

"What nonsense you talk, Marie! Don't you know that a young woman like you ought to be married some day—that is if she can get a fitting man to take her? What would the neighbours say of me if we kept you at home to drudge for us, instead of settling you out in the world properly? You forget, Marie, that I have a duty to perform, and you should not make it so difficult."

"But if I don't want to be settled?" said Marie. "Who cares for the neighbours? If you and I understand each other, is not that enough?"

"I care for the neighbours," said Michel Voss with energy. "And must I marry a man I don't care a bit for because of the neighbours, Uncle Michel?" asked Marie, with something approaching to indignation in her voice.

Michel Voss perceived that it was of no use for him to carry on the argument. He entertained a half-formed idea that he did not quite understand the objections so strongly urged by his niece; that there was something on her mind that she would not tell him, and that there might be cruelty in urging the matter upon her; but, in opposition to this, there was his assured conviction that it was his duty to provide well and comfortably for his niece, and that it was her duty to obey him in acceding to such provision as he might make. And then this marriage was undoubtedly a good marriage—a match that would make all the world declare how well Michel Voss had done for the girl whom he had taken under his protection. It was a marriage that he could not bear to see go out of the family. It was not probable that the young linen merchant, who was so well-to-do in the world, and who, no doubt, might have his choice in larger places than Granpere; it was not probable, Michel thought, that he would put up with many refusals. The girl would lose her chance, unless he, by his firmness, could drive this folly out of her. And yet how could he be firm, when he was tempted to throw his great arms about her, and swear that she should eat of his bread and drink of his cup and be unto him as a daughter till the last day of their joint existence. When she crept so close to him and pressed his arm, he was almost overcome by the sweetness of her love and by the tenderness of his own heart.

"It seems to me that you don't understand," he said at last. "I didn't think that such a girl as you would be so silly."

To this she made no reply, and then they began to walk down the hill together.

They had walked half way home, he stepping a little in advance,—because he was still angry with her, or angry rather with himself in that he could not bring himself to scold her properly,—and she following close behind his shoulder, when he stopped suddenly and asked her a question which came from the direction his thoughts were taking at the moment. "You are sure," he said, "that you are not doing this because you expect George to come back to you?"

"Quite sure," she said, bearing forward a moment, and answering him in a whisper when she spoke.

"By my word, then, I can't understand it. I can't indeed. Has Urmand done anything to offend you?"

"Nothing, uncle."

"Nor said anything?"

"Not a word, uncle. I am not offended. Of course I am much obliged to him. Only I don't love him."

"By my faith I don't understand it. I don't indeed. It is sheer nonsense, and you must get over it. I shouldn't be doing my duty if I didn't tell you that you must get over it. He will be here again in another ten days, and you must have thought better of it by that time. You must indeed, Marie."

Then they walked down the hill in silence together, each thinking intently, on the purpose of the other, but each altogether misunderstanding the other. Michel Voss was assured that she had twice declared that she was altogether indifferent to his son George. What he might have said or done had she declared her affection for her absent lover, he did not himself know. He had not questioned himself on that point. Though his wife had told him that Marie was ever thinking of George, he had not believed that it was so. He had no reason for disliking a marriage between his son and his wife's niece. When he had first thought that they were going to be lovers, under his nose, without his permission,—going to commence a new kind of life between themselves without so much as a word spoken to him or by him,—he had found himself compelled to interfere, compelled as a father and an uncle. That kind of thing could never be allowed to take place in a well-ordered house without the expressed sanction of the head of the household. He had interfered,—rather roughly; and his son had taken him at his word. He was sore now at his son's coldness to him, and was disposed to believe that his son cared not at all for any one at Granpere. His niece was almost as dear to him as his son, and much more dutiful. Therefore he would do the best he could for his niece. Marie's declaration that George was nothing to her,—that she did not think of him,—was in accordance with his own ideas. His wife had been wrong. His wife was usually wrong when any headwork was required. There could be no good reason why Marie Bromar should not marry Adrian Urmand.

But Marie, as she knew very well, had never declared that George Voss was nothing to her,—he was forgotten, or that her heart was free. He had gone from her and had forgotten her. She was quite sure of that. And should she ever hear that he was married to some one else,—as it was probable that she would hear some day,—then she would be free again. Then she might take this man or that, if her friends wished it—and if she could bring herself to endure the proposed marriage. But at present her troth was plighted to George Voss; and where her troth was given, there was her heart also. She could understand that such a circumstance, affecting one of so little importance as herself, should be nothing to a man like her uncle; but it was everything to her. George had forgotten her, and she had wept sorely over his want of constancy. But though telling herself that this certainly was so, she had declared to herself that she would never be untrue till her want of truth had been put beyond the reach of doubt. Who does not know how hope remains, when reason has declared that there is no longer ground for hoping?

Such had been the state of her mind hitherto; but what would be the good of entertaining hope, even if there were ground for hoping, when, as was so evident, her uncle would never permit George and her to be man and wife? And did she not owe everything to her uncle? And was it not the duty of a girl to obey her guardian? Would not all the world be against her if she refused this man? Her mind was tormented by a thousand doubts, when her uncle said another word to her, just as they were entering the village.

"You will try and think better of it;—will you not, my

dear?" She was silent. "Come, Marie, you can say that you will try. Will you not try?"

"Yes, uncle,—I will try."

Michel Voss went home in a good humour, for he felt that he had triumphed; and poor Marie returned broken-hearted, for she was aware that she had half-yielded. She knew that her uncle was triumphant.

(To be continued.)

A MIGHTY SOCIABLE PLACE.

BY MARK TWAIN.

In Nevada there used to be current the story of an adventure of two of her nabobs, which may or may not have occurred. I give it for what it is worth:

Colonel Jim had seen something of the world, and knew more or less of its ways, but Colonel Jack was from the back settlements of the States, had led a life of arduous toil, and had never seen a city. These two, blessed with sudden wealth, projected a visit to New York—Colonel Jack to see the sights and Colonel Jim to guard his unsophistication from misfortune. They reached San Francisco in the night, and sailed in the morning. Arriving in New York Colonel Jack said:—

"I've heard tell of carriages all my life, and now I mean to have a ride in one; I don't care what it costs. Come along."

They stepped out on the sidewalk, and Colonel Jim called in a stylish barouch.—But Colonel Jack said:

"No, sir!" None of your cheap-John turnouts for me. I'm here to have a good time, and money ain't no object. I mean to have the nobbiest rig that's going. Now here comes the very trick. Stop that yaller one with the picture on it—don't you fret—I'll stand all the expenses myself."

So Colonel Jim stopped an empty omnibus and they got in. Said Colonel Jack:

"Ain't it gay, though? Oh, no, I reckon not? Cushions, and windows, and pictures, till you can't rest. What would the boys say if they could see us cutting a swell like this in New York? By George, I wish they could see us."

Then he put his head out of the window and shouted to the driver.

"Say, Johnny, this suits me?—suits yours truly, you bet! Let 'em out! Make 'em go! We'll make it all right with you, sonny."

The driver passed his hand through the stap-hole and tapped for his fare—it was before the gongs came into common use—Colonel Jack took the hand and shook it cordially. He said:

"You twig me, old pard! All right between gents. Smell of that, and see how you like it?"

And he put a twenty dollar gold piece into the driver's hands. After a moment the driver said he could not make change.

"Bother the change! Ride it out. Put it in your pocket."

The omnibus stopped, and a young lady got in. Colonel Jack stared for a moment, then nudged Colonel Jim with his elbow.

"Don't say a word," he whispered. "Let her ride if she wants to. Gracious, there's room enough."

The young lady got her portemonnaie, and handed her fare to Colonel Jack.

"What's this for?" said he.

"Give it to the driver, please."

"Take back your money, madam. We can't allow it. You're welcome to ride here as long as you please, but this shebang's chartered—we sha'n't let you pay a cent."

The girl shrunk into a corner, bewildered. An old lady with a basket climbed in, and proffered her fare.

"Excuse me," said Jack. "You are perfectly welcome here, madam, but we can't allow you to pay. Set right down here, mum, and don't be the least uneasy. Make yourself as free as if you were in your own turn out."

Within two minutes three gentlemen, two fat women and a couple of children entered.

"Come right along, friends," said Colonel Jack; "don't mind us. This is a free blow out." Then he whispered to Col. Jim, "New York ain't no sociable place, I don't reckon. It ain't no name for it."

He resisted every effort to pass fares to the driver, and made everybody cordially welcome. The situation dawned on the people, and they pocketed their money, and delivered themselves up to covert enjoyment of the episode. Half a dozen more passengers entered.

"Oh, there is plenty of room," said Colonel Jack. "Walk right in and make yourself at home. A blow-out ain't worth anything as a blow-out unless a body has company." Then a whisper to Colonel Jim, "But ain't these New Yorkers friendly? And ain't they cool about it too? Icebergs ain't anywhere. I reckon they'd tackle a harse if it was going their way."

More passengers got in; more yet, and still more. Both seats were filled, and a file of men were standing up, holding on to the cleats overhead. Parties with baskets and bundles were climbing on the roof. Half-suppressed laughter rippled up from all sides.

"Well, for clean, cool, out-and-out cheek, if this don't bang everything that ever I saw, I'm an Injun," whispered Colonel Jack.

A Chinaman crowded his way in.

"I weaken," said Colonel Jack. "Hold on, driver! Keep your seats, ladies and gents. Just make yourselves free—everything's paid for. Driver, just rustle these folks around as long as they've a mind to go—friends of ours, you know. Take them everywhere; and if you want more money come to the St. Nicholas and we'll make it all right. Pleasant journey to you, ladies and gents; go on as long as you please—it sha'n't cost you a cent."

The two comrades got out, and Colonel Jack said:

"Jimmy, it's the sociablest place I ever saw. The Chinaman waltzes in as comfortable as anybody. If we'd stayed awhile I reckon we'd had some niggers."

The Chicago Post claims to have on its editorial staff a lady of extraordinary abilities. The editor says he "never knew any one who could write with equal ease upon so singular a range of topics with information so exact in detail." Whereupon an envious contemporary asks the Post why it never publishes any of her articles?

FIGHT BETWEEN A COBRA AND A MONGOOSE.

The snake was a large cobra, 4 ft. 10½ in. in length, the most formidable cobra I have seen. He was turned into an enclosed outer room, or verandah, about 20 ft. by 12 ft., and at once coiled himself up, with head erect, about ten or twelve inches from the ground, and began to hiss loudly. The mongoose was a small one of his kind, very tame and quiet, but exceedingly active. When the mongoose was put into the rectangle, it seemed scarcely to notice the cobra; but the latter, on the contrary, appeared at once to recognise its enemy. It became excited, and no longer seemed to pay any attention to the bystanders, but kept constantly looking at the mongoose. The mongoose began to go round and round the enclosure, occasionally venturing up to the cobra, apparently quite unconcerned. Some eggs being laid on the ground, it rolled them near the cobra, and began to suck them. Occasionally it left the eggs, and went up to the cobra, within an inch of its neck, as the latter reared up; but when the cobra struck out, the mongoose was away with extraordinary activity. At length the mongoose began to bite the cobra's tail, and it looked as if the fight would commence in earnest. Neither, however, seemed anxious for close quarters, so the enclosure was narrowed. The mongoose then began to give the cobra some very severe bites; but the cobra after some fencing forced the mongoose into a corner, and struck it with full strength on the upper part of the hind leg. We were sorry for the mongoose, as but for the enclosure it would have escaped. It was clear that on open ground the cobra could not have bitten it at all; while it was the policy of the mongoose to exhaust the cobra before making a close attack. The bite of the cobra evidently caused the mongoose great pain, for it repeatedly stretched out its leg, and shook it, as if painful, for some minutes. The cobra seemed exhausted by its efforts, and putting down its head, tried hard to escape, and kept itself in a corner. The mongoose then went up to it and drew it out by snapping at its tail, and when it was out, began to bite its body, while the cobra kept turning round and round, striking desperately at the mongoose, but in vain. When this had continued for some time, the mongoose came at length right in front of the cobra, and after some dodging and fencing, when the cobra was in the act of striking, or rather, ready to strike out, the mongoose, to the surprise of all, made a sudden spring at the cobra, and bit in the inside of the upper jaw, about the fang, and instantly jumped back again. Blood flowed in large drops from the mouth of the cobra, and it seemed much weakened. It was easy now to see how the fight would end, as the mongoose became more eager for the struggle. It continued to bite the body of the cobra, going round it as before, and soon came again in front, and bit it a second time in the upper jaw, when more blood flowed. This continued for some time, until at last, the cobra, being very weak, the mongoose caught its upper jaw firmly, and holding down its head began to crunch it. The cobra, however, being a very strong one, often got up again, and tried feebly to strike the mongoose; but the latter now bit its head and body as it pleased; and when the cobra became motionless and dead, the mongoose left it and ran into the jungle. The natives said that the mongoose went to the jungle to eat some leaves to cure itself. We did not wish to prevent it, and we expected it would die, as it was severely bitten. In the evening, some hours after the fight, it returned, apparently quite well, and is now as well as ever. It follows either that the bite of a cobra is not fatal to a mongoose, or that a mongoose manages somehow to cure itself. I am not disposed to put aside altogether what so many intelligent natives assert. This fight shows, at any rate, how these active little animals manage to kill poisonous snakes. On open ground a snake cannot strike them, whereas they can bite the body and tail of a snake, and wear it out before coming to close quarters. This mongoose did not seem to fear the cobra at all; whereas the cobra was evidently in great fear from the moment it saw the mongoose.—Professor Andrews, in "Nature."

Says an English paper: Queen Victoria's life was rendered doubly a burden during the illness of her eldest son by the incessant stream of lotions, decoctions, and medicaments poured in for the salvation of the Prince. One quack, more impulsive and confident than the rest, rushed into the royal pew and made an incoherent appeal to the good mother to accept his nostrum for her sick son, and life would of a certainty be assured.

Heavens! what a sublime scene for a label or an apothecary's show-card! St. George's Chapel, with its gorgeous windows, its rich tapestries, its varied sculptures, its tattered banners borne to battle by the knights dead five hundred years, whose effigies lie in rusty armour below. The congregation comprising the noblest and greatest people in the realm, peers who traced their descent from almost forgotten kings, dukes who were worth a thousand dollars a minute, warriors in gorgeous panoply, decked with jewelled orders won in a hundred memorable fights. In the Royal Pew, the Queen in a flood of tears and a purple robe, the crown on her head, her princes and princesses around her, the British Lion slumbering on a hassock at her feet. Into the Royal Pew rushes the enthusiast, scattering handbills around him as he flies, and, falling on his knees, shrieks, "Your Majesty, give the Prince one tablespoonful every hour and he is saved! My patent Periopicopherous cures gum-boils, small-pox and blood-spavin, makes the skin soft as that of the new born babe, unites broken china, brings out the hair, rouses the secretive organs to healthy action, can be worn for a life-time, and is not to be distinguished from real silver on the closest inspection. Just hear what the Press, the Pulpit and the People say. From the Bunkinsville Weekly Conservative, February—" Ere he can say another word the Queen shrieks, a thousand (1,000) falcions are flashed in air; the intruder is hacked into demitition little fragments, and the British Lion eats him up and licks his chaps for more. But the purpose is effected, the Periopicopherous is advertized though the proprietor has perished—

Heavens! where were Barnum, Helmbold and Jay Cook?

The following, we are assured, is a *verbatim* copy of a letter recently received by a schoolmaster in the West, from a householder in his locality: "Cur, ass, you are a man of no legs, and I wish to inter my sun in your skull." The obscurity and seeming offensiveness of this address disappear on translation. What was intended to be written was: "Sir, as you are a man of knowledge, I wish to enter my son at your school."