

Merry Moments.

INTRODUCTORY.

We rejoice to be able to announce that our Composition Machine is in full working order again and will, hereafter, grind out the due supply of prose and verse in proper proportions, and of the choicest class. The young man who tampered with it last week is known, but his name is for the present suppressed for the sake of his parents, who are strictly honest, and, consequently, extremely poor.

We beg to introduce to our appreciative readers' notice a most thrilling, pathetic, humorous, bathetic and touching melodramatic story entitled: "A Distressing Dilemma," which is strictly true, the incident having happened to the inspired editor of this Department in the days when we were young, Maggie, consequently the scene is laid in that land where he spent the halcyon days of youth.

Behold the tale:

A Distressing Dilemma.

Even at this distant day I can feel a blush suffuse my cheeks whenever I think of the incident I am about to relate.

Be it known, gentle reader, that I was once hopelessly in love, the object of my nineteen or twenty year old affections being a very pretty girl and the second of six sisters, who all resided at the little sea-side town where I was spending the long vacation with a "reading party"—so called on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, for nothing was further from our thoughts than "reading"—that is, "studying." This, of course, all occurred in England, and if any one doubts my word, I'll point out the very cave where the distressing incident which I am about to mention took place, if he will pay my expenses to the spot.

I would state that I was very fond of bathing and also of exploring the many caves in the cliffs along the shore. Accordingly one morning I set off with the intention of having a good swim, and had stripped (there were no bathing machines) in a secluded spot just round a projecting bluff or promontory, at the end of which was the mouth of a large cave. Leaving my clothes on a high ledge in the cliff behind the bay where the highest tide could scarcely reach, I plunged into the water and swam several yards out to sea and then, turning, proceeded along the coast. As I was passing the promontory alluded to, some malignant fiend entered my brain and prompted me to go ashore and explore that cave. No sooner thought of than the idea was put into execution. I swam ashore and, seeing no one in sight, ran to the cave, whose mouth was only about fifteen feet from the water's edge, and, *in puris naturalibus*, proceeded to explore. The cave was very lofty, and apparently penetrated quite thirty feet into the cliff. At a distance of about ten feet from the entrance was a perpendicular wall of rock about five feet in height, in whose face a rude flight of steps had been cut; up these I sprang and found myself on a platform, quite level and running away back into the cave. At a distance of about nine feet from the edge of the platform was a well, cut down into the rock in that platform, perhaps five feet and a half deep and six feet in diameter; near the bottom and in the side of the well nearest the sea was a hole a foot or so in diameter. I jumped into this well and was wondering whatever it could have been made for when I heard voices—ye gods! feminine voices! and the owners were evidently coming into the cave. Escape was impossible! Crouching down in the well I listened in fear and trembling, hoping most devoutly that

the fair visitants would soon depart. Not so, however. Ah! I recognized one voice all too well; it was that of my adored Fanny Damsen, and all her five sisters were with her and heaven knows how many more charming females. Down I crouched in my well; I saw that the hole in the side went clear through to the wall of the platform in front, but it was too small to permit me to escape through it. There was nothing for it but to trust in fortune, but I was trusting to a broken reed.

"Maria," I heard my dear Fanny say, "I'll tell you what we'll do: we came out to picnic to-day and what do you say to pic-nicking in this cave? Now won't it be just splendid? The tide is coming in and we'll climb up on this platform where the water never goes and wait till it comes in and goes out again. Won't that be an adventure?"

"Splendid! splendid!" exclaimed all the boys in chorus, "that will be just splendid. Come on, girls, the tide is nearly up to the mouth of the cave now; we must decide soon or we shall have to stay here for some hours, whether we want to or not."

The tide! awful thought! my hair stood upright and my limbs trembled at the thought: the tide would rush through that hole in the side into the well, and what should I do? Concealment would be impossible, but, hoping against hope, I made myself as small as possible, and thrusting my legs into the side hole, sat in that position as low down in the well as I could get. I trusted that I might not be discovered, but oh! how futile was such a hope!

I heard the girls mount the steps and seat themselves on the platform near the edge, and then, my stars! what a chattering commenced. Talk about a flock of parrots or anything else! Tut, tut! nothing could compare with the way those tongues rattled. I heard my name mentioned, too, pretty freely, and some of the remarks about me were not at all flattering; some were.

So far all had gone well, but now the tide was creeping into that hole; no efforts of mine could keep the water out. I had absolutely nothing to stop the hole with but my head and that didn't fit, and I didn't care to drown that way. In flowed the water, steadily, stealthily, and as it rose, I did likewise, till in no very great while I was compelled to allow my head to appear above the brink of the well. The girls had their backs towards me, and I escaped immediate detection, but a little brute of a dog they had with them spied me out and set up a terrific barking at the apparition. I ducked down, but the water was fully three feet deep in the well and I was forced to appear above the platform once more.

"I wonder what Flossy's barking at," I heard Miss Jemima Simpson exclaim; "let's go and see;—Oh! o-o-o-o oh!" and such a series of yells, shrieks and squawls as assailed my ears I never heard before or since. Miss Simpson caught sight of my head and naked shoulders and, pointing me out to the rest, gave her lungs full play in the most awful yells I ever heard.

There was no escape for the fair ones, however; if they had me a prisoner, the tide had them in the same fix. At length I ventured to address them:

"Ladies," I said, "I-I-it really isn't my fault—"

"Oh!" screamed Fanny—my Fanny—"if it isn't Mr. Thistleby," and she began to yell. "Yes, ladies," I went on, "it is Mr. Thistleby, but it is an accident. Ladies, if I stay in this hole I shall either drown or catch my death of cold and—"

"Then come out," suggested Miss Polly Bimbleton.

"But, ladies, I—that is—I'm not—you

know—I've—I've no clothes on. Ladies, I'm absolutely stark naked. Pity me, ladies, and throw me an umbrella or a parasol; then, I implore you, turn round with your faces to the side of the cave and I will dash past you and escape. Thank you," I said, as a parasol—my Fanny's parasol—was thrown towards me. I grasped it and opening it, took a brief glance at the feminine assembly; they were facing the wall like so many convicts in a military prison. Now was my time. I drew myself out of the well and made a desperate dash for freedom. Like a meteor I darted across the intervening space and sprang with a loud whoop, parasol and all, into the water, and as I vanished round the corner of the promontory, my ears were assailed by a perfect torrent of feminine laughter from the cave which I had left.

I could not face dear Fanny Damsen again. I have her parasol yet.

The Rustic's Fate

(Air—"Excelsior.")

The shades of night were falling fast
As through King Street a youth thus passed,
A youth who bore a rustic mien
And in his locks were hayseeds seen.
Gee-whoo! Haw buck!

He passed along and made a stop
Before a tall blue-coated cop,
And asked him wherewith would he be
For him to stay o'er-night and rest.
Gilt sup, that!

The peeler eyed the rustic well
And steered him to a fine hotel,
A modern, first-class hotel,
With gas and electric bells.
(Rustic House: see adv.)

Into the inn the hawbuck sped,
Demanding supper and a bed:
"Where is your baggage?" "None." "That so?"
Pay in advance or out you go.
Good scheme: heigho!

The rustic paid his fare and said,
"Show me the room where is my bed."
The host the bell-boy led him to;
The spring was touched and up he flew.
Excelsior!

It was a gorgeous room, I ween,
Where modern capers all were seen:
Gas brackets and electric bells
And windows closed to keep in smells.
Faugh! Pah! Fore-paugh!

He viewed his room and went downstairs
To rid himself of hungry cares.
He cleared the table in a trice
And said "These city folks be nice,
I saw; gee-haw!"

He drank five cups of ten cent tea
And four of thirty cent coffee.
He ate three pies and stowed away
Far more than I should like to say.
Good appetite.

Then, having eaten all there was,
He said, "I'll go to bed to-day."
There's nothing else that I can do,
So up the host once more he flew.
Excelsior!

He hauled him off his cow-hide boots
And then his best of home-spun suits.
His little rustic prayers he said;
Blew out the gas and went to bed.
Poof, puff! Snore, snore!

There in the morning cold and grey
In all his rural beauty lay
The poor young fellow in his bed:
Smiling and beautiful—but dead!
Sniffle, sniffle.

The coroner's quest was held because
'Twas right, and this the verdict was:
"We find his death has come to pass
Because he would blow out the gas."
Gee-whoo! Excelsior!

Who wants eternal sunshine or shadow?
Who would fix forever the cloud-work of an
autumn sunset, or hang over him an everlasting moonlight?

A grateful beast will stand upon record
against those that, in their prosperity forget
their friends that to their loss and hazard
stood by and succoured them in their
adversity.

Retribution is one of 'no grand principles
in the Divine administration of human
affairs. There is every where the workings
of the everlasting law of retributtal. Man always
gets as he gives.

Sympathy, without active energy, may
degenerate into weak sentimentalism; without
intelligence, it may produce much evil;
without sense of responsibility and duty,
it may be a mere self-indulgent impulse.

—For Truth.

Glints of Home Life.

Professor Lintner was right in advising the colonization of the "Coccinella," or lady-bug, as they find their natural food in the aphids that infest house plants, laying their eggs on the leaves, the larva when hatched devouring great numbers of the plant enemies.

At this time of the year they are often found, and if children are taught to take them to the house plants, they will be of benefit, and well repay a little close observation. I think all children are better for having a love of flowers turned to practical use in the care of them, and the influence is surely for good. Also, to learn the habits of insects, and the lesser living creatures that are about their homes, for they are born naturalists generally and fond of investigation.

The argus eyes of the children discover the advent of the crow, and announce the arrival of a "whole flock." I have had ample evidence that this bird does a great deal of good at this season, eating larvae of insects that infest trees, and when the first furrows are turned, how eagerly they follow the farmer in search of grubs, going up close to the plow to obtain them.

We tried to-day the advice given in TRUTH regarding tar smoke, for the benefit of several members of our family suffering from severe colds and bronchial affections. There is no doubt it is a relief after the burning sensation goes out of the throat caused by the smoke that filled the house penetrating into every corner of it. The result was good, and they intended to continue it, and note the effect. I have firm faith in pine tar and the value of living among these trees, for, as Whittier sings:

"Our pines are trees of healing."

As the days grow warmer let the children breathe the out-door air as much as possible. Well wrapped up they will be better than if coddled beside the stove. But the feet must be dry particularly, and if the chest is weak a newspaper pinned over it, under the jacket, is a great protection.

And so gradually and serenely the seasons change, the sun rises and sets as ever, while news of "wars and rumors of wars" abound everywhere. Let us have faith and trust in our quiet homes, hoping for the best, and believing that the Guiding Hand rules the universe and "the Lord reigneth."

ANNIE L. JACK.

A Mother's Love

Honor the dear old mother. Time has scattered snowy flakes on her brows, and plowed deep furrows on her cheeks, but is she not sweet and beautiful now? The lips are thin and shrunken, but those are the lips that have kissed many a hot tear from childish cheeks, and they are the sweetest lips in the world; the eye is dim, yet it glows with the soft radiance that never can fade. Ah, yes, she is a dear old mother. The sands of life are nearly run out, but, feeble as she is, she will go further and reach down lower for you than any other person on earth. You cannot enter a prison whose bars keep her out. You cannot mount a scaffold too high for her to reach, that she may kiss and bless you in evidence of her deathless love when the world shall despise and forsake you, when it leaves you by the wayside to perish unnoticed; the dear old mother will gather you in her arms and carry you to her home, and tell you of all your virtues until you almost forget that your soul is disfigured by vices. Love her tenderly and cheer her declining years with holy devotion.—T. J. RYAN.

Moderation may be considered as a tree of which the root is contentment and the fruit repose.

The nerve which never relaxes, the eye which never blanches, the thought which never wanders—these are the masters of victory.