

## WINGED WORDS.



I HAD come to the end of a brilliant New York season, had attended dances and dinners night after night, prolonging each day's festivity far into the next day. Salads, champagne, flirting and late hours had done their evil work upon me, when one grey morning last April, beside my uneasy couch in the Hotel Alpha, stood—not an avenging spirit—but a good fairy. Her expression though kindly was educational, as if on her travels she registered from Boston. With startled nerves I muttered, "Thy mission pray?" The fairy said "Thou shalt hear and see." "Know first that thy lips have offended and that words are things, and living things, behold!"

Whereupon, taking her position near my unabridged Webster, thrice she waved her wand. Slowly the book's heavy lid lifted, its leaves rustled, and a troop of elves fell to the floor. Their expressions clearly had once been decided. They had plainly been bad and good, refined and repellent, but whatever their original characteristics had been, all expression was overpowered in that of dire weariness. Their heads drooped, their arms hung limply down, their dull eyes were almost shut.

"Elves, what are you?" asked the fairy, with such authority as a gentle schoolmistress might assume.

They murmured "We are Horrid, Nice, Elegant, Monstrous, Awful, Recherche, Lovely, Esthetic, Artistic and Company." "We are some of the beings usually invisible to human kind, whose qualities mortals syllable in their speech." "We are the sadly overworked elements of fashionable vocabularies, we are pressed into all sorts of service where we have no business and we want a rest."

Just here Horrid, Nice and Company, yawned and blinked, with an unmeaning gaze that betokened little else than dreary fatigue.

Turning to me the fairy said, "Behold fashionable one, distress you have helped to make." Then gracefully waving her wand, the elves in response slowly climbed back into the dictionary,—but I noticed that its lid remained open. After some anxious moments of expectancy, the fairy again described volutes and spirals in the air circumambient to Webster, but this time her exertions were both protracted and severe. Finally in obedience to her bidding a troop of elves of a new order displayed themselves on my carpet. They were all judicial in aspect, ruminative, thoughtful; yet withal, every one of them showed the inanition which follows utter lack of exercise. Not weariness but disease had made their muscles feeble, they seemed stolid, lethargic, and through plainly knit to do good work, manifestly had for years never been given work to do. When they had somewhat recovered from their effort in reaching the carpet, in reply to the fairy they said:

"We are Moderately, Proportionately, Approximately, Probably, Passably, Comparatively and Company." "We are of the adverbial race, ours is the mission of measure and proportion, and though qualified to qualify, the application mortals demand of our brethren the adjectives, we are never called upon, and are fast passing

out of the memories of men." "It is not fair." "We're not Synonyms, we are not Technical Terms, nor Obsolete Polysyllables put in dictionaries to make 'em big and meet competition." "We are honest words, of good Latin and Saxon stock, just as valuable as any other parts of speech, and if we are withdrawn from circulation, the American tongue will be just that much poorer."

But the toil of so lengthy a plaint was too much for the elves, who canted over, gasped and had to be tenderly lifted back into Webster by their fairy mistress. When she had shut the great book at last, she turned to me and with reproachful gaze remarked,—

"Mortal, I am the fay of Just Utterance." "Wouldst welcome the fate of the dumb?" "Thou wouldst not." "Then know that when thou neglectest to fashion with thy lips words chosen with discrimination, words to match worthy thought, thou so far chooseth dumbness by losing the true gift of speech." "Let not mine enemy, the simpering sprite of Small Talk allure thee from rightful allegiance to me, or I shall invoke powers of Air and Anthracite and afflict thee with causes of inarticulateness for which laryngology hath no remedy." Then the fairy vanished. Since which vanishment my friends have often said among themselves: "How silent Grist is now!"

G. GRIST.

## A JOINT-STOCK HOST.

SCENE.—*Directors' room of the Baldwinsville Hotel Company (limited). Mr. Watkins meets his directors. Directors fat and frowning. Mr. Watkins, standing, bespectacled and meek.*

*Mr. Watkins.*—"Mr. Chairman, may I purchase a new mat for the dining-room?"

*Mr. Chairman McCrosky.*—"What do you want of a new mat, the mat there will do fine till next season."

*Mr. Watkins.*—"Well gentlemen, can I have an ice-pitcher for the parlor?"

*Mr. Reuben Rail.*—"There are lots of jugs in the pantry, use one of them."

*Mr. Peleg Plummer.*—"Although sir, the house is more expensively managed than ever, there's more complaint of it; we are inclined to think too, sir, that your attenuated frame is rather a bad advertisement for our table."

*Mr. Watkins.*—"Please, Mr. Plummer, what can you expect when my Board don't agree with me!"

## RIME OF THE MODERN MARINER.

A CERTAIN young man from Aurora  
Having got his vacation, he swore a  
Great oath that he'd go  
'Cross the lake for a row,  
And he did—on the handsome *Chicora*.



July 21, '86.

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