



The Three Friends.

Once upon a time a fine, tall, straight tree grew on the edge of a beautiful wood. The tree was so tall that its top branches reached out over the heads of all its neighbors. One morning three friends were talking together under the tree: a fat green frog, a frisky gray squirrel, and a little brown thrush whose wings were not strong enough to fly.

"Oh, my!" said the little brown thrush looking up into the green branches, "wouldn't it be fine if we could all live up among those shiny green leaves?"

"Well, yes it might," said the gray squirrel, "but I'm pretty well contented where I am. I can gather plenty of nuts down here and store them away without much trouble. If I lived in one of those high branches it would take me twice as long to get to my nest and it would mean a great deal more work. I think I'd just as soon stay where I am."

"Well, for my part," croaked the frog, "I don't believe in doing any more than you have to do. I can get enough bugs and insects down here. I really can't see any sense in going higher."

"Oh, but think how many lovely things you can see up there, and how much more you could hear," said the little brown thrush, "and I shouldn't wonder a bit if you could do more when you are up higher. I'm going to try to get up just as high as I can."

"Oh, ho!" laughed the squirrel, "How do you expect to get up? You can't fly yet and you can't climb the way I can. What's the sense in going to all that work? I say it's foolish."

"And so do I," croaked the frog. "Can't you see enough and hear enough and do enough down here in the grass? You don't find me overworking and doing any more than I absolutely have to do." And with that the frog settled himself in the grass at the roots of the tree; and there he stayed.

But the little brown thrush began right away to learn to fly. It was hard at first, and she had to try many times before she was able to reach even the first branch. But one day she did reach it. It was more beautiful

ful than she had dreamed, and when she had found out all the lovely things about it she called down her two friends and begged them to come up and share her pleasure. The green frog flatly refused to leave his grassy home, but the gray squirrel, after thinking it over, decided to go. He climbed up the tall trunk to the first branch and found it every bit as delightful as the little thrush had said; so then and there he decided to stay. As soon as he had rested, he went to work to make his nest. But the little thrush didn't stop at the first branch. Each day she kept going a little higher, and each day she kept growing a little stronger, and each day she kept finding something new and beautiful that the higher branches had to offer, and each day she begged the squirrel to follow her. "Oh, if you would only come up here," she would say, "I'm sure you would be happier; why, I am getting stronger every day; I feel as if something wonderful were going to happen to me."

"Oh, I don't think anything very wonderful can happen to you," called back the squirrel. "You are only a little brown bird and about all you'll ever do will be to fly and chirp a little. Please don't bother me any more with your coaxing. I'm getting quite tired of it, and besides I've fully made up my mind to stay right here!" After that the little thrush stopped coaxing the squirrel and spent all her time and strength in trying to reach the top of the tree.

One spring morning she reached it—the very tip-top of the big tree—and oh, what a glorious moment! Her little heart almost burst with the joy of it all as she looked out over the sun-lit tree tops and spires and up into the blue sky. Oh, if she could only tell someone about it, and then, the wonderful thing happened, for just as she opened her mouth to pour out one of the sweetest bird songs the world has ever heard!

Grace and Charlie on their way to school stopped to listen. "Oh, look!" cried Charlie, "the bird is on the very tip-top of the big tree!" "Oh I see it!" called Grace. "Doesn't it sound as if it were telling us how beautiful it is away up there?"

Official Kisses.

M. Millerand has announced that he will no longer embrace recipients of the Legion of Honor when decorating them.

Other high functionaries in France will doubtless follow suit, and the practice of official kissing will soon be as obsolete there as it is (except in the case of a newly-elected mayor, somewhere or other) in England and Canada.

George IV. seems to have been the last of our monarchs to indulge in it. When Wellington, Lord Lyndhurst, and Sir Robert Peel resigned after the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Bill, the King, says Charles Greville, "gave them a salute on each cheek, and they returned to London to tell their colleagues."

At one time the English were far more given to promiscuous kissing than other nations. Nicholas de Bethlen, who visited England in 1683, notes how he and his brother "behaved very rudely on one occasion, being unaware that it was customary in England to kiss the corner of the mouth of ladies instead of shaking hands, as we do in Hungary. We were invited to dine at the house of a gentleman of high rank, and found his wife and three

Can Laugh at Fate.

Consider yourself that there is no luck or fate which can permanently down you—and there is no destiny which can keep you floored, no fate which can conquer a resolute soul. There is something in you that can laugh at fate, that can defy destiny, something in you that is bigger than everything outside of you.

daughters (one of them married) ready to receive us.

"We kissed the girls, but not the married ladies, and thereby greatly offended the latter. Duval apologized for our blunder, and told us that when saluting we must always kiss the senior lady first and leave the girls to the last."

London will hold an exposition in 1923 to demonstrate the natural resources and the inventive and manufacturing possibilities of the British Empire.

One Year—445 Days

The financial year of the British Exchequer ends on the last day of March. This is a curious survival of the old style of reckoning time, for up to and including the year 1751, the English year did not begin on January 1st as it does now, but on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25th.

This was the more peculiar because Scotland had adopted the present New Year's Day a century and a half earlier—namely, in the year 1600.

To-day calendar reform is very much in the air. The principal idea is to give Easter a fixed date. And to arrange the months so that the year shall always begin upon the same day of the week, and consequently every date throughout the year coincide with a certain day of the week.

The method of reckoning time has always been more or less of a trouble to the priests or men of science of every civilization.

Naturally, the first standard fixed upon was the lunar month—that is the period of about twenty-nine and a half days which elapses between one new moon and the next.

Twelve of these lunar months seemed to correspond in length to the four seasons—spring, summer, autumn and winter. And so the year was fixed at 354 days.

Hence the ancients soon found that things were getting badly mixed, and that the seasons did not correspond to the months. In the course of ten years they were over three months wrong.

Wine on the Lips.

We know that the old Romans kissed, not, however, for the sake of love, but to find out "if the wife had been drinking wine in the master's absence." And it is on record that the ancient Greeks made their wives eat onions whenever they were going home, realizing that the kiss of Venus herself would be distasteful with a flavor of garlic hanging about her delicate lips.

Ambassadors, differing in this respect from mere ministers plenipotentiary, represent not alone their government and their nation, but also in a much more personal sense the rulers of their native land, no matter whether the supreme power is derived from royal inheritance or popular election. Ambassador J. J. Jusserand has for nearly twenty years served as the envoy of France, and has won the gratitude of the two great sister republics and old-time allies as the principal bond of union and of sympathetic understanding between them.

But he is also the representative of President Millerand, and obliged to conform to his views, and to follow his cue in the matter of etiquette. Guided by the example of the head of the French nation, M. Jusserand will from now on dispense with the bestowal of the ceremonial accolade upon those whom he is called upon by his government to invest with the insignia of the Order of the Legion of Honor.

Example by Edward VII.

In abolishing ceremonial osculation President Millerand may be said to have taken a leaf out of the book of that extremely up-to-date and sensible

ABOLITION OF CEREMONIAL KISS

PRESIDENT OF FRANCE STARTS REFORM.

Millerand Has Taken a Leaf Out of the Book of Our Late King Edward VII.

President Millerand of France inaugurated with the new year an epoch-making and revolutionary reform, which is of a nature to commend itself to the English-speaking people in all corners of the world. For he decreed the abolition of the ceremonial kiss as part and parcel of official etiquette.

Until this innovation it had been incumbent upon the Chief Executive to bestow a kiss upon every man whom he invests with the Order of the Legion of Honor, upon the prize winners at the scholastic commencement exercises at which he may be present, upon the girls and young women who present him with flowers at public receptions, and upon the small boys who address to him verses of welcome. He is supposed to embrace foreign personages whom he may visit or entertain in his official capacity. He is even expected to impress a chaste salute upon the cheeks of any potential Mayor or vineyard-faced and attenuated provincial dignitary who may declaim from typewritten notes a patriotic oration, the kiss being supposed to constitute a recognition of the sentiments enunciated, rather than a tribute to the doubtful pulchritude of the speaker.

Thousands of Kisses.

Although only a few months have elapsed since the elevation of Alexandre Millerand to the Presidency of the republic, he has been required by traditional and time-honored rules of etiquette relating to his high office to bestow many thousands of ceremonial kisses, mostly upon the unwhitening bearded and unbarbed cheeks of members of the masculine persuasion. He does not like it.

He has shown no hesitation about his distaste for this purely ceremonial form of osculation. He has, indeed, declined to adhere any longer to the custom. He has decreed its abolition, and henceforth he will give an expression of his thanks, of his good will and of his regard by means of a good, honest, wholesome and manly handshake in lieu of a kiss.

Edward VII. was more fortunate. He had his way, and on the occasion of his coronation he studiously refrained from kissing either the peers or the bishops, and his son and successor, King George V., followed his example ten years ago, on the occasion of his coronation in Westminster Abbey.

There are certain forms of ceremonial kiss, however, which neither the present ruler of Great Britain nor yet the late King ever attempted to abolish. Thus archbishops and bishops of the Church of England, ambassadors and ministers plenipotentiary, Cabinet officers and the great dignitaries of the court and the state kiss the hand of the sovereign at the audience in which he confers on them their appointment, and the fact that they have "kissed hands on appointment" is always recorded in the royal court circular and in the ancient London Gazette.

Ceremonial kissing dates back from the earliest times. Long prior to the Christian era those initiated into the blue-stained mysteries kissed each other in token of brotherhood and of equal knowledge, and so did the early Christians at the agapes, or love feasts. But in the fourth century the council of Carthage found it necessary to forbid all religious or ceremonial kissing, especially osculation, in church, because it tended to "unedifying indecorum."

ruler, the late Edward VII. of Great Britain. Until the latter's accession, not only each peeress of the realm, but also every daughter of a peer, was entitled to a ceremonial kiss from the sovereign on presentation at court.

At Dublin Castle the Viceroy, as Lord Lieutenant of the monarch, was required by etiquette to accord a similar salutation to every woman presented, no matter whether young or aged, married or single, homely or beautiful. Fortunately, the vast majority of the daughters of Erin are extremely attractive, so the Viceroy seldom complained.

King Edward did not favor indiscriminate osculation. He abolished the many-hundred-year-old custom of kissing peeresses of the realm and their daughters on presentation, and naturally the viceregal court at Dublin was compelled to follow suit.

It was this same monarch who finally did away with the ancient custom which required the sovereign on the occasion of his coronation in Westminster Abbey to bestow a kiss on every peer, spiritual or temporal, when making homage.

Definiteness Needed in Forest Contracts.

The more general appreciation by governmental forestry branches of the advantage of administering our timber lands along lines of scientific forestry practice should be an incentive to foresters to promote the adoption of more specific terms than heretofore customary in descriptions of trees or timber. In the past, no little confusion has resulted in different interpretations being placed upon the nomenclature adopted in forest legislation; it would, therefore, be of advantage that a standard terminology be followed.

A matter under discussion at present is as to whether licenses issued but a few years ago, in which a condition appeared reserving "pine," included jack pine or only white and red pine. More recent forest legislation included a classification of "spruce and other soft woods." "Soft woods" is, of course, a very indefinite term, and may mean anything. With the high prices of all kinds of timber this broad classification has become a very live problem, one in which both the public and the timber trade are intensely interested.

The "pine" controversy has demonstrated that while a certain designation may seem sufficiently specific to define what is presently intended, with changing conditions the use later of a certain timber species for some industrial purpose may render the term ambiguous. For instance, with the increasing use of jack pine for pulpwood purposes, a pulpwood concession which contained a restriction reserving "pine" would very largely reduce the amount of pulpwood available, if the interpretation of "pine" were to include jack pine.

To overcome what may at any time become an acute situation, more definite names should be applied to timber species. Undoubtedly, the most satisfactory terminology to be used in legislation would be the recognized botanical names, since common names are too often varied by local conditions.

The Dominion Forestry Branch has published a pamphlet "Native Trees of Canada," the nomenclature adopted therein might with advantage be followed as a standard throughout Canada.

Buried in Lava.

In the valley where stands the City of Mexico, and almost in the outskirts of that metropolis, the ancient bones of human beings have been found beneath a bed of lava.

The discovery is rather exciting. Many years ago a considerable sensation was caused by the alleged finding of human remains beneath a lava bed in California, under conditions which seemed to indicate that they were of almost unbelievable antiquity; but, unfortunately, the affair proved to be a fraud and a fake.

In this case, however, there is no doubt whatever of the fact. Tunnels have been driven several hundred feet beneath the lava bed, and the bones, found in several places, have not been removed. Instead, they have been saturated with silicate of lime to harden and preserve them, and have been placed in glass cases exactly where the diggers came across them, so as to be viewed by anybody who may be interested.

How old are the bones? It is a question nobody can answer. They may be 1,000 or 10,000 years old. There is no historical record of the volcanic eruption which made the lava bed. Undoubtedly it occurred a very long time before Cortez visited the capital of Montezuma.

The Village War Cross.

Was it a year to-day
The cross was unveiled in the square,
And a hush of rest
Like a moment blest
Came over the people there?
It's granite—'twill last for ages,
The names carved deep in the stone
Will proudly meet
Though hurricanes beat
And winds a requiem moan!
A dozen—or, maybe, a score,
Marched out in their youth-arrays,
And the village's loss
Crept into that cross,
Unveiled—just a year to-day.
Thought is a pleasant walk that leads to a desired destination; worry is a treadmill that leads nowhere.

The Parable of the Marriage Feast

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.—St. Matt. 22: 2.

Marriage customs in eastern countries and in our Lord's day were quite distinct from ours, and in some respects superior. Such a thing as a clandestine marriage was almost unknown. On the contrary many people were invited to the marriage and sometimes the very success of the occasion was measured by the number of guests. And when, as in the case of our Lord's parable which we study to-day, the marriage was that of a prince, the whole kingdom was practically invited.

Christ spoke this parable near the close of His earthly ministry when the cruel and bitter and wild wrath of the Pharisees was at its height. God had sent His Son into the world that the human race might be redeemed and joined in loving union and harmony with the Eternal Creator. All men were called to this blessed union, for it was an event of peace and salvation. But alas! some would have none of it. They were in rebellion against God because He called them to repentance and they would not give up sin. The Jews were called first, because they were the chosen race through which the Messiah came. When they rejected the invitation, some through hostility and some through indifference and unbelief, then the Gentiles were called, and there were, and still are, many guests. Let us hope and pray and labor to bring to Christ the descendants of the original guests, the Jewish people, long ago chosen of God. There must be no bitterness on our part against them, but a great loving brotherly desire to have them share in the blessings Christ has brought to us.

Our chief lesson to-day has to do with missionary work. The king's servants were told to go out and seek the people and bring them to Christ. What a vision of opportunity is thus given! "Go ye into all the world." He said, and though His commission was given 1900 years ago the round world has still many highways and byways which the King's servants have never reached.

The Gracious Invitation.

Notice the graciousness of the invitation: "Bid to the marriage." It was a simple welcome, echoing that great gospel word "Come." I wonder if we have always made this call as clear and loving and direct as the king makes it? I wonder if we have not changed the word "come" to "go"? The servants have nothing to do but to deliver the invitation; but do they not often take it upon themselves to enlarge upon it until the Christ Himself is forgotten in the shadow of the messengers. There are thousands of truths in Christianity, but they can only be grasped gradually and in the presence of Christ. There are many problems which easily slip into the way to the King's palace and become

obstacles, but the King did not put them there. What we need to-day is such a clear and telling and simple delivery of the gracious invitation that the messengers will be forgotten in the joy of the knowledge that the King of Kings asks us to come to His feast. We are to come—the King will care for us and see that we are welcomed and clothed and placed when we arrive.

Notice how without distinction the invitation was to be given: "As many as ye shall find." And as a result "they gathered together all so many as they found, both bad and good. For the King's home is not for those who are perfect. Rather, as some one has said, it is a gracious hospital where all are treated according to their needs. "All sorts and conditions of men," an old prayer phrases it. In fact, none are really good; it is only the poor human judgment which is always trying to classify and analyze, that makes a difference. We all need the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness; for there is so much bad in the best of us and so much good in the worst of us that we are practically all of us in need of treatment. St. Augustine in the fourth century wrote a great truth: "He loved her foul, that He might make her fair." Christ takes us as we are and loves us as we are, because the essence of His loving salvation is to make His church fair and beautiful and happy by His own hand."

The Unrepentant Guest.

We are confronted, however, with a serious difficulty in this parable, when we find the man who was cast out by the king because he had not on a wedding garment. How can such a judgment balance with the generous invitation and cordial welcome? It seems to have been the custom in the Oriental countries for the host at a wedding to supply a wedding garment for his guests. We have a survival of it in the special dress demanded in monarchical countries when people are admitted to the royal presence, or in modern life, when "full dress" is asked of those who attend any special function. Foolish though these customs are, there is a great truth at the root of them all. I am not worthy to enter heaven. I come, "just as I am," and the Prince of Peace gives me the robe of His righteousness. I cannot boast of my own worthiness. No good works of my life can claim for me the right to enter into glory. Christ's mercy is free—but it is also necessary. This man in the parable thought his own dress was good enough. Perhaps he lingered after the invitation to array himself in such fashion as should attract attention. And when the wedding garment was offered he scorned it. He was like the elder brother of the Prodigal Son. He was like some modern folk who count themselves quite worthy and cannot gain the humility which opens their eyes to their sins.—Rev. F. W. Tomkins.

A Maiden Speech.

Many people do not enjoy talking in public—a class to which Mr. H. M. Tomlinson seems to belong. In his book, Old Junk, he describes how he felt when he once addressed a meeting.

The night came, he says, as at last I began to feel that it would. My brief notes were in my pocket, for I had resolutely put from me the dishonorable and barren safety of a written lecture. In the train—how cold was the night!—I wished I had gone more fully into the matter. Slightly shivering, I tried to recall the dry humor of those carefully prepared opening sentences, which shortly would prove to my audience that I had their measure and was at ease.

But those delicate sentences had broken somehow. They were shards, and not a glitter of humor was sticking to the fragments.

I felt that I should far rather approach one of those towns in France where you were likely to run into a company of Uhlans than to go to that lecture hall. No doubt, too, my friend had explained to them what a clever fellow I was, in order to get some reflected glory out of it. Then it would serve him right; there would be two of us.

The hall was nearly full. What surprises you is to find so many ladies present—a very disquieting fact entirely unforeseen. They sit in the front rows and, evidently in a tranquil, alert and miffed mind, wait for you to begin. I could hear their leisurely converse and occasional subdued laughter (about what?) even where, in a sort of lucid calm, indifferent to my fate, I was handing my hat and my coat to my friend in a room behind the platform.

As we got upon the platform, the chairman told them something about me—I don't know what—but when I looked up it was to find, like the soul in torment, that a multitude of bodiless eyes had fixed me—eyes intent, curious, passionless.

"I call upon—" said the chairman. I stood up. The sound of my voice uplifted in that silence was the most startling sound I have ever heard. Shortly after that came the paralyzing discovery that it is a gift to be able to think while hundreds of people wait patiently to see what the thought is like when it comes. This made my brow hot. There was a boy in an Elton suit, sitting in front with his legs apart; he was grinning at me through his spectacles. How he got there I do not know. I think he was the gift of the gods; his smile so annoyed me

that I forgot myself, which saved me. I just talked to that boy.

Once there was loud laughter. Why? It is inexplicable. I talked for about an hour. About what? Heaven knows. The chairman kindly let me out through a side entrance.

Woman Pearl Divers.

The only women pearl divers in the world are Japanese, and are employed in a certain sort of pearl culture which was originated not many years ago by an enterprising subject of the mikado named Mikimoto, who is proprietor of extensive beds of pearl oysters near Toba, on the shores of the Japan sea.

The process consists in introducing tiny metal pellets or other foreign objects into the oyster's economy when the latter is three-years old. Then the bivalve is returned to its bed; and, when taken up again four years later, a true pearl has formed about each nucleus. Many odd shapes are the result.

Unfortunately, the foreign object often adheres to the shell, and in that case the result is not the perfectly rounded jewel desired, but a pearly hemisphere. It is understood, however, that thanks to the adoption of an improved and more scientific method, the output of round pearls is now much greater than formerly.

The women divers do all the work of gathering and replanting the pearl oysters. They are extraordinarily husky and muscular, and thick nothing of staying under water three minutes at a time.

Help yourself in the right way and you help others; improve yourself and you do a favor to your friends.

The finest public bath in the world is at Vienna. It has a basin 575 feet long, and accommodates 1,500 bathers.

To-Day!

This little strip of light
Twixt night and night
Let me keep bright—To-day!
And let no shadow of tomorrow
Nor sorrow from the dead
Gainsay my happiness to-day!
And if To-morrow shall be sad
Or never comes at all,
I've had at least—To-day!