekase he couldn't have mashed tater at ebery meal, we will now eradicate the usual order of business." "Eradicate?" queried the Rev. Penstock as he bolted to his feet. "De cha'r said eradicate," answered the president. "De cha'r doan' boas' ob his eddicashun, but he knows de difference between predicate an' eradicate." "Could you predicate dis meetin'?" asked the reverend. "If sircumstances was favor'ble an' de moon in de fust quarter I think I could. If de brudder will now drap back into his seat we will endeavor to perambulate de gin'ral programme." "Per—!" "Will Brudder Penstock drap?" He drapped.—Detroit Free Press.

A few mornings since a ragged little beggar stopped at a door and plaintively suggested victuals. As the benevolent lady of the house was filling his basket she asked, "What is your name, my son?" "My name is Grimes." "Is your father living?" "Yes ma'am." "I thought old Grimes was dead." "That was my grandpa."

The First Paper-Maker.

Who was the first paper-maker? If the reply to this query should be, as is quite likely, that some old-time inventive genius was the man, it will be incorrect. The date of the invention and the founding of paper-making is not definitely known. The common wasp was, however, the inventor. The big wasp's nest, which was always kept at a safe distance, and often knocked down with a stone during the rambles of boyhood, was composed of actual paper of the most delicate and elegant kind. As spiders were spinners of gossamer webs of intricate and exquisite pattern when primitive man went about dressed in the shaggy skins of beasts, and could neither spin nor weave the beautiful and fine cloth fabrics of to-day, so little wasps, when people of a later and somewhat more advanced age had recourse to such rude and unsatisfactory substances as wood, stone and brass, the bark of trees, and the hides of animals on which to preserve memoranda, were making a material of far greater excellence.

They made their paper, too, by very nearly the same process employed by man at the present time. Indeed, several of our best discoveries in regard to building, architecture, and manufactures of various kinds, if they have not been derived from acute observation of the work of certain animals, including insects, have, when compared with their constructions and their manner of making them, been found to show a wonderfully close resemblance. The beaver gave men their earliest and most serviceable knowledge concerning dam building, and to-day no workman can surpass this animal's skill and precision in the erection of such structures.

Nature is a great teacher, and especially does the paper-making wasp illustrate how valuably suggestive she may sometimes be; for, assuredly, the wasp was the first to show that it did not always require rags to manufacture paper, that vegetable fibers answered for this purpose and could be reduced to a pulp, and that to make the paper strong and tenacious, the fibers must be long.

The first thing the wasps do, when about to build a nest, is to collect, with the preference for old and dry wood, fibers about one-tenth of an inch long, and finer than a hair, and put them into bundles, which they increase as they continue on their way. These fibers they bruise into a sort of lint and cement with a sizing of glue, after which they knead the material into paste, like paper mache, and roll up a ball; this they trample with their feet into a leaf as thin as a tissue paper.

The ceiling of the wasp's chamber, to the thickness of nearly two inches, is often constructed by putting, one above another, fifteen or sixteen layers or sheets of this prepared paper, and between these layers spaces are left, so that it seems as if a number of little shells had been laid near one another. Next they build up a terrace composed of an immense number of the paper shells, until a light and elegant structure, like a honey-comb, has been constructed, and in the cells thus formed they rear their young.

That the wasp was the first paper-maker will, we think, hardly be disputed. As patent laws did not probably exist in the days when wasps first began to multiply on the earth, and to build their houses of paper, the field has been an open one up to comparatively later days, and has been well improved and enlarged upon. The quality has been much improved, the quantity greatly increased, and the uses to which paper has been successfully adapted are many and marvelous. The wasp was building much higher than he knew when he went into the paper-making business. He was a genuine Christopher Columbus, and really discovered the Paper World.

DOMESTIC ENDEARMENTS.—I hold it indeed to be a sure sign of a mind not poised as it ought to be, if it be insensible to the pleasures of home, to the little joys and endearments of a family, to the affection of relations, to the fidelity of domestics. Next to being well with his own conscience, the friendship and attachment of a man's family and dependents seems to me one of the most comfortable circumstances of his lot. His situation, with regard to either, forms that sort of bosom comfort or disquiet that sticks close to him at all times and seasons, and which, though he may now and then forget it, amidst the bustle of public or his hurry of active life, will resume its place in his thoughts, and its permanent effects on his happiness, at every pause of ambition or of business.