

[Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.]

THE WATERFALL.

O Bijou, you slowest of girls,
I'm afraid I'll be late for the ball.
Have you finished arranging those curls?
Do you think you are dressing a doll?

Do they answer my hair to a shade,
As fair and as glossy and fine?
'Twould be hard with the price that I paid,
If nobody thought they were mine!

Whose were they, I wonder, Bijou?
But what does it matter to me,
If the false be but taken for true,
That, like Venus, they rose from the sea.

Yet the sea, we know, has its dead
In its "vast and wandering grave,"—
That's Tennyson—Bijou, my head!
Is it any wonder I rave?

I have heard of a trade—never mind—
It's the fashion; who goes without curls?
And to-night mine shall fly like the wind
In the most delicious of whirls.

Whose were they? Why, bless me, what stuff!
Bijou, will you never be done?
They are mine now and that is enough—
Perhaps they belonged to some nun—

Some nun, who now by the bed
Of the sick may be speaking of God,
While I am adorning my head
With her curls! Well, isn't it odd?

What fancy! who knows whose they were?—
Perhaps some German *Baronne*
Went mad, and the doctors took care
To shave her as bald as a stone.

They're not Spanish, Italian or French,
For blondes in these countries are few,
And such hair! why, no Southern wench
Would sell it. Now finished, Bijou?

Are they English? Some girl's who?—Oh, no—
Some beautiful sister's of love
Who by labours of mercy below
Looks meekly for mercy above.

Was she like me, I wonder? It's queer—
Bijou, have you finished, I mean?
Do they match? I am glad—they're not dear—
Oh! there is a head for a queen!

Now, bring me my dress, the blue *tulle*;
I may yet be in time for the ball,
And dance into frenzy some fool
With love for—a false waterfall.

Oh charming! I glory in blue,
With my red and white like the song—
And these curls—Oh, thank you, Bijou,
I forgive you for being so long.

JOHN READE.

HOW MISS PHIPPS BECAME MRS. PHILLIPS.

A LEAP-YEAR STORY.

AUTHORS and artists have imposed some most ridiculously untruthful types of character upon us. For example, what is the conventional notion of the British old maid? Thanks to those unchivalrous caricaturists, the phrase suggests a picture of a lady with a figure like a ramrod, and a face like a winter-apple—a crab-apple—reserving her small remnant of sour milk of human kindness for her cat; as afraid of the men as Horace's Chloe; and feasting like a ghoul upon the mangled reputations of her youthful sisters. Well, now, my reader, look round your circle of acquaintances, and tell me honestly how many of such vestal virgins you can find. I never met with one, and, with your permission, will introduce you to a little body who is the very opposite of that abominable portrait—my friend, Miss Phipps.

As plump as a partridge, as blithe as a mavis, bright-eyed as a robin, Aunt Rhoda—as she is called in some dozen families into which she has been lovingly adopted—is in request for all our merry-makings, and lights up the sick-rooms, to which she will go just as willingly, like a very substantial sunbeam. She doesn't petrify into a hand-crossed effigy in men-folk's company, but roundly rates the bad taste of bachelors in having suffered her so long to continue single. Of course, like all women who are good for anything—it is only your selfish people (moral oysters) who shut themselves up, and take no interest in their neighbours—she is fond of a bit of gossip; and being a hot-tempered little dame, she can occasionally say a sharp thing of, though far more frequently to, for she likes everything above board, any one who has happened to offend her, or—which is a far easier mode of rousing her wrath—who has offended her friends. But there is not a grain of malice in her heart. She blurts out exactly what she thinks in a volcanic burst, and there is an end: a far preferable mode of procedure, in my opinion, to the polite, smiling way in which phlegmatic people dribble out their spite—in such small contributions that a grievance will last them for a month.

Such is Miss Phipps as, on the last night of 1855, she sits in her doll's house of a cottage in Pogis Parva, entertaining a tiny party of village friends. Her elder sister, Harriet—also a maiden—is really the mistress of the house; but she, good, quiet soul, resigns the lead in everything to bustling Rhoda, who not unfrequently bullies her, in a good-natured way, to stir her into life, and whom she watches, half admiringly, half anxiously, as one might watch the china-endangering pranks of a frisky kitten playing with the table-cloth.

The hearts of the Misses Phipps are large, but their means are small: a party at their house, therefore, is an "event." They do the thing well, however, when they attempt it. Their neatest of little parlours—although the process seems very much akin to the painting of the lily—is tidied up for hours beforehand. The best china—white as snow—with sprigs and rims of gold—is daintily dusted. The heirloom tea-pot and cream-jug are scoured until the quaint old plate seems almost ashamed of that spotless polish, which brings out in such bold relief its bygone fashion. Cake, both of seed and plum, is cut up into the genteelst of blocks and wedges. Wafer bread-and-butter is arranged in graceful circling sweeps, with bunches of laurustinus in the centre. A round tower of toasted muffins rises on the fender—"footman." The home-cured ham is sliced into semi-transparent slices, and wreathed with classic parsley. The preserves and marmalade, for the manufacture of which the Misses Phipps enjoy a five miles fame, are poured, like liquid gold and rubies, into their shallow receptacles of crystal. Wax candles are placed in readiness for lighting on the tea-table, in massive silver sticks—the Misses

Phipps have "seen better days"—with verdant coronals. One bottle of port and one of sherry are decanted, and put aside with the plates of almonds and raisins, and oranges for pre-cænal refreshment. The supper-tray is ready-laid; and then, after sundry injunctions to the extemporised parlour—as well as kitchen—maid to "mind her manners," the sisters go up stairs to wash their hands, give the last touch to their toilet, and to see once more that the bedroom is in a fit state for the reception of their guests when they visit it for the purpose of "taking off their things."

Bonnets and boas, muffs, shawls, and mantles have lain upon the counterpane for some hours, when my tale begins. Supper has been despatched; and to counteract the richness of the hot game-pie—Pogis Parva is in a noted sporting county, and you may be sure that popular Aunt Rhoda has not to buy the birds she cooks so deftly—the assembled ladies, with their feet upon the fender, and their skirts turned back over their knees, are sipping "just a little very weak brandy-and-water." Their tongues have not been idle at any time of the evening, but now, lubricated by that gentle stimulant, they wag like poplar leaves. It is amusing to note the effect of after-supper alcohol—however much diluted—on the feminine brain. The topic of conversation is a Mr. Phillips, a shy, autumnal bachelor, who has recently taken up his residence in Pogis. So very shy is he that he has had his pew in church screened, not only in front, but also at the sides, with lofty curtains, above which, when he stands up, the top of his head can just be seen by his fellow-worshippers, and behind which, at the close of the service, he remains perdu until the church is empty, having taken care to be the first to enter it. All the week long, he never stirs from his premises, which he would seem to have selected for the sake of a brick-wall and a high holly-hedge, which shut them in on all sides. The rector is the only person who has visited him, and he reports that Mr. Phillips is an intelligent and well-informed, but most ridiculously nervous, man, with a perfect horror of womankind. His servants, to whom he rarely speaks, can give no further gratification to their village gossip's curiosity about him, than by telling them what he has for dinner; that he spends the day in reading in his study, or moping in his garden; and that they often overhear him walking up and down his bedroom at night, talking to himself.

Here is a mine of mystery for rural speculation! Our ladies, irate at his misogynism, for the most part are very uncharitable in their conjectures. The rector's wife believes him to be a concealed atheist. Why cannot he show his face at church, she asks, like a decent Christian? Mrs. Squills, the surgeon's spouse, suggests that night-walking and talking point to remorse for some great crime—perhaps a murder. Swindling finds more favour in the eyes of Mrs. Brown, the retired tradesman's wife. She would like to know whether Phillips is his name, and how he got his money. "Perhaps he's a coiner," whispers, in an awe-struck voice, her daughter Belinda, a great reader of romances. Miss Harriet Phipps, who is suspected of having had a love-affair long ago, is the only one who is not censorious; she hints that blighted affections may have caused his melancholy. But this compassionate hypothesis, in common with all its unkind predecessors, Aunt Rhoda scornfully scots. In her opinion, the man is merely an absurd hypochondriac old bachelor, who has grown half-silly through living by himself, and having no one else to care for; and, as usual, sharp-sighted little Aunt Rhoda is right. She vows, moreover, that she will rout him out, and make him take a wife, and do some good in the village, instead of haunting his house like a selfish old ghost.

"Why not ask him yourself, Aunt Rhoda?" says Miss Brown. "Next year is leap-year, you know."

"Well," laughs Aunt Rhoda, "if I can't manage it any other way, I will."

"O Rhoda!" exclaimed shocked sister Harriet.

Thus they sit chatting until the bells burst out with their joy-peal at the birth of the new year, when, with many expressions of surprise at the quickness with which the time has flown, they give each other the customary hearty greeting of the hour; and then the visitors clog and cloak, and scatter to their homes, the rector's wife tossing her head contemptuously when she meets the Methodists coming out from their "watch-night" service in their little meeting-house; in which manifestation of scorn I cannot sympathise with Mrs. Rector, there seeming to me to be a deal of solemn poetry in that rite. The few minutes before midnight, passed kneeling and in silence, whilst the clock ticks audibly in the hushed chapel, as if it were the heart of the dying year fast hastening to its final throbs, struck me, when once I witnessed the service, as being about the most thrilling time I ever spent.

Leap-year is not three days old, when, in company with Mrs. Squills, Aunt Rhoda presents herself at the gate of Holly Lodge, and requests to be ushered in to the presence of its owner. In vain does wondering John, the janitor, inform her that "Master don't see nobody, miss." He must see her, as she has come on business. But when they are seated in the drawing-room, comes a request for the ladies to send in their message, as Mr. Phillips is too unwell to leave the library. "Very well, then, we'll go to him, John," says the undaunted little woman; and go she does, dragging her companion with her. Mr. Phillips, a tall, pale-faced man, with twitching lips and quivering fingers, starts from his chair at the apparition. Since they have bearded him in his den—caught him sitting on his form, perhaps, would be a more appropriate figure—he tries hard to be polite, kicks over the coal-scuttle in a nervous attempt to hand them seats, and stammers out a welcome, to which, however, his startled eyes give a decided contradiction. He looks a little relieved when he finds that the intruders have come for no more formidable purpose than to solicit a subscription to their Coal and Blanket Fund, and permits them to put down his name for a munificent sum, evidently hoping to bribe them into a speedy departure; but still Aunt Rhoda stays, rattling on about the weather, and the neighbourhood, and general news, until his look of pain changes into a look of puzzle, and eventually into one of semi-pleasure. It is a novel and not altogether disagreeable sensation to have the stagnant waters of his existence stirred. Women, he finds, like other reputed monsters, are not quite so terrible when closely scanned; he can talk, after a bit, without stammering and blushing, and when his visitors leave, escorts them not only to the hall-door, but also to the garden-gate.

Other local charities afford pretexts for other calls. Ruthlessly does little Rhoda bleed his purse, affirming that she ought to extract heavy fees for the good that she has done him. And, indeed, he is marvellously improved. He no longer denies himself to the village ladies, all of whom Rhoda introduces to him in turn. He ventures outside his gate on

the week-days; he joins the Book Club, and attends its meetings—at first, indeed, with the scared look of a snared thing, but he gets used in time to hearing his own voice in company, and proves a valuable acquisition to the society, not only by his suggestions as to the selection of their literature, but also from the interesting nature of his conversation. His front curtain at church is now undrawn, and rumour says that he looks a good deal more at Aunt Rhoda than at the rector. Belinda Brown, who is rather an old young lady, adds that it is really immodest for Miss Rhoda Phillips—she doesn't "aunt" her now—to call so often at his house; but she supposes that her age protects her.

At this spite and tattle, Aunt Rhoda only laughs. In all honesty of purpose, she simply tried to win a fresh patron for her poor clients, and to convert a sullen recluse into an agreeable neighbour. She has succeeded, so let rumour and Belinda Brown say what they please. It must be owned, however, that she takes a great interest in her protégé, and champions him on all occasions against Harriet, who, now that her love-theory has proved false, and he lives like a commonplace gentleman instead of a romantic hermit, is rather apt—with a most mild malignity, however—to depreciate him.

New Year's Eve has come again; and a little after eleven the sisters are sitting—this time without company—in their little parlour, when they hear a knock at the front door. Rhoda, much astonished, runs to open it, and is still more surprised when Mr. Phillips enters. He has had a sad relapse—his *mauvaise honte* has come back as bad as ever. He can hardly be persuaded to be seated; he fidgets with his hat; he looks askance at Miss Harriet, as if annoyed by her presence, but turns pale with fear when by chance she rises, as if about to leave the room; he hems and haws; he begins sentences, and never ends them. "Deeply grateful to Miss Rhoda"—"object for existence"—"not let the year close," are the only intelligible portions—and these but partially intelligible—of his fragmentary utterances. Miss Rhoda soon understands him, however, and cheerily exclaims: "I know what you mean, Mr. Phillips; but you'll never say it, if I don't help you, for we can't send Harriet up into the bedroom this cold night; and if I wait till the clock strikes, I shall lose my chance of helping you. You want me to marry you, don't you? There, Harriet! I said this time twelvemonths that I'd ask him, and see I have!"

Neither Harriet, snugly housed in, nor we who visit at her happy, hospitable home (the holly hedge has been cut down), have had any reason to regret that Miss Rhoda Phipps became, a month afterwards, Mrs. Henry Phillips.

KRUPPS'S 1,000-POUNDER SIEGE GUN.

This leviathan breech-loading gun is manufactured in the mammoth establishment of Frederick Krupp, at Essen, in Prussia, and is intended for the arming of coast defences against the attacks of iron-clad vessels. It consists of an inner tube upon which are shrunk cast-steel rings. The inner tube forms the important part of the gun, and weighs, when finished, twenty tons. The cast-steel rings are shrunk on the central tube, forming a three-fold layer at the powder chamber, and at the muzzle portion a two-fold layer. The rings are manufactured from massive ingots without welding, and when in a completed state weigh thirty tons.

The shot or shell is raised by block and fall, and is rolled into the side of the breech through an aperture that is closed by a slide. The system of breech-loading is Krupp's patent arrangement.

The total weight of the gun is.....	50 tons
Preponderance.....	1,500 lbs
Diameter of bore.....	14 in
Total length of gun.....	17.5 ft
Number of rifle grooves.....	40
Depth of the rifling.....	0.15 in
Pitch of the rifling.....	980 in & 1014.4 in
Weight of the solid shot.....	1,212 lbs
Weight of the shell.....	1,080 lbs

N. B.—The weight of the shell is made up as follows:—

The cast-steel shell.....	843 lbs
The lead jacket.....	220 "
Bursting charge.....	17 "

	1,080 lbs
The charge of powder weighs from.....	110 lbs to 130 lbs

For the transportation of this gun a railway car had to be specially constructed. It is made entirely of iron and steel, rests upon twelve wheels, and weighs twenty-four tons.

When mounted, the gun rests upon a steel carriage weighing fifteen tons, and the whole is supported upon a turntable weighing twenty-five tons. The gun carriage slides smoothly upon the turntable to the check at the back stays at each discharge of the piece. Such is the construction of the mechanism necessary for working the gun so that one or two men can quickly and easily elevate, depress, or turn it, to follow and cover a passing iron-clad with expedition and accuracy. Gun, gun-carriage, and turntable give a total weight of ninety tons.

It is supposed that a single shot from this gun would burst in the side of any iron-clad now afloat, while a few shells thrown from it would make terrible havoc in a large city. Some of the daily papers which have announced that Prussia is without suitable siege guns make a great mistake. No nation is better provided. Herr Krupp's establishment is fully six times larger than the largest works for a like purpose belonging to any government. It covers more than two hundred acres actually under roof, and gives employment to more than twelve thousand men. Last year thousands of tons of breech-loading cannons of all calibres, from the 1,000-pounders down to 4-pounders, were on hand finished in the works at Essen. It would seem that Prussia is fully prepared for any emergency.

A NUT THAT BURGLARS CANNOT CRACK.

The London correspondent of the Boston *Commonwealth* narrates the following:—

"A stranger in Threadneedle Street, standing in the narrow thoroughfare shortly before ten o'clock in the morning, would have his curiosity aroused by the number of well-dressed men whom he would see entering a silversmith's shop, and, in a few minutes reappearing with small Japan boxes under their arms. If, by further chance, it so happened he was at the same spot between five and six o'clock in the evening, he would probably observe the same young men return to deposit