

THE ENGAGED RING.

BY E. CLAYTON.

And so they say that I shall be Belle of the coming ball, Where all are bright and fair to see— The loveliest of all.

For this they loop my costly dress, And braid and deck my hair; Bright flowers in the service press, And jewels rich and rare.

Many will turn when I appear, The vision fair to see— Low praise be whispered in my ear, Warm glances thrown at me.

Yet memory with a sudden pain Comes, better thoughts to bring! I need to look at thee again, Thou simple little ring.

Ah! little hoop of gold and brass, Given by Frank to me, Most emblem of that heart so true, Now far beyond the sea.

And in the deep depths of my heart A casket sure shall be, Where gems he'll prize are kept apart— Love, Faith, and Constancy.

HOW A LAW SUIT WAS ENDED.

Mr. Popkins was a bachelor. I mention this fact with an ill-due reverence for the name—and sympathy for the condition. He was well-to-do in the world, if owning a fine farm and being plaintiff in a law suit is any criterion. Aside from Mr. Popkins' misfortune in being a bachelor, he had one fault—a general aversion to female society and a particular aversion to Miss Sallie Hopkina, the defendant in the above named law suit.

Now, be it known, that though Miss Sallie's name was put down on the list of O. Mm's, (Old Meas), she was the roundest, costliest, dimpled checked spinster that ever lived in Lincoln. She had the softest brown eyes with a trick of looking down and peeping under the lashes, prettily bewildering, and her hair that waved and shone in the sunlight, in such a manner that a susceptible lady like you and I, would have felt an irresistible desire to have sole ownership of the "nut brown locks."

But, however fascinating Miss Sallie was to the sex in general, as I have said, between her and Mr. Popkins there was a deadly feud; and the cause of all the trouble was a meadow, spreading fair and wide between Miss Sallie's and Mr. Popkins' farm.

Now, the truth of the matter was this: The meadow justly belonged to Mr. Popkins, but instead of going to Miss Sallie and frankly stating the case he must serve a process of law, Miss Sallie flew all to pieces, and declared she would maintain her rights at any cost.

I am confident from the manner in which the whole thing ended, that had Mr. Popkins gone to act himself, she would have relinquished it gracefully, but a woman has a mortal horror of being forced to do anything. Tie a thread round their necks, feed them sugar plums, and you can lead them to the jumping off place, go to driving them, and for obstinacy, they will beat Jack Iwan's mare in the Holy Land all to pieces.

When Miss Sallie met Mr. Popkins on the street, her nose was decidedly "retoured," and Mr. Popkins looked like an automaton Cardiff gambler. The neighbors were forced to take part in the case, but which invitations, those who invited Mr. Popkins were obliged to omit Miss Sallie, and vice-versa.

In the meantime the law spit "dragged its slow length along," from session to session, from term to term, until Popkins vs. Hopkins was as familiar as A, B, C. But fate had taken in hands the destiny of these two obstinate individuals, and soon brought matters to a most satisfactory conclusion, although the unconscious mediator was rather a burlesque on the "high tragedy" daily enacted.

There lived close to these belligerents, a good-natured old man, nearly as deaf as a post, who had the greatest faculty of blundering on unfortunate facts of any individual known either in ancient or modern history.

He never heard anything correctly, and it was an utter impossibility to try and explain, you would certainly find yourself floundering about in a perfect slough of despair.

Miss Sallie and Mr. Popkins had received notice that their case would come up for a final hearing, in Harrow, on the Tuesday of next week. Miss Sallie concluded to take the stage, Uncle Ben Dropper, our dear friend, had business a little distance on the road, and he would take the stage too, and Mr. Popkins' saddle horse fell sick just as he was needed, and no time for an other arrangement, so he must take the same conveyance.

Miss Sallie came floating down to the gate with white ribbons and bows, and dainty dress, sufficient to bewilder a man with as stony a heart as the Sphinx, and saw, approaching from the opposite side, her foe in immaculate broadcloth, and shirtfront. For a moment the

color flashed to her cheek, and she half-resolved to go back, but to be outdone by a man, and he a Popkins, was not to be thought of. So she stepped in the coach with an air of sixteen Queen Victorias, elevating her head until it made an acute angle with her nose, and then became sublimely unconscious of anyone's presence. Mr. Popkins seated himself as though he had swallowed a whole foundry, and had his pockets full of eggs for desert. Just then came Uncle Ben, puffing and blowing, utterly unconscious of the oaths of the impatient "Jehu."

"Good morning, Miss Sallie," said he, carelessly seating himself beside her. "Good morning, Mr. Popkins. Where might you be going, and what for?"

"To Harrow," said Mr. Popkins, in his most polite manner, answering the first question and ignoring the last.

"Du tell!" and the round face fairly glowed with placid surprise.—"Going to Marry?" Well, I told Hester last night that was the best way to settle the suit after all. There ain't a more

dauling in an occasional chuckle and knowing glance at Mr. Popkins, but at this moment he saw he had arrived at his destination, and wishing his two victims "much happiness" he left them.

The human heart is a strange affair, to say the least of it. Had any one advised Mr. Popkins to marry Miss Sallie, he would have rejected the idea immediately, and she herself would have taken it as an insult, but the totally unexpected manner in which the matter had been brought up made altogether a different affair of it. He stole a glance at Miss Sallie. Her face was still turned away, and she was apparently studying nature. She was pretty Mr. Popkins could not deny that. What if—if—and his heart gave a tremendous bound. What a fool he had been all this time! He must try at any rate, and risk a repulse. So without any more hesitation, for our hero was brave, he took Uncle Ben's seat and said quietly:

"Miss Sallie."

The face turned the eighteenth part of a inch



"GEMS RE'LL PRIZE."

capable girl anywhere than Sallie, and I am glad you've found it out. And Mr. Popkins is wonderful clever," turning to Sallie, and instead of being two farms and a law suit, there need only be one. Law bless me!" rubbing his hands with increased satisfaction, "if it ain't a tip top arrangement!"

Mr. Popkins clatched at his throat as though he were choking to death, and made spasmodic efforts to utter a word of explanation, but his tongue seemed palsied and failed him utterly in this emergency. Miss Sallie with a face of the deepest rose color, placed her hand to her mouth and shouting, so as to startle the horses, said:

"I am going to see Mr. Stiles on business."

Oh, day of blunders! Mr. Stiles was her lawyer, but the unfortunate girl was unaware that a Presbyterian minister had the same delightful cognomen.

"Mr. Stiles, indeed," said our friend. "Well, I've heard him well spoken of, but I never expected you, Sallie, a Baptist, to be married by any one but a minister in your own church, but I suppose you gave way to Mr. Popkins, and I think it shows a downright good disposition."

Miss Sallie gave up in despair, and looked fixedly out of the window, while Mr. Popkins' lips moved occasionally, as though he were saying, "Water: water!" But the unconscious cause of this turmoil sat serene and happy, in-

towards him. Not much encouragement, but a little.

"Miss Sallie," he repeated, "I've been a fool and a brute."

Oh wise Mr. Popkins! He had started on the direct road to a woman's heart. Either from contrariness or a sense of justice they always take the opposite side. Miss S. made up her mind from this moment that he was a gentleman and a second Solomon, and she turned her face completely round.

"Do you think," continued he, "that we can settle this law suit in the sensible manner suggested by Uncle Ben? I do love you, Miss Sallie, and by George! I believe I've loved you all the time and never knew it until to-day."

Miss Sallie was completely vanquished, and the answer, although whispered, was heard by Mr. Popkins above the noise of the wheels, and the cracking of the driver's whip.

The suit of Popkins vs. Hopkins was dismissed that day. The Baptist minister got a fee, and the people are firmly convinced that Mr. and Mrs. Popkins are the best hands in the world to keep a secret.

A disgusted Danburian wants to know, if a woman was designed to be the equal of man, why it is she can't whistle.

CURIOSITIES OF THE PIANO TRADE.

The New York correspondent of the Cincinnati Gazette makes the following revelations in connection with the piano trade of that city:—

I presume, the business that pays more commissions than any other is that of making and selling pianos. In the first place each large establishment usually keeps a man to write its advertisements and look after its business relations with the press and advertising mediums generally. One manufacturer, a shrewd foreigner, is understood to employ one of the musical critics, who not only prepares pamphlets and advertisements, but devotes his criticisms as far as possible to the interests of his master. Then, most of the distinguished pianists who come here are each paid by some one of the manufacturers to tout for his piano. If you look at the programme of these piano concerts and recitals, you will generally see a line announcing "the Muggins piano is exclusively used at this concert, and recommended by Herr Ivorypounder." One pianist now in this country was brought here by a piano-maker who guaranteed forty thousand dollars for a six months' tour; and another foreign pianist, now here, has a similar guarantee of twenty thousand. It is safe to say that half the noted foreign pianists are imported by the piano-makers, and that half the rest are engaged and subsidised by the makers soon after they get here. Then, most of the concert tours are backed by the piano men, and I know several instances in which they have been directly organized by them. They may lose money on the tour itself, but they make money out of the extra sales of pianos. Then they are obliged to pay commissions to music stores and to music teachers who recommend their wares and effect sales, and frequently to persons totally unconnected with musical matters, such as upholsterers, carpenters and friends of the families where they are bought. I know an instance wherein a man who was paying attention to a young lady received two hundred and fifty dollars from a piano dealer for turning the attention of the fair one from the instrument of Stiggins to that of Wiggins. He accompanied her to the store where she made her purchase; her papa sent his cheque next morning, and in the afternoon her dear Charles Augustus called for and obtained his commission. And he is not the only society man by a long way who makes something out of the piano dealers.

Last winter the daughter of a wealthy citizen wanted a piano, and the wealthy citizen told her to select one. The house was undergoing some repairs and alterations, and the carpenters and upholsterers were at work there. Maria was taking music lessons, and appealed to her teacher for advice; the latter recommended a Muggins, and in the course of a week or so the piano was bought and sent home. The teacher was suddenly called out of town and did not visit Muggins until ten or twelve days after the purchase. When he asked for his commission Muggins told him that it was already paid.

"To whom?" was the question with emphasis of astonishment.

"To Repe & Co., upholsterers."

"What right had they to it?"

"They came here next day after the piano was sent home and said they were upholstering the house and were consulted about a piano. They recommended mine as specially adapted to the house, and said it was bought through their influence. I paid them the commission, since then the carpenters have been here, and now you make the third applicant. I am sorry it has happened so, but take a cheque for fifty dollars, and whenever you influence another sale, let me know at once."

The music teacher was badly sold, as it afterwards turned out that Repe & Co. did not know a word about the piano till they saw it in the house. Had he been as sharp as some others, he would have notified each of the piano makers, as soon as Maria broached the subject, that he was trying to sell his piano, and then, no matter whose make she selected, he would have obtained his honestly-earned commission.—Pianos.

An old fellow who is noted up town for his stutering, as well as for his shrewdness in making a bargain, stopped at a grocery and inquired: "How m-m-many t-t-turkeys have you g-g-got?" "Eight, sir," replied the grocer. "T-t-tough or t-t-tender?" "Somewhat tender, and some tough," was the reply. "I k-keep b-boarders," said the new customer. "P-pick out the t-t-tough or t-t-tender ones, if you p-p-p-please." The delighted grocer very willingly complied with the unusual request, and said, in his politest tones: "These are the tough ones, sir." Upon which the customer coolly put his hand upon the remaining four, and exclaimed: "I'll t-t-take th-th-these."

WITCH?—Kate Stanton, in her lecture on "The Loves of Great Men," asserts that the planets revolve around the sun by the influence of love, like a child revolves about his parent. When the writer was a boy, he used to revolve around his parent a good deal, and may have been incited thereto by love, but to an unprejudiced observer it looked powerfully like a trunk strap.—Dunbury News.

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