

## A SHOT AT RANDOM.

I am in the theatrical profession. My wife, before I married her, was in the theatrical profession too. She was known as "little Miss Smith." Why? Well, because she was little—in body, that is; but she was great of heart—as generous, as kindly, as thoughtful, and as pretty a little woman as ever was made. I met her in the old-fashioned town of Elgin, where a temporary stage had been made in a large hall for the accommodation of our manager, who was doing a tour among some of the towns that had no theatre. I was an all-round actor then; she was leading tragic lady. Her rare ability amply made up for the slowness of her figure. She could be as gentle as Juliet; lofty as Lady Macbeth. But it was seldom we acted Shakespeare. We always tried to hit the public taste, which, in those days, inclined to the red-handed blood-and-murder article—such as "Rodolpho the Redoubtable, or the Robbers of the Rocky Ravine"; "The Amiable Assassin, or the Sanguinary Suicide"; "Dirko the Diabolical, or the Dungeon, the Ducat, and the Devil"; and so on.

Little Miss Smith was about twenty years of age when, in October, 1850, she first came to Elgin to join us. She had not been with us a week before every one of our army, from manager down to call-boy, was ready to die for her. "Her manners they was so genteel," as the heavy man, a comic-looking Highlander, once remarked to me. With the rest I, of course, was smitten with this sweet little tease, and smitten severely too. I loved her madly at the end of the first fortnight—I was young, you know, then, but I think if I had been old I would have loved her just the same. She was amusing, yet modest. Stage carpenters—a rough lot—never swore in her hearing. Everybody spoke respectfully to her; and she was always watched eagerly from the wings when on the stage. If you ask me why I loved her I will tell you; it was because she was good, and graceful, and kind, and true.

November arrived. In the meantime I had made but poor progress in my love affair. I had taken my dear one home from the theatre many times, but that was all. In that month the manager engaged a "star." He was an Englishman. Random was his name. He was a great, blue-chinned, heavy-browed fellow, and wore a big moustache and a pug nose. He hailed from Cocksaigne, and was unpleasantly obese and vulgar. To use the idea of a brilliant wit of our day, he seemed to have grown fat upon the h's he had swallowed. Indeed, the manner in which he ignored the existence of the eighth letter of the alphabet was a caution. A constant sneer was for ever playing about his cruel-looking mouth. I hated him from the first, and he hated me. He began to be very particular in his attentions to Miss Smith, and this I resented. I even thought she favoured him more than she should, and I determined to tell her how I loved her. I did it, and my heart jumped at the result. She had loved me from the first! Imagine if you can the joy I felt when I snatched from her a kiss. "Richard was himself again," as the late Mr. Colley Cibber says in Shakespeare's play.

I had an interview after this with Random. I told him that, as Miss Smith and I were promised to each other, I would thank him to turn his attentions to some other quarter. He tried to laugh the matter away, and said something to the intent that all was fair in love and war. But I was in dead earnest. We came to high words, and what would have happened if, in the middle of it, the company had not come in upon us I cannot tell. But there was an evil purpose on his face as he left me; and if ever I saw murder in a man's eyes—and I have seen a good few actors try to show it—I saw it then.

The night came when we were producing a new play. It was called "The Troubles and Temptations of a Soldier's Wife; or, Virtue Triumphant"—a play of the "right kind" as the public said. The plot of the piece was something like this:—

A ship leaves Glasgow for Port Elizabeth, Cape Town. Among the passengers is a soldier's wife who, with her child, is on her way to join her husband out there. The vessel is the *Robbie Burns*, of Glasgow. The author writes down the captain as "a villain of the deepest dye." He makes base overtures to Mrs. Bagonet, the spouse of the soldier, but, although thousands of miles away from the man to whom she had sworn to be faithful "for better for worse, she nobly scorns the captain's offer, and threatens to appeal to the other passengers for protection. A hurricane arises, and the sheet iron behind the stage thunders like the very crack of doom. A gun is then heard, and the man from the maintop, rushes on deck with the cry that a pirate is in chase. After a not very successful attempt at running away, the ships grapple, and, in the middle of the fight, the captain of the *Robbie Burns* hurries below (that is, he hurries to the front of the middle drop which goes down on the scene of bloodshed), to find Mrs. Bagonet, whom he tries to persuade to fly with him. The storm having abated, his design is to make off in a boat which he moors near the porthole. She refuses. He tries force; but, in the nick of time, the pirate captain enters, and with one blow of the butt-end of his pistol finishes the captain of the *Robbie Burns*, and then proceeds to make Mrs. Bagonet his prisoner. Above deck the sound of the strife shows that the pirates are having the best of it, and, as their captain advances towards the lady, she suddenly thinks on a bold

stroke. Quick as lightning she flies across the cabin, seizes a pistol and fires at the buccaner, who falls instant. She dashes on deck, tells the men what she has done, and before you can say Jack Robinson the pirates are driven off. Both the captains are found to be dead, and their bodies are dropped overboard, after which the voyage soon ends, Mrs. Bagonet falls on her husband's breast, and down goes the curtain.

Random had the rôle of the rascally captain of the *Robbie Burns*, for which, to my thinking, he needed no make-up. To have seen little Miss Smith as Mrs. Bagonet, would have done your heart good. I was cast for "the bold pirate-captain."

On this—the first night of the play—the house was full, and everything seemed to go well. Thunders of applause greeted the mock-thunder of the sheet-iron and the mock-fight on the deck of the *Robbie Burns*. My cue came. I entered the cabin, hurled Random to the floor, and went on to secure Mrs. Bagonet. She snatched up the pistol (laid ready) and fired it, and I ought, of course, have fallen; but instead of falling, I turned round and stood stupid with terror. There was a bullet in the pistol! I felt it whizz past my ear, and I heard a groan behind me. Random, instead of shamming death, was in what I thought mortal agony, and real blood bespattered his face and the dusty platform. The house was mad with excitement, and nearly brought the room in with applause. But this was not stage mummery. I rushed to the wings and laid down the curtain with a bounce, and then hastened to little Miss Smith, my darling wife that was to be, who had fainted. The manager and actor hurried to Random, lifted him carefully, and carried him to a neighbouring inn. How the theatre was cleared I never knew.

Who put the bullet in the pistol? That was the question. I was puzzled and provoked by doubts and fears. A terrible idea occurred to me. Could Random, in a moment of hate and madness, have loaded the firearm himself to make away with me as if by accident? I thought of the look he gave me when we quarrelled, and I shuddered at the suggestion my conscience prompted.

Random lay on a homely bed, breathing heavily; and, till the doctor arrived, the manager and myself washed and bandaged the wound. All my dislike to him vanished as he lay there in so pitiable a plight. He revived a little after a while, but his face was as white as death when his eyes fell on me.

"Thank God, you're not hurt!" he hoarsely cried. "I am glad of it—glad I've been hung with my own rope."

"Stop, Random; don't commit yourself," I interrupted, as I cleared the room. The manager left with the others. I told them that Random was raving, and that they must send the doctor whenever he made his appearance.

"Now, Random, tell me what you have to say," I said.

"I have injured you much," he rejoined, "I hated you. You are a much better man than I. I don't wonder at Miss Smith showing a preference for you. Take my hand and forgive me. I want your forgiveness. I want everybody's forgiveness. I feel I've got a settler."

"What have I to forgive?" I asked, wishing to hear his confession.

"You know well enough," was the hurried response. "I wanted to murder you. I loaded the pistol. But I could not see it out. I hadn't the courage; and, as Miss Smith pointed it at you, I rose on my knees to pull you away, and got the bullet myself. Forgive me, sir, forgive me. God forgive me, if you will not!"

I told him I forgave him with all my heart. But I thought that man was a great coward, and do so still. When the doctor examined the hurt, he astonished us by saying it was not very dangerous, and that Random would recover. The bullet had glanced off the shoulder-blade, after ripping up the flesh.

Next day he was insensible. But as the days wore on and the end of the year came near, he got better; and one morning when I made my usual call at the inn, I was told that Random was missing. He had taken his leave without saying "Good-bye," or "Thank you."

The manager had made enquiries about who loaded the pistol, but though I believe he half suspected the truth, they came to nothing.

It was the new year. By most of the company Random was soon forgotten, or only thought of now and then. As for myself I felt unfeignedly thankful that I had escaped being made the victim of a most dastardly crime.

On Hogmanay night a bumper house attended an influential audience at the theatre for the benefit of Miss Smith and myself. And on the first day of the new year there was the grandest shine of a wedding in our hotel that the town of Elgin ever saw. Ever since then little Miss Smith and Alick Macdonald have been "all one." My wife is a little woman still, a rosy little woman of fifty; and she is as dear to me now as she was thirty years ago.

**PLUCK.**—Whatever your sex or position, life is a battle in which you are to show your pluck, and woe be to the coward. Whether passed on a bed of sickness or in the tented field, it is ever the same fair flag, and admits of no distinction. Despair and postponement are cowardice and defeat. Men were born to succeed, not to fail.

## MISCELLANY.

**THE DEVIL'S CRADLE.**—In a church not far north of Aberdeen one of the members was in the habit of sleeping every Sabbath during the sermon. One day, however, the quietness and gravity of the church were fairly upset by the sleeper losing his equilibrium, and falling hump right on his head in the passage. The minister, who was an eccentric and plain-spoken old man, stopped short in his sermon, and, addressing himself to the now wide-awake member, said, "John, ye've gotten mony a sou' sleep in the devil's cradle, but he has fairly coupit it on ye the day."

**THE GAIN OF SUNDAY REST.**—Says Lord Macaulay, "We are not poorer, but richer, because we have through many ages rested from our labour one day in seven. That day is not lost. While industry is suspended, while the exchange is silent, while no smoke issues from the factory, a process is going on quite as important to the wealth of the nation as any which is performed on more busy days. Man, the machine of machines—the machine compared with which all the contrivances of the Watts and Arkwrights are worthless—is repairing and winding up, so that he returns to his labours on the Monday with clearer intellect, with livelier spirits, and renewed corporeal vigour."

**ELOQUENT!** said the Chicago lawyer of his partner. "He's able to reason the kick out of a mule. Why here awhile ago business was dull, and he decided that Mrs. Dasher ought to have a divorce, and he'd go into court and get it for her, and then charge her for it. Somehow she heard what was going on. She galloped down to court house to stop him, as she didn't want a divorce. She got there just as he was making his plea for her. And mind you, she was mad at him, but by Jove, sir, she listened to him five minutes and became so convinced that she ought to have a divorce, that she walked right up where the jury could see her and shed three pints of tears while he recited her wrongs. And when he won the case she embraced him, and said he should conduct all her divorce cases. I call that eloquence."

ABOUT the time of the great exhibition of 1851 a lady unknown to him wrote to Mr. Disraeli several times, asking for an interview with him. Being one of the Royal Commissioners of the Exhibition, he was much engaged, and, beyond a polite acknowledgement of the letters, he took no step towards a compliance with the request. But his fair correspondent was not to be put aside by the great statesman's neglect, and next wrote to his wife, asking for an interview. She added, with true feminine tact and precaution, that there was no unworthy motive at the bottom of her anxiety, for she was sixty years of age, and almost at the end of her earthly career. This request was granted, and the visitor explained that she was the widow of an Indian officer of distinction, that she had no family, and that, being herself a Jewess, and an ardent admirer of Mr. Disraeli's literary and political genius, she desired to will her fortune to him. Mr. Disraeli afterwards communicated this to her husband, who treated the matter as a joke, and, in the midst of his amusement, penned a note to his admirer to say that he had no objection to become her heir if she were so minded. A day or two afterwards, as Mr. Disraeli was leaving home for the House of Commons, his valet handed him a letter, which he put into the pocket of his overcoat, to read at a more convenient season. On reaching the House he was immediately absorbed in the exciting political events of the moment, and forgot all about the letter. It remained in his coat pocket for a few weeks, and his valet, surprised to find it there unopened, took it at once to his master. Mr. Disraeli opened the letter, and found in it a note from the lady, saying that she quite understood his hesitancy with regard to a personal interview with a stranger, but as proof that she was in earnest, she enclosed a cheque for £1,000, which he would no doubt find useful in paying his expenses at the next election. Mr. Disraeli then called upon his fair correspondent to thank her for the acceptable gift, upon which she showed him a will in which she had bequeathed to him all her property, only stipulating that he and Mrs. Disraeli should pay her a holiday visit twice a year at her house in Torquay. Four or five years after this the lady died, and Mr. Disraeli found himself possessed of £40,000 or £50,000 in cash, a quantity of plate, jewels, a fine library, and a handsomely-appointed house. With the money he paid off his debts, and was enabled to make a new and favourable start in the world, free from pecuniary worry or incumbance.

**WHAT THE CONSUMPTIVE NEEDS** is a medicine which not only relieves irritation of the lungs, but makes up those losses of strength always entailed by lung disease. Recovery can never be hoped for so long as the vital current remains watery and impoverished, the nervous system weak and unquiet. It is the union of invigorating elements with a pulmonary acknowledged potency that gives Northrop & Lyman's Emulsion of Cod Liver Oil and Hypophosphites of Lime and Soda such a decided pre-eminence over the generality of preparations designed to overcome lung, throat, and bronchial affections. The hypophosphites furnish the system with the most important constituents of blood, muscle and nervous tissue, and the highly prepared oil derived from the cod's liver acts as a subjunctive of throat and lung irritation. Sold by all druggists. Prepared only by NORTHROP & LYMAN, Toronto.

## ECHOES FROM PARIS.

It is curious that Boulogne has not yet had its own English paper. That alarming deficiency is to be put an end to by the establishment of *The Boulogne*.

ON May 5th was held a banquet in celebration of the abolition of slavery in the French colonies, which banquet was presided over by M. Gambetta. The eloquent French statesman made a brilliant speech on that occasion.

Mlle. LOUISE MICHEL has been airing her views on the Tunisian question. "The movements of the troops in Algeria, the sums voted by Parliaments, the blood of the soldier which is about to flow on African soil, all these things are due to the discovery of an old stock of equipments, old gaiters, and old shoes dating back to the time of the Empire, and which must be utilized as speedily as possible if they are not to be thrown away as old rubbish." These words were greeted with applause at the Theatre of Levallois-Perret.

A GROUP of young girls, chosen from among those of the Paris schools who intend devoting themselves to a professional career, is at the present moment visiting London, under the guidance of Miss Wilby, a director of a Photographic Association. The stay of the young ladies in the city will last two weeks, and M. de Heredia, of the Municipal Council of Paris, has written a letter to the Lord Mayor of London, asking him to offer these students all the facilities in his power. The expenses of this trip are defrayed by M. Berger, honorary Consul-General.

THE readiness and ingenuity shown in Paris to cater to and profit by ephemeral whims and pre-occupations, can rarely have been more fully demonstrated than by an advertisement which has been lately published in a number of Paris papers, to the effect that the advertiser will forward on application a microscope (increasing objects to seven hundred times their real size), with which trichine in pork are easily discovered. The price is only 4 fr. 50 cent. But a still more valuable instrument (which the inventor should have recommended to all emigrants about to leave for that land of unwholesome bacon—America) is the "Micro-Trichine," especially adapted for the detection of parasites in pork. With the aid of this powerful magnifier, not a single trichine in the most numerous tenanted ham will escape discovery; and, indeed, the inventor, to parry the possibility of some uninitiated person seeing, but not suspecting, the real character of the unpleasant worm in question kindly forwards, with the "Micro-Trichine," very correct cuts of trichine and trichine-infested muscles, &c. And for all this—the glass for perceiving the trichine and their photos—the inventor only asks the small sum of fr. 25.50. No well-appointed household should be without when such can be so easily and cheaply procured—without a "Micro-Trichine," and, indeed, not only should the cook be provided with it, but the instrument should be placed upon the table, so that "the head of the family," when the ham is served, should be able to examine the meat briefly but thoroughly, and thus avert the dire consequences which would result were trichine in possession, and the cook having forgotten or neglected the needful inspection.

**WALL DECORATION.**—Tapestry is gloomy and holds dust, and silk and satin are too delicate to stand the smoke and dirt of town atmospheres. Anything, in fact, that holds dust is essentially out of place on walls; everything which collects dust on its surface is to be carefully avoided in all wall decoration; and for the same reason, all flock papers, as well as those stamped in relief are to be rejected, except for ceiling or frieze decoration.

**POLIWKA'S STANDARD GOODS.** THE "FAVORITE" GELATINE.—Having for many years sold Gelatine in bulk and in one pound packages, we have often been asked by the Grocery Trade why we did not give the public a Gelatine in a more convenient shape, of say one and two ounce packages. Seeing that there was an increasing demand for these goods, we have set to work to get up a Gelatine, which in quality is equal to, and in style and get up, handsomer, than anything in the market. We trust that our efforts will be crowned with success, and that "The Favorite" will indeed become a favorite Gelatine with the public.

## MARRIAGE.

On the 11th inst., at St. Matthew's Church, Quebec, by the Rev. Charles Hamilton, Lorenzo, son of George Evans, of Southport, England, to Elizabeth Mary, younger daughter of Henry H. Mills, LL.D., D.C.L., late Protestant Secretary of Public Instruction for the Province of Quebec.

## OUR CHESS COLUMN.

Solutions to Problems sent in by correspondents will be duly acknowledged.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. W. S., Montreal.—Papers and letter to hand. Thanks.

Student, Montreal.—Correct solution received of Problem No. 317.

E. D. W., Sherbrooke, P. Q.—You are right. There are two solutions to Problem No. 324.