

CARMEN BICYCLORUM.

TO THE C. B. C.

Air—"Larger Horatius."

Veniamus Centauri,
Lactamus per rotas,
Superomneque ventos,
Silentibus in equis.
Chorus—Nunc venite Bicycli.
Et cantate gaudia
Chalybis equestris, per
Terrarum totum orbem.

Antiqui equi erant
Oculum et carnis;
Sed nunc eos faciunt,
Ferro atque chalybis.—Chorus.

Equitamus per imbrem
Et in luce solis.
Via mala est bona,
Nisi et astate.—Chorus.

Agamus gratias dis
Facillate data
Nobis aequa alitis
Volandi sine alitis.—Chorus.

WHAT D'Y'CALL IT?

"How do you pronounce it?" asked pretty Miss Icicle, as they gazed at the Providence show.
"Pronounce it! that thing I way they call it bicycle," said Languid Fitzjardie, her beau.

"Bee parson—you're wrong," said Professor Idrykle, phonologist, pumpkins and show.
"You're right, it's like they call it bicycle," said the lady. "Do you see how they go!"

While the professor and the beau talked learned along
Of the meanings which words roots reveal,
They're just lovely! she sighed. Answered Engineer Strong:
"You mean those young men on the wheel?"
Detroit, June 22, 1880.

HOW SNOOKS GOT OUT OF IT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PHYLIS," ETC.

"If you will take my advice," said Mr. Wilding, making a last noble but futile effort to balance the ivory paper-knife on the tip of his first finger, "you won't go to Brownrig's hall."
"And why not?" asked his companion irritably.

"Well, I really wouldn't, you know," said Mr. Wilding, giving up the struggle with the impossible, and laying the refractory paper-knife upon the table,—"for a variety of reasons. Girls play the very mischief with you, and you know what trouble it gave me to get you out of your last scrape. There are four Brownrig girls, aren't there? And they are all pretty!"

"I don't see what that's got to do with it," said Snooks sulkily. "There's safety in a multitude. I can't marry 'em all, can I?"

"Happily, no! Though, if the laws of your land did not forbid it, I am inclined to think you might try to accomplish even that. Still, be advised, Snooks, and be conspicuous by your absence at the Brownrigs'—small and early." Papa Brownrig when incensed is not nice, and you know you are decidedly *épris* with Miss Katie."

"No, I am not," said Snooks, with decision, "not a bit of it. Though I allow she is a handsome girl, and has lovely eyes. Hasn't she, now?"

"I don't know. As a rule I never look into a woman's eyes. I consider it a rudeness as well as a *bêtise*," said Wilding earnestly, telling his lie without a blush. "Never mind her eyes. If," warningly, "you must go to this ball, at least try to forget that she has any eyes at all. If you don't, you will propose to her, to a moral."

"One would think I was a raw schoolboy," said young Snooks wrathfully. "Do you think I can't look at a woman without committing myself? Do I look like a fool?"

Whatever Mr. Wilding thought at that moment, he kept it to himself. Before he spoke next, he and his conscience had agreed to dissemble.

"My dear fellow, do not let us even hint at such a thing," he said amiably. "I only meant you were slightly—very slightly—susceptible, and that Miss Katie has a certain amount of pleasing power, and that—I positively would give up this ball if I—"

"Are you going?" broke in Snooks impatiently.

"Well, yes, I daresay I shall look in about twelve."

"Then I shall look in with you," said Snooks defiantly.

"Fact is, the fellow wants to spoon her himself, and don't see the force of being cut out," said he to himself complacently, as he ran down the steps of Wilding's stairs.

Beyond all question the Brownrig's ball was a decided success. The rooms were filled to overflowing, the staircases were choked, the heat was intolerable. Sir Thomas and Lady Higgins had actually put in an appearance after all, and the supper, if uneatable, was, I assure you, very expensive. No pains or money had been spared; everything was what the mistress of the house called "rug regal;" and all the Miss Brownrigs looked as charming as any one could desire.

There were four of them. There was Katie, the second daughter—Snooks' friend, and the possessor of lovely eyes. And they were lovely; large, "and dark, and true, and tender," like the North, according to the Laureate; "black as sloes," said her fond if slightly oppressive mother, and of the languid, melting order.

Then there was Hetty, the eldest girl, who, if her eyes were not dark as midnight, had at least the dearest little nose in the world. A pure Greek feature, perfect in every respect, ignorant of colds in the head, that made one long to tell her (only she would have blushed, they were all nicely brought up) about Dudu, and her Phidian appendage.

Then came Georgie—"George the Third," as she was playfully termed in the bosom of her family—who, if she had neither nose nor eyes like her sisters, had certainly a prettier mouth than either. A sweet little kissable rosebud of a mouth, that pouted and laughed alternately, and did considerable exertion.

And finally there was Lily. A tall pale girl, with blue eyes, a finely cut chin, and a good deal of determination all round.

Katie's eyes were larger, darker, and (when she looked at Snooks and thought of his thousands) more melting than ever that night. Her dress, if slightly *bizarre*, was intensely becoming. Snooks, for the first half hour, kept himself bravely aloof from her fascinations, declined to notice her reproachful glances and languishing *willows*, and for reward was wretched. Finally, being driven into a corner during a fatal set of lancers, he met her eyes, saw, and was conquered. She would dance the next with him! Yes (colibly). And the next! Yes (more gently). And the ninth—he can see she is disengaged for it! Yes (this time quite warmly).

An hour later the deed was done. Some capital champagne, a dark avenue (I believe there were some Chinese lanterns there originally, but a kind wind had blown them out), and a soft little hand slipped into his, did the work; and Miss Katie had promised bashfully, but with unmistakable willingness, to be his future Mrs. Snooks. Whether it was Snooks or the property pertaining to Snooks she most affected, deronent saveth not.

When, however, her betrothed found what he had done, and remembered his former words, and all the awfulness of parental wrath, his heart failed him. He went, as he usually did when in sorry case, in search of Wilding; and having discovered him, took him into a side-room, and shutting the door confronted him with a rather pale face.

"So the eyes were too many for you," said Mr. Wilding calmly, after a deliberate examination of the disturbed face before him. "I told you how it would be."

"That's the sort of thing any fellow might say," returned Snooks pathetically. "I didn't think you would be so aggravating. And just when you see I'm down on my luck too. Yes; I've been and gone and done it."

"Mother will be pleased," quoted his friend and law adviser, with a shrug. "So, by the by, will be your father. They both regard nothing so highly as birth. I suppose Miss Brownrig can lay claim to some decent breeding!"

"The old chap is a cornchandler, you know that; at least, he used to be," said Snooks, with a heavy groan.

"O, indeed! And a very charming business too, I make no doubt. Leads up to quite a train of ideas. Corn, wheat, staff of life, quaint old mill, and rustic bridge in the distance; miller sitting in it. I wonder," dreamily, "if Brownrig ever wore a white hat? And if so—why? Don't all speak at once. Well, well, she is a very pretty girl. Such eyes, you know! I really congratulate you, my dear fellow."

"Wilding," desperately, "can't you do something? I—I don't know how it happened. It was the champagne, I suppose, and of course you know she is pretty; but I don't want to marry any one, and I know the governor wouldn't hear of it."

"He will have to hear of it now, won't he?" asked Wilding unfeelingly.

"He would go out of his mind if such a thing was even hinted to him, declared Snooks wildly. "Try to help me out of it, Wilding, can't you?"
"I don't see what there is to do, except marry her. I only hope Lady Snooks and Miss Cornchandler will get on. And you should think of her beauty, you know; doubtless it will console you when Sir Peter cuts you off with the customary shilling."

"I suppose I had better cut my throat and put an end to it," said Snooks dismally, and then—overcome, no doubt, by the melancholy of this suggestion—he breaks down and gives way to tears.

"I say, don't do that, you know," exclaimed Wilding indignantly. "Weeping all over the place won't improve matters, and will only make you look a worse fool than Nature intended, when you go out of the room. If you have put your foot in it, at least try to bear misfortune like a man. Look here," angrily, "if you are going to keep up this hideous boo-hooing I'll leave the room, and you, too, to your fate. It's downright indecent. They will hear you in the next house, if you don't moderate your grief."

As the nearest house was a quarter of a mile off, this was severe.

"I shouldn't care if they heard me in the next town," said Mr. Snooks, who was quite too far gone for shame.

"There is just one chance for you, and only one," said Wilding slowly. "I have an idea, and you must either follow it, or—go to the altar."

"I'll follow anything," eagerly. "What is it?"

"You have proposed to Miss Katie," solemnly. "Now go and propose to the other three!"

As Wilding gave vent to his idea, he turned abruptly on his heel and left the room.

"I'll do it," said Snooks valiantly, drying his eyes and giving his breast a tragic tap, "whatever comes of it."

Going into the hall, he saw Hetty standing near an entrance; a little way beyond her was Katie, conversing with a tall and lanky youth. Not daring to glance in the direction of the latter, who plainly expected him to come straight to her on the wings of love, he turned and asked Hetty to dance.

They danced, and then (it was a custom with the ball-goers in that mild suburban neighbourhood) he drew her out under the gleaming stars and up the dark avenue that a few minutes since was the scene of her sister's happiness.

There he proposed in due form, and was again accepted. Hetty's conduct, indeed, was perhaps a degree more pronounced than Katie's, because she laid her head upon his shoulder, and he felt he was by all the laws of sentiment bound to kiss her. Her nose looked lovely in the pale moonlight; so I daresay he did not find the fulfilling of this law difficult.

After that he had some more, a good deal more, champagne; and then he proposed to Miss Georgie, who also consented to be his. There now remained but one other step to be taken. He crossed the room and asked the youngest Miss Brownrig to dance. He was getting rather mixed by this time, and was on the very point of asking her to marry him instead, so customary had the question grown to him now. Miss Lily, however, declined to dance, on the plea that she was tired, and could exert herself no more that night. With questionable taste he pressed the matter, and begged her to give him one, just one. At this she told him frankly she did not admire his style of dancing, which, of course, ended the conversation. So he asked her to come for a stroll instead; and, having arrived at the momentous spot, delivered himself of the ornate speech that had already done duty three times that night. I forget what it was, but I know it wound up with the declaration that he adored her and wanted to marry her.

"It's extremely good of you, I'm sure," said the youngest Miss Brownrig calmly. "But, unconvincing as I fear it must sound, I don't want to marry you."

"Don't you, by Jove!" said Snooks hastily. "Well, that's awfully kind—No, no!" pulling himself up with a start; "I don't mean that, you know; I mean it's awfully horrid, you know. In fact," warning to his work through sheer gratitude, "you have made me miserable for ever; you've broken my heart."

"Dear me, how shocking!" said Miss Lily, frivolously. "Let us hope Time will mend it. I'm not very sure you did not speak the truth at first. I really believe it is kind, my refusing you. And now, Mr. Snooks, if I were you I should go in and say good-night to mamma, because you have been having a good deal of papa's champagne, and it is trying to the constitution."

Snooks took the hint, bade farewell to Mrs. Brownrig, who, to his heated imagination, appeared to regard him already with a moist and motherly eye, and, taking Wilding's arm, drew him out of the house.

"Well!" said the latter interrogatively.

"I don't know whether it is well or ill," returned he gloomily. "But I followed your advice, and proposed to 'em all!"

"And they accepted you?"

"The most of 'em. But Lily, the youngest, she—"

"I always said she was a sensible girl," put in Mr. Wilding *sotto voce*.

"Did you?" with much surprise. "Well, she refused me; sort of said she wouldn't have me at any price. So you see you were wrong!"

"I always knew she was one of the most intelligent girls I ever met," Mr. Wilding repeated, in a tone so difficult that his companion for once had sufficient sense to refrain from demanding an explanation.

The next morning, as Katie Brownrig turned the angle of the hall that led to her father's sanctum (whither a sense of filial duty beckoned her) she almost ran into the arms of her three sisters, all converging towards the same spot from different directions. Simultaneously they entered Mr. Brownrig's study. (He called it a library; but that word is too often profaned for me to profane it, so I shall draw the line at study.) But to return. Miss Lily, being the youngest, was, of course, the first to raise her voice.

"I had a proposal last night, papa, and I have come to tell you about it," said she, in a tone replete with triumph.

It is so sweet to the mind of youth to outdo its elders. But "on this occasion only" the elders refused to be outdone. They each and all betrayed a smile of inward satisfaction, and then they gave way to speech.

"No!" they said, in a breath. They did not mean to doubt or be impolite; they only meant surprise.

"The curate," said Hetty, in a composed but plainly contemptuous whisper. It was a stage-whisper.

"Old Major Sterne," said Miss Georgie promptly.

"Perhaps Henry Simms," suggested Katie, with some sympathy. Then turning to her father she said, with a conscious blush, "It is very strange, papa, but I, too, had a proposal last night."

"And so had I!" exclaimed Georgie and Hetty in a breath.

"Eh?" said papa, pushing up his spectacles. He was fat and pudgy, with sandy hair and a flabby nose. He was a powerful man, too, and one unpleasant to come to open quarrel with. Proposals in the Brownrig family were few and far between—in fact curiosities—and so much luck, as the girls described, falling into one day overpowered him.

"One at a time; my breath is not what it used to be," he said, addressing Kate. If he had said *breath*, it would have been equally true, as his mother—if she was to be believed—always declared he was a lean baby. "May I ask the name of your lover?"

"Mr. Snooks," said she, with downcast eyes and a timid smile. She took up the corner of a cherry-coloured bow that adorned her gown, and fell to admiring it, through what she fondly thought was bashfulness.

"Impossible!" exclaimed Georgie angrily. "What a disgraceful untruth!" cried Hetty rudely. "Mr. Snooks proposed to me, last night, and I accepted him."

"What is it you say? O, I am going out of my mind; my senses are deserting me," said Georgie, putting her hands to her head with a dramatic gesture. "Or is it a dream that he asked me to marry him, and that I, too, said 'yes'?"

"I seldom visit the clouds," said Lily, with a short but bitter laugh. "And I certainly know he made me a noble offer of his hand and heart; both which treasures I declined."

"Where?" demanded the other three, as though with one mouth.

"In the laurel avenue!"

At this they all groaned aloud.

"Perfidious monster!" said Hetty from her heart.

"Am I to understand," began Mr. Brownrig, with suppressed but evilent fury, "that this—this—unmitigated scoundrel asked you all to marry him last night?"

"If we speak the truth, yes," replied the girls dimly.

"He was drunk," said papa savagely.

"I can't believe it," said Katie, who was dissolved in tears—in fact, "like Noah, all tears"—by this time. "Nothing could be nicer than the way he did it. His language was perfect, and so thoroughly from the heart."

"He addressed me in a most honourable, upright, and Christian fashion," said Hetty. "I am sure he meant every word he said."

She was thinking uneasily of that kiss in the moonlight. *Could* any one have seen her? Was old Major Sterne anywhere about at the moment?

"I certainly considered his manner strange, not a bit like what one reads," said Georgie honestly; "but I thought of the title and the property, and I said yes directly."

"I thought him the very greatest muff I ever spoke to," broke in Miss Lily, with decision. "I refused him without a moment's hesitation, and told him to go home. I'm sure it was well I did. I daresay if he had stayed here much longer, he would have proposed to mamma next, and afterwards to the upper housemaid. I agree with you, papa, the champagne was too much for him."

"I—I think he is fond of me," said Katie, in a low and trembling tone. Her fingers are not playing with the cherry-coloured bow now, but her eyelids have borrowed largely of its tint.

"Don't be a goose, Katie," said the youngest Miss Brownrig, kindly but scornfully; "you don't suppose any of us would marry him now after the way he has behaved. Do have some little pride."

"Perhaps he is mad," said Hetty vaguely. Just at this moment, as a salve to her wounded vanity, she would have been glad to believe him so.

"No, my dear," declared Lily calmly; "he has no brains worth turning."

"He said something, papa, about calling today at four o'clock," said Katie very faintly.

"Then I shall sit here till four," returned Mr. Brownrig, in an awful tone. "I shall sit here until five; and then I shall get up, and go out and find that young man, and give him such a horse-whipping as I warrant you he never got before in all his life."

"Don't be too hard on him, papa," entreated Katie weakly.

"I shan't, my dear, but my whip will," said papa, grimly.

So he waited until five; he waited till half-past five; and then he took up a certain heavy gold-knobbed whip that lay stretched on the table as though in readiness, and sallied forth in search of Snooks's rooms. And he found them, and Snooks too—in bed, suffering from a severe catarrh, caught, I presume, in the laurel avenue.

And no man knows what he did to Snooks. But at least he gave him an increased desire for his bed, because for a fortnight afterwards he never stirred out of it.

When Mr. Wilding heard of all this, I regret to say he gave way to noisy mirth in the privacy of his chambers; and was actually caught by his washerwoman—who peeped through the keyhole—performing a wild dance in the middle of the floor.

A "Saturday to Monday" ticket from Rome to Vesuvius is now "all the go" in the Eternal City, and a large restaurant has been established on the mountain at the foot of the cone, for the benefit of the excursionists, to which a telegraph office is attached.