

# URGENT PRIVATE AFFAIRS.

## CHAPTER I.

### CROCODILES OF THE THAMES.

"I beg your pardon," said a hesitating male voice.

"I'm on the wall," said the male voice in apologetic tones.

She cast her eyes up. The head and shoulders of a light-haired young man, clad in flannels, appeared almost directly over her.

The young man mounted a rung higher on the ladder and said: "I hope I haven't startled you? I was looking for something I had lost when I saw you. I spoke because I thought you might be frightened if you came on it unawares."

"What is it?" she asked with great dignity, stepping back a pace, and tilting her cream-coloured umbrella further back over her dainty shoulder.

"Only my crocodile, Jacko."

"What?" she cried, glancing her dress together and glancing round the ground with apprehension.

"Indeed," said the young man penitently, "you must not be alarmed. He's quite tame and very small, and he's almost blind. I bought him cheap—a damaged lot," he added, laughing, to reassure the girl.

She looked at him in silent indignation. She was not accustomed to being addressed by strange young men, and she was accustomed to being treated with respect and deference—the respect and deference due to her age, eighteen.

"I am not joking," said he; "I would not think of doing such a thing. I'm awfully sorry; and I should not have spoken at all—I should not have dared—only I was afraid you might come on Jacko unexpectedly and be alarmed."

She was mollified somewhat by the concern in the speaker's voice. "A crocodile?" she said, condescending to admit wonder into her voice.

"Yes," he said, bringing his chest above the wall by raising himself another rung on the ladder, this causing her to retreat another pace. "But you really mustn't be afraid. He's only a very small chap. He never goes for people, you know."

"I don't know," said she stiffly. She had not been in good humour at all when taking her solitary walk through these strange grounds, and this affair annoyed her; and the young man—although he seemed really sorry, was very easy in his address, and should use no slang to her. He annoyed her too.

"Of course not," said he very humbly. "I mean he would not think of attacking people. I lost him at our side of the wall, and thought he might have got into Mr. Bathurst's grounds through a hole or drain—there is an unbarred drain higher up. I'm very sorry for frightening you—I am indeed; and, of course, I couldn't be so rude as to make a joke about such a thing. If you only knew how distressed I am, you'd—you'd believe me," he ended somewhat incoherently.

Miss Ellen Morton felt that here her dialogue with the unknown young man on the wall ought to end. She was in these grounds of Garwood House, on the Thames twenty miles above London, for the first time in her life that day. She had no reason to believe that young men in flannels were desperadoes. Still, propriety, with the strictest rules of which she was familiar, demanded that this dialogue should end.

But then a crocodile! No rule, of which she had ever even as much as heard, took into account the contingency of a crocodile at large. In historic times, anyway, a crocodile had never before entered into a nation of this kind on the banks of the Thames. It was easy for conventionality to say: Go away. Be wretched! If she moved, she might be walking straight towards the odious reptile, or—worse still—might suddenly hear him running after her behind.

Plainly, it was impossible for her to move. She was not at all timid by nature. But before she came upon this adventure she had not been very happy. She stood still, glancing about her in shivering watchfulness.

"I don't know exactly what I ought to do," said the young man on the wall in accents of perplexity. "Mr. Bathurst forbids people landing on his grounds from the river or getting over his walls or fences. He is death on trespassers, feeling that it was a great pity this exclusiveness did not operate effectually against sailors."

"Oh yes. He's awfully particular about keeping every one out. If I might only slip over and stand beside you, you'd be all right, you know."

It was hard for Ellen Morton, notwithstanding her eighteen years' experience in life, to deal with this speech. Here was a complete stranger talking in a respectful tone of her host. This ought to be resented, although she had never met Mr. Bathurst yet. Then there was the impudent assumption on the part of this young man that if he were only by her side she should be "all right." Still the speaker meant well. And then there was the dreadful thought of the lurking crocodile! She felt as though she must cry. Fancy her, Ellen Morton, crying like an ordinary silly girl! she who always held in scorn and contempt girls who cried for nothing! But, on the other hand, was a crocodile nothing? If she was sure this crocodile was nothing, she should not feel the least inclined to cry. She should feel very indignant. Why had this young man spoken at all? Why had he not held his tongue, and allowed her to be torn asunder by the crocodile in the peace?

"What—what am I to do?" she asked with a little quaver of pathos in her voice.

"Oh, pray, don't," said he; and before she knew what was happening, he had swung himself over the top of the wall, and saying: "I am sorry I spoke at all. I distressed you without any need. There was no danger from Jacko, except the danger of giving you a fright, if you saw him unexpectedly. And here I terrified you and nearly made you cry. I'd give all the world," he said desperately, "I had held my tongue."

"I am not going to cry, and I am not terrified," she said, her dignity giving way before his manifest sincerity, and under the relief afforded by his presence. She turned towards the house, a quarter of a mile distant, and began walking towards it.

"You see," said he, "I hadn't the least idea there was any one near when I got up the ladder. And, of course, I did not expect to find a lady here. Mrs. Bathurst is never about the grounds, and I don't remember any other lady at Garwood."

"I came only this morning."

"You are not a member of the family?"

"No. I am not a relative; but I am going to stay a while."

"I am not a relative," cried he with involun-

tary astonishment. "Going to stay at Garwood House for a while?"

"Yes. Why are you astonished?" she asked, widening the distance between them as they walked.

"Oh, nothing," he said in momentary confusion, and then founded a moment, and then partly recovered himself. "I'm sure I beg your pardon; only, you know, you are so unlike Mr. Bathurst, I thought you could not be closely related. You must think me very rude to ask. I assure you I did not mean to frighten you, and I didn't mean to be rude; and it is horribly awkward about the crocodile."

She smiled. His companion was disarming, engaging. He almost required protection from himself. "You did not do or say anything so very dreadful. Of course, it is awkward to have the crocodile wandering about, and a pity you have lost your pet."

"Oh, that's no consequence at all," said he. "I wish he were at the bottom of the Red Sea."

"A crocodile," said she, with another smile, "is a fresh-water creature."

The young man said nothing; he merely made an impatient gesture, as if it were dismissing the reptile to still more unsuitable depths.

And as to asking me if I were related to Mr. Bathurst, there was no harm in that, for I do not know him, have never seen him yet."

"What?" he cried, pulling up suddenly and staring at her in consternation. "You don't know him? You haven't seen him? Why this is worse than anything! This is the worst of all!"

The girl looked at him with displeasure and suspicion. "What is the matter now for your secret so far? Will you not come in?" she moved her hand in formal invitation, but voice and manner conveyed his dismissal.

"To the house?" said he in amazement. "Oh no, thank you. I am dreadfully afraid you may not know much, may not know anything about Mr. Bathurst."

This was really going too far. "I must thank you for your kindness and say good-day," said she frigidly, bowing.

"Oh, pray don't speak in that way. I would not offend you for the world; but I fear you do not know much about Mr. Bathurst, and may tell him about me, about me and Jacko!"—He paused, unable to go on.

"Well!" she asked mercilessly, and conveying grave reproach for the bare notion of making a secret of this meeting.

"Oh! well, indeed, you mustn't tell anything about it to Mr. Bathurst, or, I think, to Mrs. Bathurst either. You may well look insulted and astonished; but I assure you I am speaking only to prevent a horrid mess. You don't know that Mr. Bathurst has a nickname in the City. No! I felt you couldn't have heard. How could you? A horribly unkind and beastly, but—but they call him the Crocodile."

"What!—And your story of the escaped creature?"

"Oh, believe me, that is quite true. Indeed, indeed, every word I have told you is quite true. It was Mr. Bathurst's nickname. Jacko really got out of his basket just before I saw you first. Mr. Bathurst does not at all like his nickname, and if you told him about me, it would be most unpleasant. I don't care what you may tell him about me, but for goodness' sake, don't mention the crocodile. If you mention the crocodile, he may think—I don't know what he would be very awkward for you to say anything about a crocodile at your first meeting. The young man took off his cap.

"I'll watch you safe into the house from this side. Jacko must surely be at the other side of the wall. I shall write you to say I have recovered him, so that you may not be afraid to walk about the grounds—that is, if you will tell me to whom a letter for you should be addressed. You see, I can't write to Mr. Bathurst or his mother about Jacko; and I couldn't bear to tell my dearest friend the means of keeping you in endless dread."

"My name is Morton," she said with dignity and then, with grave politeness and bow: "Good-day, and thank you."

"And my name is George Chaytor. Good-day." He bent his bare head, and then the lawn and entered Garwood House. Then, forgetting that he still held his cap in his hand, he plodded back to the boundary wall, with eyes bent on the ground and in complete forgetfulness of the whole reptile creation.

A year back Nellie Morton had left school and gone to live with her gentle, sympathetic, mother, Mrs. Bathurst, wife of Colonel Pickering, in Deighton, a quiet town of the south. This June morning her uncle had left her at Garwood House bidding her final adieu. She was the only child of the widower, Christopher Morton, civil engineer now residing in Brazil. Mr. Bathurst was Morton's business man in London. When Colonel Pickering was ordered abroad, Mr. Bathurst's mother wrote to Brazil offering the girl a home at Garwood House.

Mr. Morton replied, thanking Mrs. Bathurst for her kindness to his motherless daughter, and saying he should be home for good in the autumn, as he had now made enough for himself, but was much better, almost as well as ever.

Nellie had never seen Mrs. Bathurst until this morning, and the interview had proved anything but reassuring to the young girl. Mrs. Bathurst was short and very stout, about seventy years of age, with dark, peering, inscrutable eyes, and a heavy portentous manner and delivery. She was not tall or thin or haggard enough for a witch. She looked a dark unweirdy sorceress.

When bluff, outspoken Colonel Pickering had resigned Nellie into the hands of her new guardian and taken his leave, the old woman said: "Child, I cannot get about easily. As soon as you have seen your room and taken off your things, come back here. I wish to talk to you." The tone was not one of request or command; but of a person accustomed to speak and find the words carried into acts as inevitably and automatically as one's limbs obey one's will.

Nellie returned from her room subdued and awed by the gloom of this vast silent house, dark throughout, despite the white sunlight of June morning shining abroad on wood and river and field.

"Take a chair, Ellen," said Mrs. Bathurst as though Miss Morton was the new housemaid, for some unwelcome reason privileged to be seated in the presence of the mistress.

"You will find this place dull. There are the grounds to walk in, and books in the library. I am practically an invalid, although I suffer from no ailment or pain. I never cross the threshold of this house. A young lady cannot walk on country roads alone."

you will be obliged to make the most of the grounds, for I can't go to the river. We entertain company. We breakfast at half-past seven, lunch at two, and dine at half-past six. My son is the soul of punctuality. He never varies a minute—never half a minute. Go, explore the grounds between this and luncheon; a bell will ring a quarter of an hour before it is ready."

Nellie felt far from comfortable as she entered the dreary, hollow, resounding house after her interview with George Chaytor. That great desolate house had oppressed her like a portentous cloud. The meeting with Mrs. Bathurst had filled her with tremulous misgivings and vague chilling fears, never even suspected before in her clear, bright, open, happy life. For the first time she now had a secret—she was to say nothing about that incident at the boundary wall. It was a poor, paltry, mean, unhandsome secret connected with the trivial circumstance of her meeting with that young man, and learning the lowering fact that her father's business man, whom she had never seen and under whose roof she now lived, was known by an uncompromising and damaging nickname.

Mrs. Bathurst and Garwood House had filled her with inexpressible fears. She deplored but could not help this. No doubts in time she should overcome these unpleasant feelings. One thing she could do, and that one thing she would do, namely, to yield Mrs. Bathurst constant and dutiful respect.

She would have repelled with scorn the idea that there was anything romantic or even interesting in her encounter with young Chaytor. Such a thought could not have occurred to her, and no one was by to suggest it. She had been startled by hearing his voice from the wall. She had been alarmed at the notion that a hideous reptile might be within reach of her; and she had been disgusted at learning that Mr. Bathurst, whom her father and aunt and uncle always spoke of with respect as the custodian and wise investor of his father's fortune, should be treated with such want of feeling and courtesy as to be named after the most loathsome of reptiles.

She remained in her room until the bell rang for luncheon. With a startling shrillness the sound tore through the weird quiet of that lonely house! She wondered that that clangorous bell peal through the corridors when the old woman was alone; or had it been set going to honor or terrify the guest? It made her shudder to think of rousing all the far-off guests of this sombre house for two lonely women.

Luncheon was served in the large dining-room, on the left of the front entrance hall. Here, notwithstanding the brightness and warmth of the day, all was dim and damp. The heavy dark oak furniture, upholstered in deep purple leather, was moist and chilly to the touch. The air of the room was moist, not with the sweet moisture of leafy trees, but with faint noxious exhalations from the banquet of hidden generations. The dark wainscoted walls seemed to stand back in sullen distance from the shrunken dining-table. The room looked out on the front lawn, and the cloth was laid at the farthest end from the curtained windows. Bright as the summer day was, it seemed as though lamps would be indispensable—they would have been regarded with pleasure by any one not morbidly enamoured of gloom.

Mrs. Bathurst was standing at the back of the room when Nellie entered. "Ha!" she said, moving across the floor with difficulty and apparent pain and great slowness, because of her unwieldy bulk. "You are punctual, child. That is right; we are very punctual in this house."

The meal was served, and the two women sat down. The parlor maid who attended the table was middle-aged, stolid, stupid-looking. For a long time no word was spoken. Nellie felt glad of this. She did not desire conversation. The desolate genius of this house had begun to work, and was filling with shadowy terrors this girl, who up to that time had lived her life unafraid.

Mrs. Bathurst ate little, and Nellie had no appetite at all. Mrs. Bathurst made no pretence of entertaining her visitor. She spoke such words as were necessary in the progress of the meal, and now and then bent her inscrutable eyes on her guest. She did not look at the girl as though she wished to see her. Those sorceress eyes never betrayed any thought or emotion. They were the outward organs of a spirit always occupied with the most subtle in the mood of heaven. A sixteen-year-old cat died at Colts Neck, N. J., the other day.

The ostrich covers from eleven to fifteen feet at every stride while running. At Americas, Manitoba, there is a peculiar species of rat. It is of several colors and hundreds of them can be seen about the streets.

Other hunters are out in force. Several of them recently came near shooting a boy who had slipped into the water. Seals when basking place one of their number on guard to give alarm in case of danger. The signal is a quick clack of the pippers on a rock. Rabbits signal with their forepaws and have regular signals and calls.

Squirrels and gophers are great scatterers of seed. They carry nuts about in their cheek-pouches and bury them here and there in the ground an inch to an inch and a half deep. They remember where a good many of them are hidden and dig them up again, but they are sure to forget some, and these have an excellent chance to sprout and grow.

Cuttlefish are useful in many ways. The bone under the skin of the back which affords the animal some sort of substitute for a skeleton, is employed for caged birds to sharpen their beaks upon. It is also ground up into powder for absorbing blots in writing, and is utilized as an antacid in medicine, and is made an important ingredient in dentifrices.

The cries of none of the animals approach more closely that of the human voice than that of seals when lamenting the loss or capture of their young. They emit a wailing and effecting cry, similar to that of a woman in distress. The cry of a wounded hare resembles that of a child in distress. Its piercing shrieks can, on a still night, be plainly heard at a distance of more than a mile.

Soulful Youth—Do you sing "For Ever and Ever." Matter of Fact Young Girl—No! I stop for meals.

An experiment of serving fried mush instead of hominy, with canvasback duck, is in progress at some of the clubs.

A Vienna correspondent telegraphs—A few days ago an old lady with snow-white hair came to a well-known Vienna lawyer and asked him to take the necessary steps for the disinterment of her sister's body, buried in the great central cemetery ten years ago. The old lady stated that she had lost her husband, and with him the means of subsistence. Ten years ago she was well off, and had her sister buried with all her jewellery, which was very valuable. She had no other means of getting out of her misery than by appealing to the dead and taking the trinkets out of the coffin where they had lain for ten years. The lawyer refused to act for her.

thing unusual in her appearance; and that if she had fainted or fallen off her chair, Mrs. Bathurst would have contented herself with summoning a servant and giving orders that Miss Morton should be carried to her room and attended to. And here very short hostess showing herself, on this very short acquaintance, able to detect a slight alteration in manner or appearance.

"I think the grounds are beautiful," said Nellie, when she had recovered from her astonishment sufficiently to be able to speak. "And you have not been to the library yet?"

"No; I reserved that pleasure for after luncheon."

"Ah! I hope you may find the library a pleasure. I don't think you took any benefit from the grounds to-day. I hope none of those audacious boating-parties landed and disturbed your walk?"

"No; I did not see any boating-party. This answer was given with extreme reluctance. It was of course truthful, but it was not the whole truth.

"You are keeping something back from me," said the old woman; "but you need not tell me. I am not interested. I do not ask you what. If I wanted to know, you would tell me, but I do not want to know."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A Fierce Pet.

During my residence in the East I had a fine young chacha given me about 3 years old. He grew rapidly, and in about a year he was a large and dangerous animal to strangers, though very tame with me. He would sit beside me, playing like a child, but let any one come into the room, man or boy, and he raised himself fully erect, every hair on his head and neck standing out, made hideous faces and showed his powerful teeth, enough to intimidate any one, but a few gentle words from me calmed him. Fearing some accident, I had a large iron chain attached to a thick ring and placed round his body, and this was fastened to a strong bolt driven into a tree.

Mr. Jean Louis, as he was called, took it all quietly, but on the first chance he got alone he broke a link in the chain with a stone in the same manner as a human being would do it, yet the links were as thick as the little finger of a man. On my return with a friend I found him up a large bread-fruit tree. The sight of a stranger so excited him he began posing us with the heavy fruit, pretty dangerous missiles when sent with so accurate an aim that we had to seek shelter to avoid them. My friend retreated precipitately, and when I was alone I soon had Jean Louis down under my control. He was always accustomed to watch for my return, when at once he set to work with impatience to examine my pockets as I always brought him a banana, guava, or other fruit.

His curiosity was great, also his imitative faculties. Once he watched me attentively make a hole with a gimlet and insert a screw with a screw-driver, and he did the same fairly well. He could drive a nail as well as I could, draw a cork from a bottle and drink wine from a glass. I believe I could have taught him almost anything save speech. I was the only male he would allow to approach, but he never showed the same disposition to a female. His ferocious looks, however, were enough to deter any woman from going near him. It was my intention to bring him with me to America, but circumstances prevented it.

A few days before I set sail Jean Louis got loose and made for the cathedral and began tearing off the claspboards. Seeing the door open he walked in and went to the pulpit, to the horror of the sexton, who then caught sight of him. He seized and tore the velvet cushions, and when an attempt was made to dialogue him he flung the bible and prayer-book at him and fairly drove him from the building.

The police were called and two men with loaded carbines shot my pet while standing erect defying them, but if I had been called I could have got him away quietly. When brought to the house and laid on the veranda he had almost a human look about him. Jean Louis now occupies a prominent place in the Museum of the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences at Port Louis, Mauritius.—[Nicholas Pike.]

About Animals.

A Quinto, N. J., man trapped 193 possums in a month.

A sixteen-year-old cat died at Colts Neck, N. J., the other day.

The ostrich covers from eleven to fifteen feet at every stride while running.

At Americas, Manitoba, there is a peculiar species of rat. It is of several colors and hundreds of them can be seen about the streets.

Other hunters are out in force. Several of them recently came near shooting a boy who had slipped into the water.

Seals when basking place one of their number on guard to give alarm in case of danger. The signal is a quick clack of the pippers on a rock. Rabbits signal with their forepaws and have regular signals and calls.

Squirrels and gophers are great scatterers of seed. They carry nuts about in their cheek-pouches and bury them here and there in the ground an inch to an inch and a half deep. They remember where a good many of them are hidden and dig them up again, but they are sure to forget some, and these have an excellent chance to sprout and grow.

Cuttlefish are useful in many ways. The bone under the skin of the back which affords the animal some sort of substitute for a skeleton, is employed for caged birds to sharpen their beaks upon. It is also ground up into powder for absorbing blots in writing, and is utilized as an antacid in medicine, and is made an important ingredient in dentifrices.

The cries of none of the animals approach more closely that of the human voice than that of seals when lamenting the loss or capture of their young. They emit a wailing and effecting cry, similar to that of a woman in distress. The cry of a wounded hare resembles that of a child in distress. Its piercing shrieks can, on a still night, be plainly heard at a distance of more than a mile.

Soulful Youth—Do you sing "For Ever and Ever." Matter of Fact Young Girl—No! I stop for meals.

An experiment of serving fried mush instead of hominy, with canvasback duck, is in progress at some of the clubs.

A Vienna correspondent telegraphs—A few days ago an old lady with snow-white hair came to a well-known Vienna lawyer and asked him to take the necessary steps for the disinterment of her sister's body, buried in the great central cemetery ten years ago. The old lady stated that she had lost her husband, and with him the means of subsistence. Ten years ago she was well off, and had her sister buried with all her jewellery, which was very valuable. She had no other means of getting out of her misery than by appealing to the dead and taking the trinkets out of the coffin where they had lain for ten years. The lawyer refused to act for her.

Hard Sleddin'.

Of a winter like this, when the snow on the road will scarcely leave tracks where you're treading. And the ox at the sled must be urged by the good. While the "shoes" in the gravel squeak under the load. New Englanders say it's hard sleddin'.

In the jostle of life that we see every day Some folks struggle on, though now dreading The same future that hope one time painted so gay. But in colors that fade and long left them to say: With me, that life's mighty hard sleddin'.

For instance, Jones died, leavin' numerous "cubs"— His widow is meekly a treading The dull journey of life, and she sighs as she rubs. (To feed four little mouths she now washes and scrubs). That's what seems to me like hard sleddin'!

Yes, she was a fine girl, and her father had wealth. (He made a display at the wedding) But he soon lost his all, and poor Jones lost his health. Then came Death, on his rounds' in his heart-chilling stealth. Took him, leavin' her but hard sleddin'.

But I've known silver snow fall for many a one. And leave a crisp mantle a spreadin' The long way from the rise to the set of life's sun. As with music of sleigh-bells fine teams they go. It's feared they were havin' fine sleddin'.

For myself I admit life has lost all its charm, And now forced to earn daily bread in "Chorin" round in the cold in the old poor-house (But, of course, my grown children don't mean me no harm). I say life's been mighty hard sleddin'.

—[By John F. Stewart.]

The Ax-Covered Grindstone.

Though bright to my heart are some scenes in my lad-time Which fond recollection presents to my view, One thing remember that brought me no glad-time: But lent to my childhood an indigo hue. How awful when sneaking away from my mother As down to the creek with my tackle I fled, To hear father's voice, "One good turn needs another: Come turn at the grindstone that hangs by the shed. The old crooked grindstone, The wobbling old grindstone, The old squeaking grindstone that hung by the shed. Ah, many's the hour I've turned it and grunted. For it was the millstone that burdened me down: When warts were to gather and squirrels to be hunted. There was always an ax or scythe to be ground. It never was oiled and was hard in the turning. "Oily grease of the elbows it needs" father said. And the handle would often slip off without warning. And instantly tumble me heels-over-head. The old dented grindstone, That worn away grindstone, It gathered no moss as it hung by the shed.

"This one," father said, "like earth turns on its axis. But comparison fails on the matter of force." I said, "Though the speed of the earth ne'er slackens, I am sure it would stop 'neath those axes of yours." The rocks they were deep in the ax or the hatchet. And father bore on till sweat dropped from his head: If I'd pause to put water on then I would catch it, he said.

"Watch the crank and keep on with the motion," he said. Oh, that old shaky grindstone, That slow-grinding grindstone, That hard-running grindstone that hung by the shed!

Yes, dear to my heart are some scenes of my childhood. The orchard, the cider, the neighbor's peach tree. The school-hours I pleasantly passed in the wildwood. And the honey I stole unbeknownst to the mother. But that circular horror, whose motion was rotary. That makes my anger all fly to my head, Add I'm willing to go and make oath to the north. That was ground dull by that stone by the shed— That lop-sided grindstone, That old dented grindstone, That confounded grindstone that hung by the shed.

Northern Winter.

"When 'mid the silvery pillared aisles of beechen Gay colored leaves had fluttered softly down. And the old oak, forlorn of summer's love, To earth had gently cast his sylvan crown. Then there were portents in the sky on earth. Of winter's imminent reign and boisterous mirth.

Some morn on rising would be seen A gleam of sun in the blue hooded heavens, A dreamy softness, as of hovering wings, And sounds all coming soft and low, and even, But soon Old Winter did unveil his face, Throw his broad mantle o'er the resting earth, And, glorying in his robes of purest white, Bid fairy elves of snow and frost to work.

The merry chime of bells rang on the air. As borne by horses that were fleet and strong. On pleasure bent, or toil with little care, Swiftly the hardy travelers sped along. That was the season when old friends did meet, And round the ample fire's cheerful blaze, Did each the other with unforgotten pleasure greet. And call up scenes of by-gone happy days.

Full scope there was for story, song, and dance In those long nights when pleasure held full sway. As whippersnappers of love and stolen glance, Made hours, as moments, brief, glad, swift away. Long lasted bluff old Winter's reign, By so we wakened once called dismal, lone and drear. But, judged by sports of glittering, icy plain, As kindred joys, the dearest of the year. And when at last the days of winter done, And violets gan to peep in budding woods, And the deep rivers, freed by glowing sun, Down to the night lakes did pour their floods, There was a freshness in the balmy air. As change complete from death to glowing life. And birds, and flowers, and all seemed wondrous fair. Radiant at such sweet ending of the strife. —[William G. Reynolds.]

Frugality Rewarded.

We have all heard of the "ruling passion strong in death," but in the lives of most women there is another moment which supplies almost as severe a test of the dominant purpose.

The New York Sun says that a farmer entered a telegraph-office in central New York, and sent this message to a woman in Canada.

"Will you be my wife? Please answer at once by telegraph."

Then he sat down and waited. No answer came. He waited till late in the evening; still no answer.

Hard Sleddin'.

Of a winter like this, when the snow on the road will scarcely leave tracks where you're treading. And the ox at the sled must be urged by the good. While the "shoes" in the gravel squeak under the load. New Englanders say it's hard sleddin'.

In the jostle of life that we see every day Some folks struggle on, though now dreading The same future that hope one time painted so gay. But in colors that fade and long left them to say: With me, that life's mighty hard sleddin'.

For instance, Jones died, leavin' numerous "cubs"— His widow is meekly a treading The dull journey of life, and she sighs as she rubs. (To feed four little mouths she now washes and scrubs). That's what seems to me like hard sleddin'!

Yes, she was a fine girl, and her father had wealth. (He made a display at the wedding) But he soon lost his all, and poor Jones lost his health. Then came Death, on his rounds' in his heart-chilling stealth. Took him, leavin' her but hard sleddin'.

But I've known silver snow fall for many a one. And leave a crisp mantle a spreadin' The long way from the rise to the set of life's sun. As with music of sleigh-bells fine teams they go. It's feared they were havin' fine sleddin'.

For myself I admit life has lost all its charm, And now forced to earn daily bread in "Chorin" round in the cold in the old poor-house (But, of course, my grown children don't mean me no harm). I say life's been mighty hard sleddin'.

—[By John F. Stewart.]

The Ax-Covered Grindstone.

Though bright to my heart are some scenes in my lad-time Which fond recollection presents to my view, One thing remember that brought me no glad-time: But lent to my childhood an indigo hue. How awful when sneaking away from my mother As down to the creek with my tackle I fled, To hear father's voice, "One good turn needs another: Come turn at the grindstone that hangs by the shed. The old crooked grindstone, The wobbling old grindstone, The old squeaking grindstone that hung by the shed. Ah, many's the hour I've turned it and grunted. For it was the millstone that burdened me down: When warts were to gather and squirrels to be hunted. There was always an ax or scythe to be ground. It never was oiled and was hard in the turning. "Oily grease of the elbows it needs" father said. And the handle would often slip off without warning. And instantly tumble me heels-over-head. The old dented grindstone, That worn away grindstone, It gathered no moss as it hung by the shed.

"This one," father said, "like earth turns on its axis. But comparison fails on the matter of force." I said, "Though the speed of the earth ne'er slackens, I am sure it would stop 'neath those axes of yours." The rocks they were deep in the ax or the hatchet. And father bore on till sweat dropped from his head: If I'd pause to put water on then I would catch it, he said.