

The Listening Oak.

She found the old familiar spot,
Beneath the green oak tree;
She sighed—she sighed—"He loves me not,
And I'm alone—ah me!"
It watched her there—the fond old oak—
For trees have hearts like other folk;
It whispered, whispered, "Hearts may roam,
But late or early Love comes home."

He stood where they so oft had met,
He flung away her flower;
"Ah me!" he cried, "Coquette, coquette,
'To love me but an hour!'
But loudly sang the angry oak,
For trees have hearts like other folk;
And chiding, chiding was the song,
"The heart that loves believes no wrong!"

There's some one stealing on apace,
And some one's arms thrown wide,
And some one's heart in some one's place
At happy eventide.
The tears, the doubts are gone, are gone,
And gayly now the oak looks on,
And sings to them of joy and rest,
"The love that's tried is happiest!"

A Lady's Love Letters.

There is not much variety in love letters, says an English lady. For the most part they appear hopelessly silly to all except those concerned in their production. My first love letters were written when I was ten years old, and were inspired by a page-boy in my father's service, whose buttons made an indelible impression on my already susceptible heart. The page-boy was already the victim of the charms of a housemaid fifteen years his senior, and spurned my advances. This resulted in the heart-rending epistles above mentioned, which, however, were intercepted, while the unlucky writer was rewarded by being sent to bed for spoiling the contents of a new desk. Since that time—a period of nearly fifteen years—I have, if not written, received quantities of love letters in many languages from people of all ages and nationalities, and have not yet lost my interest in them. As a study they are amusing, not to say instructive. As letters they are flattering to one's vanity, which is not inconsiderable.

The most impassioned letters are usually written by men from forty to fifty years of age, if the writer be an Englishman. Attachments at that age are deeper; and less anxiety not to compromise oneself is shown and felt. From twenty-five to forty they are more cautiously worded, and even occasionally signed with initials. Men between these ages, besides being desirous to avoid committing themselves, are more or less ashamed of any display of sentiment. A young man from eighteen to twenty-five will inundate the object of his affection with letters full of the most fervent protestations, as evanescent as they are ardent. After fifty, men are often wise enough to vote the writing of love letters an unprofitable occupation; but some carry on the practice to a very advanced age. Their protestations are then ingeniously flavored with touches of the paternal, which sometimes entirely mislead the unsophisticated recipients.

A German of most ages will address his sweetheart in the second person singular, and indulge in dreary descriptions of his every-day life, giving her little anecdotes about himself, interspersed by a quantity of sentimental platitudes which most English girls would designate "bosh." Frenchmen, in their love letters, are as expansive as they are insincere. Not that they have the least idea at the time that they do not feel every syllable they write. Compliments and exaggerated expressions of devotion are idioms of the French language, and flow naturally from a Frenchman's lips, even under the most discouraging circumstances.

I do not know whether a mau's letters to his wife come under the head of love letters. I am scarcely an authority on the point, since my husband persists in remaining a provokingly mythical person; but if a few letters I have seen addressed to my friends by their husbands may be taken as

specimens, I should certainly say they do not. A page is devoted to reproaches for having forgotten to pack up his boot-jack, or some other equally indispensable article in a gentleman's travelling paraphernalia. She is then favored with a page of instructions where to find the said boot-jack, and perhaps other things necessary to the comfort of her lord and master, with a request to have them immediately forwarded. The children, if there are any, are then mentioned *en passant*, and her "affectionate husband" closes his effusion.

On the subject of young ladies' love letters I am also rather ignorant, unless I can judge them by my own. Into the particulars of these, however, I decline to enter. In some countries flowers are employed as mediums of this species of correspondence, and these mute messengers are frequently the most eloquent. A gentleman sends the lady whose appearance or manners have found favor in his sight a rose-bud. Her acceptance of it implies that his attentions are not unpleasant to her; and it is in the course of time followed by a half-blown rose, to indicate the development of the sender's passion. If this second declaration be received with favor, the usual conclusion to the correspondence is the arrival of a full-blown rose, signifying that the gentleman's feelings have reached a climax which renders him capable of placing his hand and heart at her disposition. If she graciously accept this act of condescension, she wears the rose, and is considered affianced.

It would be interesting to ascertain whether it, after being the recipient of two roses, the anxious maiden is sometimes kept so long in anticipation of the arrival of the third that solicitous friends and relations begin to doubt the increasing ardor of the sender's affection. In England two faded roses would have but little weight with a jury listening to the evidence in a breach of promise case. Let us be thankful that we live in a country where custom permits the interchange of love letters, and where civilization has reached a point which enables young ladies to make capital out of them when all other means have failed.

Our Own.

"Will you?" asked a pleasant voice. And the husband answered, "Yes, my dear, with pleasure." It was quietly but heartily said; the tone, the manner the look, were perfectly natural, and very affectionate. We thought, how pleasant was that courteous reply! How gratifying must it have been to the wife! Many husbands of ten years' experience are ready enough with the courtesies of politeness to the young ladies of their acquaintance, while they speak with abruptness to the wife, and do many rude things without considering them worth an apology. The stranger, whom they have seen but yesterday, is listened to with deference, and although the subject may not be of the pleasantest nature, with a ready smile; while the poor wife, if she relates a domestic grievance, is snubbed or listened to with ill-concealed impatience.

An Angel's Touch.

One evening, not long ago, a little girl of nine or ten entered a place in which is a bakery, grocery and saloon in one, and asked for five cents' worth of tea. "How's your mother?" asked the boy who came forward to wait on her. "Awful sick, and ain't had anything to eat all day." The boy was just then called to wait upon some men who entered the saloon, and the girl sat down. In five minutes she was nodding, and in seven she was sound asleep, and leaning her head against a barrel, while she held the poor old nickel in a tight grip between her thumb and finger. One of the men saw her as he came from the bar, and, after asking who she was, said: "Say, you drunkards, see here. Here we've been pouring down whiskey when this poor child and her mother want bread. Here's a two dollar bill, that says I've got some feeling left." "And I can add a dollar," observed one. "And I'll give another."

They made up a purse of an even five dollars, and the spokesman carefully put the bill between two of the sleeper's fingers, drew the nickel away, and whispered to his comrades "Jist look a there—the gal's dreaming!" So she was. A big tear had rolled out from her closed eyelid, but the face was covered with a smile. The men tip-toed out, and the clerk walked over and touched the sleeping child. She