



AT THE SIGN OF THE MAPLE

The Horror-Monger

A GREAT deal has been said and preached concerning the scandal-monger, who makes it her (or his) business to spread the news of any unpleasantness throughout the parish. But the horror-monger, although of the same species, is infinitely more depressing. She is more frequently encountered in the small town or village than elsewhere and is never of a high order of intelligence. She revels in disease and disaster and can hardly be induced to take an interest in anything healthy or happy, while a funeral to her is an occasion of the deepest concern and she will recite all details of the final hours of the "dear deceased" with a gusto which leaves her audience speechless, either with admiration or disgust.

But the joy of the horror-monger, the opportunity of her lifetime, is a murder. Canada does not supply too many of such delights and the horror-monger may go all the days of her earthly pilgrimage without such an event for immediate exploiting. In that case, newspapers must fill the void and the sensational details are all too dull for the avid taste of this woman, who dwells upon each mysterious feature with an interest no act of heroism would be capable of arousing in her.

We have just seen an instance of this in the profound interest manifested by thousands in the Hamilton tragedy. The circumstances were so extraordinary that it was no wonder that general public curiosity was aroused. But most of us must wonder what spirit possessed the thousands of strangers who pressed up the door-steps, swarmed on the verandah and even attempted to force themselves upon the stricken family. Such intruders in a house of grief are nothing more nor less than horror-mongers and their ways are not the ways of pleasantness, nor are their paths peace.

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Songs About Sleep

A COLLECTOR of American Sonnets remarks on the circumstance that nearly every American poet has composed a sonnet on sleep. This restless age seems to ask from its song-writers many productions of the lullaby class. One of the daintiest of these is "The Inn o' Dreams" by Theodosia Garrison, which appeared originally in *Scribner's Magazine*:

Sleep at the Inn o' Dreams—

A kindly host he waits,
And all night long a goodly throng
Comes softly through his gates.

A varied company—

Scholar and clown and king,
Or prince or priest, or great or least,
He gives them welcoming.

For each he fills the cup

Where poppy-petals swim,
Wherefrom each guest at his behest
Drinks deeply, toasting him.

And old men drink of youth,
And sad men of delight,
And weary men drink deep again
The pulsing wine of might.

And poets drink of song,
But best and oh, most sweet,
Above that brim where poppies swim
The lips of lovers meet.

Sleep at the Inn o' Dreams—

A kindly host he waits,
And all night long a goodly throng
Comes softly through his gates.

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A Lucky Writer

ABOUT ten years ago, the story-reading world was much pleased by a collection of tales entitled "Smith College Stories" by Josephine Dodge Daskam. They were genuine stories of college-girl work and fun, with a delightful humour enlivening

all. Since then, several books have been written by Josephine Daskam, who, by the way, has changed her name to Mrs. Selden Bacon. One interesting feature in her career, is that never, never, in her most youthful days did she have a manuscript returned with the editor's regrets. The editors have always gladly used Mrs. Bacon's manuscript and have "paid on acceptance." This sounds almost too good to be true but it has been told by several reliable journals and therefore deserves respectful reading. Mrs. Bacon's unusually happy sketches of child life, such as those contained in "The Madness of Philip," have led to several apocryphal yarns of her own childhood. One of these was to the effect that she once possessed a doll to which she was attached with a most intense devotion, and which she even carried off to boarding-school. Mrs. Bacon has written to *Hampton's Magazine* to deny this rather absurd story and says: "I adore children but I hate dolls. My two children also dislike dolls; so I suppose it is hereditary."

As a matter of fact, there are many small girls who are bored by the dolls thrust upon them by would-be kind friends. If children were allowed more choice of playthings, many a flaxen-haired small person would pass by a wax doll in favour of a woolly lamb or a gingham dog. Perhaps, Mrs.



WELCOME!

Britannia (preparing to introduce United South Africa to Canada and Australia). "Here comes your new cousin."—Punch.

Bacon's great charm, as a writer of stories about children, is that she discards all conventions about the juvenile hero and heroine and allows youngsters to be merely human. Consequently the small girl is, by no means, always a lover of dolls.

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A Matter of Music

THERE were several women talking before the fire about a variety of matters, while the March winds howled and shrieked in a fashion which made the glow in the grate all the more comforting.

"There's one thing I envy you," said one of them, turning to a brown-eyed matron, who was busy manufacturing some fragments of lace and muslin into an article called by courtesy an apron.

"What's that?" asked she of the needle-work with curiosity, for the first speaker possessed more of this world's goods than any of the others and also had "naturally" curly hair.

"Your music. How in the world have you managed to keep it up? Tom's always scolding me because I've dropped mine. We might just as well have no piano."

"But you were always away ahead of me at school, Marian. You got the medal in music the year we graduated."

"I know," admitted Marian pensively. "And Tom is ever so fond of music. But I just don't seem to get the time." The brown-eyed matron laughed merrily.

"That's all nonsense, my dear," she replied, with the happy ease belonging to those who have been at school together, "you have more time than any of the rest of us. In fact, it's my belief that a woman has time for anything which she really wants to do. You have time to play bridge three evenings a week and some of the afternoons."

"Oh! That's different."

"Of course it is. It's something that you really want to do. There's no royal road to keeping up music, but I find it worth while. I'm looking forward to playing duets with Dorothy."

Then they transferred their attention to spring millinery and the subject of music was forgotten. Why is it that most women "drop" their music when they take upon themselves the cares of a home? The few women who do keep it up are such gratifying exceptions that one cannot help wondering that more of their sisters do not make an effort in the direction, even though it should mean fewer "frills." There is such a difference between the household where music is a part of the home life and that from which it is absent, that keeping up her music seems well worth a woman's time and sacrifice.

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The New Nation

THE laughter of Time is a silent thing, so one of the poets has informed us. When one looks at the picture in *Punch* representing Britannia, with Canada and Australia, welcoming the new State of South Africa into the British Empire, it seems as if it can hardly be ten years since the Briton-Boer conflict began. Those days in the autumn of 1899 and the winter of 1900, when the Canadian contingents were being hurried to Capetown will not be

readily forgotten by the men who went out or by the women who stayed behind. Canada, therefore, is properly represented as taking an interest in the union of the various states of that troubled territory, for many graves on the veldt mark the resting-place of Canadian volunteers. It was during the Boer War that the association, the Daughters of the Empire, now including thousands in its membership, was formed in Montreal. Canadian women are said not to take as much interest in the political life of the country as their cousins across the Atlantic. While this may be true, there never was a national or imperial crisis when the women of the Dominion were found wanting. We are not a demonstrative people, but it would not be safe for the stranger to take that lack of facile expression for a dearth of emotion. The horrors of war fall more heavily upon the women who wait from day to day for the latest news than upon the men who are in the thickest of the fight, learning the grim companionship of those who face death together. We have travelled far since those black days of defeat and disaster, when the list of young officers killed in action lengthened appallingly before Mafeking was taken. There are varying opinions as to the new South African policy, but no part of the Empire will be more ready to rejoice in a really unified state in that distressed corner of the African continent than will this happy and prosperous Dominion of the North.

CANADIENNE.

The Foxy Old Ultimate

Can it be said that in the illimitable and inconceivable there is an Ultimate? Must there not always be infinity beyond?—Goldwin Smith, in the *Springfield Republican*.

THE Ultimate is big game. Theodore Roosevelt has been chasing him around the country for eight years, and hasn't got him yet. He ran a race with him over the principal railroad tracks, and he played hide and seek with him in the halls of Congress. Now Theodore is going to look for him in Africa.

Professor James, of Harvard, has been after the Ultimate also. He invented, or rather adapted a modern trap called Pragmatism, and put some nice words in the entrance for bait, but the old Ultimate is a sly dog. He wouldn't get caught.

Dr. Lyman Abbott has been "beating up" the Ultimate for some years—almost ever since we can remember.

We guess the Ultimate knows his business. But if he is ever to be caught, we suspect that some woman will do it.—*Life*.