

at last the countess grew furious. I laughed in secret, but bade her not be rash; told her that I would watch them and keep her informed of their movements. By this time I was acquainted with all the parties and so I could work my plans easily.

"Sending a letter to the lady, I obtained her presence in the garden of the count's mansion, and then telling him that his wife was there, I ran into the house to bring her to witness the meeting. The count flew to the arbor, where he supposed his wife to be, and two minutes later I was there with his wife, watching them through the trees. It seems that he had embraced the lady, who at first sight was much like his wife, and that she, having secretly loved him, received it as a tribute of affection and would not believe he had mistaken her for his wife.

"When we reached the place she was reproaching him with bitterness, and shaking the letter I had written her in his face. The countess dashed in upon them with blazing eyes, tore the letter from the lady's hand and glancing to the bottom of the page saw the count's signature. Oh, wasn't she angry then! She would have killed him on the spot if she had possessed a weapon, but I had foreseen this, and hid all she owned. Down upon his knees dropped the count—my Wilford of old—and begged and protested; but all in vain, his wife would not believe a word he said. Oh! it made by heart glad to see his anguish and hear his voice in supplication. But that was a long, long time ago!"

The old woman closed her eyes, and laid her head back as if very weary.

The twilight had deepened into dark; arising, I lighted the gas.

"Won't you take a little refreshment now, Luella?" said Russ, not knowing what other name to use.

"Who calls me, Luella?" she cried, starting forward excitedly, and then added, with a chuckling laugh. "It's my name yet, though I am faded and ugly. No, I eat only three times a day, young man. Well, my fine count had to leave his fair countess, or die, for she swore she would kill him, and she meant it. Twice I foiled her in her attempts to poison him, and then he was only too eager to get away. He knew that I had saved his life, and he was grateful, he said. Bah! his gratitude! One night he stole away, taking his child—a little girl—with him, and succeeded in secreting himself in a vessel bound for England.

"Shortly afterward I left Spain, and returned to London. Finding that I had so changed that my friends in London did not know me, I gave out word that Luella, was dead, and I was her heiress. As I had all the necessary papers to prove this—death certificates are easily bought—and all the certificates of money deposited, I easily came into possession of my own fortune, and attended my own funeral, attired in deep black. Of course I had to buy a corpse to represent myself, but that was no particular trouble. Ha! ha! money will do anything. This safely accomplished, I caused my lawyers to write to Wilford, tell him of Luella's death, and that he was heir to ten thousand pounds. You may be sure that this brought him and the child to London in a trice. He visited my grave, made a great show of sorrow, heaped reproaches upon himself, called me an angel, and then took expensive lodgings, and began to spend my money freely. Announcing that I was going to France, I shut myself up for a week, then I presented myself before Wallace Wilbraham, as he now called himself, and requested a place as governess for his child. He liked my appearance, and I at once began my duties. I hated the man now, hated him with as much fervor as I ever had loved him.

"I had been there a week, and it was now time to commence to torture him. Dressing myself in white, I put on a wig of golden hair, and appeared before him after he had retired, as Luella. The device was a perfect success. He shivered and groaned. The second time I appeared he fired at me twice with his pistols, but as I had taken good care to remove the bullets I was not harmed, and his belief that I was a veritable ghost was strengthened. He now became moody and sullen, and trembled at the slightest sound. Oh, it was food and drink to me to see his misery! Twice a week for a whole month I walked as a ghost, and my master grew thin, nervous and sleepless. Often I heard him praying to have the phantom removed from him, and my heart leaped with delight as I witnessed his suffering. At length he took to drinking, and remained in a stupor the greater part of the time. Earth had no peace for him. He was reaping his reward for the agony he had inflicted upon me. Gradually but surely he was going to his death, and in three months from that time he met it. Remorse killed him—I did not. I felt no pang when I saw him cold before me, but I remembered the day when in my white robes I waited for him—waited, and had faith in him when all around me doubted him. Well-a-day, that was a long time ago."

The old woman worked her hands, and muttered some unintelligible words to herself.

"What became of the child?" I asked, deeply interested in this marvellous story.

"His child? Oh! yes," she mumbled, passing her hand across her brow. "I took her. She was then four years old. I named her Stella Wilbraham, to suit myself, and looked out for her as tenderly as if she were my own, and gave her a good education. When she was twenty years old she married; she was miserable after the first five years of her married life, and often came to me for comfort. I gave

her all I could, but my sympathy for married people isn't much. Stella lived to forty years of age, then I helped lay her out for the grave, and took her only child home with me, to bring up as I had her mother.

"I was sixty-three years old when Stella died, and her little girl was just five. Now the little one is a young woman of nineteen, beautiful and good—too good—some villain will win her and make her miserable, I suppose. Alack-a-day, so the world goes! I've seen much in my time—more than the most of women. But my day's most run out."

"Do you think she is insane, or is all this true?" whispered Russ.

The old woman's quick ear had caught his words, and before I could reply she darted a scornful look at him from her sunken eyes, and said, impatiently:

"Have I strength or time to amuse two ninnyes with a pack of falsehoods? Do you think I could make up all this? Out upon you for a stupid ingrate."

Scowling darkly, she drew her old shawl around her and arose to her feet. Russ apologized but she paid no heed to his words; she had evidently taken a strong dislike to him. As she left us I asked her where she lived, and thanked her for telling us her history, but she said brusquely that when she wanted to see me again she would come where I was, and that she told her story because she liked to, not to please us.

"Can it be truth?" said Russ, looking at me in mingled perplexity and anxiety.

I returned his glance, and perceived at once that there was something on his mind. Wondering what he could be, I answered:

"My dear fellow, truth is stranger than fiction every day in the week. As to our visitor being insane, that is absurd—no lunatic can break the thread of a story and recover it as she did. I told her on that in the first part of her narrative, or rather we both did, by remaining silent. You know Shakespeare makes Hamlet say, when he is thought to be insane, 'Bring me to the test, and I will matter with re-word, which madness would gambol from.' But what troubles you? for that something does is very evident."

"I'll tell you, Walter," Russ answered, rather nervously, and trying hard to avoid my gaze. "You know Flora Mayne? Yes, of course you do. Well, I have been very attentive to her for some eight months, and I am confident she loves me. She is a good girl, and I really think a great deal of her, but lately I have been much with Marion Vesey. Marion is rich, you know, and beautiful—"

"And you are considering which it the better investment," I said reprovingly. "For shame. Your income is enough to be comfortable on—let Marion go, and return to Flora."

"By Jove, I will!" he exclaimed, with evident relief. "It is the only way to satisfy my conscience. I may thank this old woman and you for making me take counsel of my heart instead of my ambition."

Four months subsequently Russ Leyden married Flora Mayne. Six months after that an aged woman died, leaving her adopted daughter ten thousand pounds.

W. G. E.

THE SIAMESE TWINS IN THEIR OWN LAND.

When I first saw the Siamese Twins their strange foreign features, and the few sentences spoken for my entertainment in the harsh dialect of their country, made as strong an impression on my childish fancy as the freak of Nature which had united them so closely. Yet I scarcely expected then ever to visit the place of their birth, or to converse with their parents in their own vernacular. When, however, after the lapse of years, my husband and myself were setting forth on our Eastern tour, we sought out the Twins in order to learn from them something of their former home and connections. They evinced much emotion when told that we should probably visit their country, and readily gave us the address of their parents. When we asked, "What message shall we take to them?" Chang said something in a low tone to his brother, at which Eng smiled and shook his head negatively, and then both spoke out, Chang saying, "Tell them we are coming home some time," and Eng adding, "—When we have made money enough."

The Twins were born some thirty miles southwest of Bangkok, in a little fishing-village that derives its name from the Ma Kiaung ("Great Canal"), on which fronts the single narrow street of low, straggling houses that compose the town. But while Chang and Eng were yet in their infancy the parents removed to Bangkok, and were, when we saw them, living within four miles of the city. The father was a Chinaman, who spoke the Tai-Chieu dialect. He was of medium height, somewhat stout, but well formed, and intelligent for one of the laboring class. The mother was born in Siam of a Chinese father and Siamese mother: so that the Twins were one-fourth Siamese and three-fourths Chinese so far as parentage was concerned, and the people about Bangkok speak of them as the "Chinese Twins." Being born in the country, they spoke the Siamese language far more fluently than they did Chinese. They, however, wore the Chinese dress, and their hair braided à la Chinoise, as do always the male children of Chinese fathers; and the parents both spoke of their sons as Chinese, utterly ignoring their place of birth and the mother's nationality. The mother of the Twins was a

fair, comely woman of medium height and well-developed form. She had good health, and looked still youthful, though already the mother of fourteen children, nine of whom were then living. Two were prematurely born, two died in early infancy, and one, of small-pox, at the age of six years or thereabouts. Chang and Eng were the first-born sons of their parents, and there were four other pairs of twins and four children born one at a birth; but none except Chang and Eng had any abnormal peculiarity, and those that we saw were all healthy, intelligent and pleasing in appearance. Chang and Eng were born in the latter part of 1811 or early in 1812, we could not learn definitely which, as no record had been kept. The mother spoke of them as somewhat smaller at birth than her other offspring, and as seeming feeble for the first six months of their lives, Eng especially, who was never quite as large as his brother.

The notion that the Twins were in any sort one, that they were actuated by one mind or impulse, as had often been suggested, never seemed to have entered the mother's mind, and when questioned on the subject she utterly rejected the idea. She had never perceived that the illness of one affected the other: one sometimes cried while she was nursing his brother, or one might hurt his hand or foot, and the other not feel pain, but if the ligament that united the twain was touched just in the centre, both were conscious of it. They always played together as two, not as one; and when they began to prattle they often spoke to each other than to those about them. It is obvious why this habit of conversing together was not more common with the Twins as they grew older. Being always together and enjoying precisely the same facilities for acquiring information, there could be little occasion for one to communicate with the other.

The mother told us, further, that these children seldom disagreed with each other, though occasionally she had to interfere and compel one or the other to give up. Chang being larger, stronger, and more intelligent, ordinarily took the initiative, and Eng, who was decidedly amiable, while his brother was irritable, and sometimes passionate, seldom contended for the supremacy. But now and then, either that the rule of the stronger became too stringent, or that the weaker was in a less yielding mood than ordinary, these closest of friends would become so incensed as to make use of some very unfriendly epithets toward each other. A whisper in the ear of one was not heard by the other, and if he to whom the communication had been made failed to impart it at once to his brother, unkind words were sure to follow, and sometimes the coolness lasted for days. After the reconciliation, which was always cordial and entire, both brothers spoke deprecatingly of their quarrel, and for a long time were more devoted than ever to each other.

The mother said that at first the ligament that united the boys was so short as to compel them to face each other, nor could they turn in bed without being lifted up and laid in the desired position; but as they grew and exercised more freely, the ligament gradually lengthened, till they were able to stand side by side, and even back to back, and to turn themselves in bed by rolling one over the other.

The little cottage where the boys passed their childhood was of the sort known in Siam as "floating houses." They are one-story buildings, moored on the river bank, and kept in place not by anchors, but by large poles on each side driven into the muddy bottom. They are built either of teak boards or bamboo, roofed with attap leaves, and contain in three or four rooms, of which the front one is a shop, besides a verandah that overlooks the river or canal. Here day by day, as the father plied his trade of catching fish or cleaned and sorted them for market, and the mother was selling wares in her little shop, the twin brothers amused themselves in the broad, cool verandah, watching their parents and aiding in such light labors as they were able to undertake. Sometimes they went fishing in the boat with their father; and like all Eastern children, they soon learned to swim, and spent much of their time in the water. One day, while they were thus engaged, Mr. Robert Hunter, a Scotch merchant residing in Bangkok, passed in his boat, and attracted by the perfect uniformity of the children's movements, he stopped to ascertain how they managed to keep thus closely side by side. One can imagine his amazement at the discovery of the cause; and from that day, which was some time during the year 1824, Mr. Hunter began conceiving measures to get them off to Europe for exhibition. He spoke to the parents, to whom his plans seemed about as feasible as they would at first entertain no proposition on the subject. But Mr. H. continued to visit them from time to time, and by his genial nature soon won not only the hearts of the parents, but those of the boys themselves, till the latter became eager to set out on a tour over a world of which they heard such glowing accounts. Still, the parents held back, and all negotiations would probably have failed but for the opportune arrival, in the year 1829, of an American vessel commanded by Captain Coffin, who offering to give the parents a large bonus, and Mr. Hunter pledging an equal amount, the twins were handed over to the foreigners, and sailed immediately for Europe and the United States before the parents had time to change their minds. They were tractable, intelligent, well behaved lads, who gave their new guardians no trouble, nor during the entire voyage expressed any desire to return to their native land. Since then their reputation has become world-wide.

I saw them last in the fall of 1865, at the New England Agricultural Fair in Brattleboro', Vermont, where they were again exhibiting themselves, with two of their sons. The fathers were beginning to show marks of age, Eng especially, who looked five years older than his brother. They had nearly forgotten their native language, and in lieu of the deep emotion they had formerly evinced in speaking of their country, they seemed now to care very little about it, and wound up the conversation by saying unchalantly, "America is our home now: we have no other."—From "OUR MONTHLY GOSPEL," by Fanny R. Feudge, in Lippincott's Magazine for March.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

ABSTINENCE FROM FOOD.—A civet cat can live ten days without food, an antelope twenty days, an eagle twenty-eight days, a badger thirty days, and a dog thirty-five days; a crocodile will live two months without food, a scorpion three months, a bear six months, a chameleon, eight months, and a viper, ten months. Spiders, toads, tortoises, and beetles will maintain abstinence for an indefinite length of time.

OLD MAIDS.—Being an "old maid" implies decision of character; neither sham, nor show, nor courtly manner, nor splendid persons, have won them over; nor fair promises, nor shallow tears. They looked beyond the manner and the dress, and finding no cheering indication of depth of mind and sterling principles, they gave up the specious present for the chance of a more solid future, and determined, in hope, and patience, and resignation, to "bide their time."

A REMARKABLE WISH.—Old Madame Rothschild, mother of the great capitalist, attained the age of ninety-eight. Her wit, which was remarkable, and her intellectual faculties, which were of no common order, were preserved to the end. In her last illness, when surrounded by her family, her physician being present, she said in a suppliant tone to the latter, "Dear doctor, try to do something for me."—"Madam, what can I do? I can't make you young again."—"No, doctor, I don't want to be young again; but I want to continue to grow old."

AN ENGLISH EARL'S DUTIES.—When the Earl of Portland, was in office as Groom of the Stole (in 1889), the royal orders were published which thus describe his office:—"Our Groom of the Stole, being present, is by virtue of his place, to put on the shirt we wear next our body, evening and morning, or as often as we shall change our linen; and, in his absence, the Gentleman of our Bedchamber then in waiting; and one of the Grooms of our Bedchamber is to warm our shirt before the fire, and hold the same till we are ready to put it on, and then to deliver it unto our Groom of the Stole, and, in his absence as before directed."

CURIOSITIES OF SLEEP.—A distinguished lawyer was consulted upon an important and difficult case, which he studied for several days with anxious care. His wife then saw him rise in the night, and go to a desk in the bedroom. He sat down and wrote a long paper, which he carefully placed in the desk. He then returned to bed, and in the morning told his wife that he had dreamt of delivering a clear and luminous opinion about a case which had greatly perplexed him, and that he wished he could remember the train of thought of his dream. She directed him to the desk, and there he found the opinion clearly copied out, which proved to be correct.

WITTY MANŒUVRE.—The Duke of Grammont was the most adroit and witty courtier of his day. He entered one day the closet of the Cardinal Mazarin without being announced. His Eminence was amusing himself by jumping against the wall. To surprise a Prime Minister in so boyish an occupation was dangerous. A less skilful courtier might have stammered excuses and retired.

But the Duke entered briskly, and cried, "I'll bet you one hundred crowns that I jump higher than your Eminence."

And the Duke and Cardinal began to jump for their lives. Grammont took care to jump a few inches lower than the Cardinal, and six months afterwards was marshal of France.

A SCOTCHMAN'S OPINION.—A dinner party had dwindled away to two guests, an Englishman and a Highlander gentleman, who were each trying to prove the superiority of their native countries. Of course, at an argument of this kind, a Scotchman possesses, from constant practice, overwhelming advantages. The Highlander's logic was so good that he beat his opponent on every point. At last the Englishman put a poser.

"You will," he said, "at least admit that England is larger in extent than Scotland?"

"Certainly not," was the confident reply. "You see, sir, ours is a mountainous, your a flat country. Now if all our hills were rolled out flat, we should beat you by hundreds of square miles."

INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS.—To dream of a small stone around your neck, is a sign of what you may expect if you get an extravagant wife. To see apples in a dream, betokens a wedding, because where you find apples you may expect to find pears. To dream that you are lame, is a token that you will get into a hobble. When a young lady dreams of a coffin, it betokens that she should instantly discontinue the use of a tight stays, and always go warmly and thickly shod in wet weather. To dream of fire, is a sign that, if you are wise, you will see that the lights in your house are cut before you go to