

## HOME CIRCLE.

## HITCHES AT THE ALTAR.

A recent hitch at the altar occurred at a fashionable English watering-place. A large party had assembled in one of the churches, there to witness the nuptials of the niece of a prominent citizen, when it was discovered at the last moment that the registrar, who had the license in his pocket, had not arrived. At the suggestion of the officiating clergyman, the ceremony was delayed for a short time, while one of the party went in search of the errant registrar. His office was the first place visited; but he had gone out, and nothing was known of his whereabouts. Then the messenger repaired in hot haste to his residence, which happened to be some distance out of town; and meanwhile, the party at the chapel becoming impatient, other scouts were despatched in various directions. At length it was ascertained that the worthy registrar had left town by an early train, and as it was impossible that he could return in time, the wedding had to be postponed till the following day. The hitch, it appeared, had occurred through the registrar having received no intimation of the day and hour of the intended marriage.

Fickleness on the part of both grooms and brides has been a fruitful source of hitches at the altar. There is a story told of a rustic swain, who, when asked whether he would take his partner to be his wedded wife, replied, with shameful indecision: "Yes, I'm willin'; but I'd a much sight rather have her sister." An equally remarkable instance, which must be authentic, is narrated by a Bathgate minister. In this case a hitch had occurred at the outset, through the absence of witnesses, and the bride herself had surmounted the difficulty by going for two friends, one of them being her cousin, a blooming lass, somewhat younger than herself. When, at length, the parties had been properly arranged, and the minister was about to proceed with the ceremony, the bridegroom suddenly said: "Wad ye bide a wee, sir?" "Oh, what is it now?" asked the exasperated clergyman. "Weel," replied the vacillating groom, "I was just gaun to say that if it wad be the same to you, I wad rather hae that one"—pointing to the bride-maid. "A most extraordinary statement to make at this stage. I'm afraid it's too late to talk of such a thing now." "Is it?" returned the bridegroom, in a tone of calm resignation to the inevitable. "Weel, then, sir, ye maun just gang on."

The gentleman who so inopportunistically declared his preference for the sister of his bride, is only one of many who have made similarly eccentric replies to the all-important question. One hasty individual, on being asked if he would take the lady by his side to be his wife, testily responded: "In course I will; that's what I came here for."

On a recent occasion an eccentric bridegroom, when interrogated in the usual fashion as to the acceptance of his bride, persisted in responding, to the confusion and bewilderment of the officiating clergyman: "Yes, for a fortnight;" a declaration which was the occasion of no little trouble and perplexity, though the difficulty was ultimately overcome.

We will conclude with a case in which a somewhat serious obstacle to the celebration of a marriage was removed at the eleventh hour by the intervention of a beneficent flash of clerical jealousy. In a western Scottish town one evening, there were so many marriages, that an unfortunate couple who had arranged to be united at the minister's house were unable to procure a cab to convey them thither till long past the hour appointed; and when at last they stood at the door of the manse and rang the bell, it was approaching midnight. A loud and somewhat indignant voice presently responded from a bedroom window upstairs, demanding to know who was there. The situation was briefly explained; but the voice—that of the Rev. Mr. W—, minister of the first charge of the Abbey Church—proved inexorable. "I can't help it," was the ultimatum received; "you must just go home and come back to-morrow." "Oh, Mr. W—, ye ken we canna gang hame without bein' married," struck in a female voice. "But what would you have me do? Call up the whole house because of your bungling?" "Could you no dae't ower the window, sir?" "Nonsense; it is impossible." "Oh, you nicht, sir; ye ken we attend the Abbey on your day, and no on Mr. B—'s." This final stroke of policy proved irresistible, for between Mr. W— and Mr. B—, minister of the second charge of the same church, there subsisted a good deal of professional jealousy. The window was put down, the gas lighted, the door opened, and the marriage of the triumphant diplomatists duly solemnized.

## CLEARING OUT STUMPS AND ROCKS.

A writer in "The Country Gentleman" advocates the use of dynamite, considering its explosive force eight times greater than that of common blasting-powder, in the removal of stumps and rocks. When a stump is blasted by black powder, it is lifted from its place and split, but it is not thrown out of its bed, because the openings caused by the explosion are sufficient to permit the gases to escape, and there is no extra force exerted to throw the pieces asunder as when the dynamite is used. Upon this peculiarity depends very much the different effects, and the consequent varied management of these explosives; for while one hundred pounds of loose blasting-powder might be exploded upon the surface of a rock without producing any useful effect, five pounds of dynamite so exploded would break the rock into fragments, or break a large hole into its face by the sudden violence of its force. In fact, while powder exerts a lifting or spreading force only, dynamite exerts a force in every direction, downward as well as upward and sidewise. On this account powder must be tamped or confined closely to produce any tearing or breaking effect, while dynamite needs only the slightest covering, and in many cases no covering at all.

Another important difference is that powder is dissolved and spoiled by moisture, or is injured by damp even, and

cannot be used in wet ground without the use of waterproof cartridges, while dynamite is not affected by water, and water may be even poured into the hole and used instead of tamping, with great convenience and effect. Moreover, dynamite is only explosive by means of an explosive, such as a fulminating cap. A piece of dynamite cartridge may be placed in a stump, and a light touched to it will merely set it blazing and fizzing (just as a piece of saltpetre would do), but there is no explosion as with powder. It is therefore more safe to use than the powder, if only care is exercised when the cartridge is prepared for use, and the cap and fuse attached. Dynamite is a preparation of nitro-glycerine made by mixing this fluid oil with twenty-five per cent. of its bulk of infusorial earth. This makes a sort of granular paste of it, much like moist brown sugar, but somewhat more adherent and plastic. Nitro-glycerine is made by pouring slowly glycerine (which is a clear, limpid fluid made from fat) into a mixture of equal parts of nitric and sulphuric acids.

This substance must be handled with great care, and is too dangerous for use alone, as it explodes by friction, concussion, by natural decomposition, and at a boiling heat. A blow from the heel of a boot will explode it and cause the person to be blown to fragments.

## A SCARCE ARTICLE IN GIRL.

A work-a-day young girl,  
A witty and gay young girl,  
Although crispy and tart—  
Not too awfully smart—  
A saucy and chic young girl.

A heart-in-her-hand young girl,  
A genteel and bland young girl,  
Not given to flirt,  
Her beau's feelings to hurt—  
A constant and loving young girl.

A help-for-her-mother young girl,  
A kind-to-her-brother young girl,  
Who spends her nights home,  
And cares not to roam—  
A light-of-the-household young girl.

A fond-of-her-book young girl,  
A know-how-to-cook young girl,  
The piano can play,  
Or do house work all day—  
A preciously scarce young girl.

A cherry-face young girl,  
A model-of-grace young girl,  
With a heart like pure gold,  
That never grows old—  
A loving and sweet young girl.

## A CAT'S MIND.

A certain household with which we had the best opportunity in the world to be familiar, was served by a very noisy milkman, who came rushing up the back steps to the veranda every morning, banged down his old tin pail, and shouted "Milk!" The pet cat of the establishment always received a saucer full of milk on his arrival, and soon connected breakfast with the noisy milkman. When the familiar step beat on the walk and the rattle and the shout were heard, the cat would spring to the door with tail in air and eyes sparkling. A mischievous boy, noticing this, conceived the brilliant idea of fooling the cat. He slipped out quietly one afternoon, ran noiselessly along the walk and up the steps, and shouted "Milk!" The cat was at the door in an instant, all agog with expectation, and savagely comprehended the meaning of things when the door opened and no milkman appeared. There was something so funny about making a fool of the cat that the experiment was tried from time to time with great success; but suddenly it failed. When the boy rushed up the steps and shouted "Milk!" the cat lay beside the stove and purred sedately. She had learned to detect the imposture. The experiment did not stop here. The boy was resolved not to be beaten by the cat, and after failing in several attempts to arouse her by the old method, he slyly took out with him a tin can, came rushing up the veranda, banged down the can with a great rattle and yelled "Milk!" The cat sprang for the door as if she had been touched with an electric battery.—*Buffalo Courier.*

## WHAT MAKES YOU PALE?

Probably a lack of fresh air and exercise out of doors. Housework is exercise, of course, but it has not the invigorating quality that a brisk walk in the open air has. Try for a month the effect of a walk every day, in the morning, which is the vital, exhilarating, delightful part of the day.

But walking without an object is very stupid, you urge. That is true enough. Have an object. Do the marketing. Undertake some of the family errands. Go to see the poor and the sick, and people who are in trouble and weighed down with some infirmity. Carry the papers that you have read to Aunt Brown, who never sees a paper unless some one lends it to her. Ask to be included in the visiting committee of the Sunday-school, and look after absentees; or become a member of the Dorcas Society, and call on some poor family. That will give you an object.

Still, all the out-door exercise you can take will not make you bright and blooming, if you do not eat the right sort of food. Tea and toast, coffee and warm biscuit, rich cake and pastry—above all, the constant nibbling of sweets and candies, will keep you pallid. You must eat wholesome porridge, made of nutritious cereals; you must eat rare roast-beef and steak, and mutton chops, and plenty of fruit. And if you go to bed early, bathe in cold water once a day,

keep your mind busy, and your heart at rest, by leaving life and its orderings submissively with God—you will have what every woman needs if she would be useful and happy—good health and good looks.

A friend says, "Do tell the girls to rest and not to wear themselves out by too much pleasuring, too much studying, or, indeed, too much of anything."

And this is good advice, too. But the mothers need it quite as urgently as the daughters—possibly a great deal more.

## COFFEE DRINKERS.

The Hollanders are the greatest coffee drinkers in the world, their annual consumption being about eighteen pounds per head of the whole population. The principal cause is the fact that Amsterdam has long been one of the great coffee marts in the world, and, being admitted free of duty, coffee is very cheap. Next comes Belgium and Denmark, in which the consumption per capita is about half that of Holland. Next comes the United States, in which the consumption per capita in 1880 was 8.8 lbs., in 1881 somewhat less, being 8.4 lbs. per head. By a calculation founded on the data furnished in Mr. Thurber's book, the present consumption of tea in the United States may be stated at a little over one pound per week for each family in the nation. In the use of tea and coffee the people of England and the United States present a most remarkable contrast. The annual consumption of the people of England is just about a pound of coffee per head, or about one-eighth of that of the people of the United States. Comparing the consumption of tea with that of coffee, it will be found that while the people of the United States use about five pounds of coffee to one pound of tea, the people of England use five pounds of tea to one pound of coffee.

## CORAL REEF BUILDING.

Professor Joseph Le Conte, in a lecture on corals, corrected a wide-spread misunderstanding respecting corals and coral reefs. The popular idea is, says M. Le Conte, that these animals are little insects; that they build like ants and bees do, and when they are alarmed they disappear into their little burrows, and these reefs are accumulations of millions of these little insects in generation after generation. The fact is, the coral animal is a polyp belonging to the group of radiata; that it consists of limestone deposits in the shape of a hollow cylinder with top and bottom discs, surmounted with tentacles, containing a stomach and enveloped with gelatinous organic matter. The tentacles or arms are provided each with a mouth for the absorption of food. The coral is coralline limestone after the gelatinous organic envelope is decayed and removed. The animals which build reefs are not much larger than pin-heads. Reef-building corals will not grow at a depth of 100 to 120 feet. There have been reef-building corals found at a depth of 2,000 feet, but they were dead—drowned by being carried below their depth. This confines them to coast lines and submarine banks. Corals will not grow where the temperature is lower than sixty-eight degrees at any time—that is, the ocean, not the air. Therefore they are confined to the tropical regions. They will not grow except in clear salt water; hence there is always a break in reefs opposite the mouth of a river. Finally, they demand free exposure to the beating of the waves. The more violently the waves beat, the more rapidly the corals grow, because the agitation gives them ventilation. Corals will grow in the face of waves whose beatings would gradually wear away a wall of granite. The four kinds of coral reefs found in the Pacific Ocean are fringe reefs, barrier reefs, circular reefs, inclosing lagoons in the ocean, and small lagoonless coral islands.

## "I'LL NO TRUST YE."

Two centuries ago, in the Highlands of Scotland, to ask for a receipt or promissory note was thought an insult. If parties had business matters to transact, they stepped into the air, fixed their eyes upon the heavens, and each repeated his obligation without mortal witness. A mark was then carved on some rock or tree near by as a remembrance of the compact. Such a thing as breach of contract was rarely met with, so highly did the people regard their honour.

When the march of improvement brought the new mode of doing business, they were often pained by those innovations. An anecdote is handed down of a farmer who had been to the Lowlands and learned worldly wisdom. On returning to his native parish he had need of a sum of money, and made bold to ask a loan from a gentleman of means named Stewart. This was kindly granted, and Mr. Stewart counted out the gold. This done, the farmer wrote a receipt and handed it to Mr. Stewart.

"What is this, man?" cried Mr. Stewart, eyeing the slip of paper.

"It is a receipt, sir, binding me to give ye back the gold at the right time," replied Sandy.

"Binding ye! Weel, my man, if ye canna trust yerself, I'm sure I'll no trust ye. Ye canna have my gold." And gathering it up, he put it back in his desk and turned the key on it.

"But, sir, I might die," replied the canny Scotchman, bringing up an argument in favour of his new wisdom, "and perhaps my sons might refuse it ye; but the bit of paper would compel them."

"Compel them to sustain a dead father's honour!" cried the Celt. "They'll need compelling to do right, if this is the road ye're leading them. I'll neither trust ye nor them. Ye can gang elsewhere for money; but ye'll find nae in the parish that'll put more faith in a bit o' paper than in a neighbour's word o' honour and his fear o' God."

MR. PROCTOR, the English astronomer who has excited the fears of some nervous people by predicting the falling of a comet into the sun, may perhaps relieve them by his more recent assertion that "the world is more likely to last 15,000,000 years than to be destroyed in fifteen."