

The Unknown Bridegroom.

A bath and the clean clothing made a wonderful change in the little fellow, and when he was fully dressed, and his hair combed and brushed, Mr. Carrol permitted him to look in the glass.

An expression of astonishment lighted his face as he gazed at the reflected figure—a pale, spiritual-looking boy, with delicate, refined features, and remarkably beautiful eyes.

These questioning induced the boy to tell what he knew of his antecedents. He had been an inmate of the poor-house, where continued ill-treatment forced him to run away, and he became the associate of street gamins, newsboys, and bootblacks, who passed their nights in a low district in the neighborhood of Wapping Way. He was called Jim, and having for a time been in the habit of sleeping in a crockery crate, he bore the nickname of "Jim-o-the-Crockery-Crate." His only warm friend was a young man named Tom Dill, a fireman. After a few days, when Jim had recovered his strength, Mr. Carrol put his young charge in a private school which was kept by a worthy woman in the neighborhood of St. Paul's, and he was to pay an extra sum for tuition, the lady promised to take special pains with her new pupil.

Then Mr. Carrol endeavored to find a trace of Tom Dill. After a long search he discovered him in an hospital for disabled firemen, a sufferer from an accident that had occurred nearly two years previous, causing a crippled leg. Otherwise the man was in fairly good health.

Mr. Carrol announced his business, and Tom Dill told him all he knew regarding Jim, the boy.

"It's a little over six years ago," he said, "when the fire occurred at the Ardmore Hotel, in Castlemaine street. When our engine, No. 45, dashed up, the fire was all over the house, and 'twasn't no use to try to save the house. The most we could do was to prevent the flames spreading into the other houses. Everybody was thought to be out, and all of a sudden there came an awful scream from a window in the fifth story, and a big gron was let loose when 'twas found that a woman an' a baby were still in the 'burnin' shell. Nobody wanted to risk goin' to 'em, for there was little hope of ever reachin' 'em, let alone savin' 'em. I was the only one who went over, and that 'twasn't a family, an' I said I'd try for it. Ladders were hoisted, an' up I went like a squirrel, an' I was spry 'n' I got down when I saw the woman she was whiter nor any sheet; but she was game, I tell yer. She reached the baby down to me afore I got to the top."

"Yer stronger 'n I, an' surer-footed," she said, "save him an' I'll take care of myself."

"So I went just with the young one, an' she followed close on my heels. But, Lord!—here the man's lips grew tremulous and he turned his eyes away from his companion—'somehow, the little fellow's clothes got fire in 'em, an' he was over the flames burst out suddenly on us—though they put a stream on from below afore the woman got into it—'an' the clothes were all over 'er a minute and he yelled like murder. I tried to smother it out, but the kid's poor little legs was burned afore we got down."

"Ah! this tells me how those unsightly scars came on Jim's limbs," Mr. Carrol interrupted.

"Yes, sir; an' I'll never forget how I felt when I saw them great blisters on the young man's arms. It had been me I wouldn't 'a' flinched, but to see that 'ere tender baby squirm in an' suffer in more'n I could stand, an' I was just ready to blubber when the man touched ground an' reached out to take him. But just that minute a brick came tumblin' down from the wall, hit the ladder, boomed off, an' struck her plump on the head."

"Ah!" ejaculated Tom Dill's listener, with a shudder.

"She dropped like lead, where she stood, an' the baby an' the woman were both trundled off in the ambulance to the 'ospital."

"Oh! did she die?" demanded Mr. Carrol, with almost breathless eagerness.

"No, poor thing!" returned Tom with a sorrowful shake of his head. "I was so cut up over the baby's burns, I didn't think of the woman. 'Twasn't till the next mornin' that I was told she was dead."

"What made you think that?" inquired his companion.

"Well, he looked it every inch of him, an' in spite of the hubbub an' danger, the night of the fire, I took notice of the clothes he had on, an' they was like some o' them fancy things yer'll see in th' bang-up shops on Regent street."

"I wonder if they were preserved?" said Mr. Carrol, inquiringly.

"I don't think it, sir, they was scorch'd an' burned almost to a cinder afore we got to the ground, an' no worth tellin'."

"Well, now tell me something about the woman," commanded the young man, with a regretful sigh.

"Waal, suthin' after that sort, I'm thinkin'," replied Tom Dill. "She knew enough to eat an' drink, wash, iron an' scrub, but she couldn't tell her own name, nor where she was from, nor nothin' else the people wanted to know about."

"Is she living now?"

"Yes, sir, an' she be as well an' strong as yersel."

"Where is she?"

"At the 'ospital where she has been ever since."

"Can you get permission to visit her?" inquired the young man, eagerly.

"Yes, sir, but little good it'll do yer to see her. Ye may ask her forty questions an' she'll look at yer in a dazed kind of way for a minute an' then go on with her scrubbin'."

"I know, for I've tried to make her talk no end o' times."

"When did you go to see her last?" Mr. Carrol inquired.

"It's six months or more, I reckon; my rheumatiz has made me so lame an' stiff I couldn't get about yer way."

"What name is she known by at the 'ospital?"

"The help about the house call 'er 'Crazy Moll,' but I've heard the nurses speak gentle to her and call her Mary. She be very good to work, mindin' what's told her, an' makes no talk."

"Do you think she could be the child's mother? D'd he look like her?" questioned Carrol.

"No, sir, he didn't," the man returned in a positive tone. "She was no mother to him."

"What makes you think so? How, then, did they happen to be together?"

"'Twas plain enough, sir, let alone the nurse's cap an' apron she had on; an' that 'twas another thing that made me think the little chap was a blue-blood."

Mr. Carrol at last began to feel that he was gleaming some rays of light in connection with the little waif who had so strangely fallen into his hands.

Everything, thus far, tended to show that Jim had come from a good family. Carrol had felt sure of this in his own mind before this interview with the fireman, for he was very far from being a common-looking child.

He had a well-shaped head, with delicate, refined features; his glossy brown hair was fine as silk, and his hands and feet were small and symmetrically formed.

And now, added to these self-evident points, to learn that he had been richly clad and stopping with his nurse in a first-class hotel on the night of the fire, were facts that went to solve the mystery taken in his hands.

He wondered if the boy's parents had also been inmates of the ill-fated hotel, and had perished in the flames, notwithstanding the fireman's assertion that it was supposed everybody had escaped.

One of two things he felt sure must be the fact: either they had fallen victims in the fearful conflagration, or they could not have been in the city.

He asked Tom Dill what he thought about it.

"No, sir; they never was burned," he positively asserted, "for no signs of any bodies was found when the rubbish was cleared away."

"But the woman must have been registered—did no one think to examine the books to ascertain who she was?" Mr. Carrol inquired.

"Yes, sir; I went myself to the clerk, but the books was burned, and he told me there'd been no inquiries for the woman or the baby. It's a puzzle, sir—a puzzle that I fear me, will never be cleared up," the man concluded, with a grave shake of his head.

Mr. Carrol also feared that such would be the case, but he had no intention of relinquishing his efforts until he should exhaust every possible means to solve the mystery regarding his protegee's identity.

He thanked Tom Dill for his information and promised to bring James to see him very soon; then, slipping a generous guinea into the man's hand, he bade him good-day and went away.

He proceeded directly to the Hallemann 'ospital, where, seeking the superintendent, he continued to push his inquiries still further.

Identify the boy, when he could be returned to his parents.

"But when Mary at last began to rally," the nurse observed; "we were shocked beyond measure to find that her mind was gone—or, rather, that she could remember nothing about her previous life, and did not show the faintest recognition of the child; although he, at the same time, instantly the moment we took him to her, and clung to her until she frightened him by pushing him roughly from her."

"As a crew stagger, she began to make herself useful about the wards, was quiet and handy, and the nurses petitioned that she be allowed to remain in the institution as a servant, instead of being sent to the workhouse."

"It was a sad day for all the nurses when it was at length decided that the boy must go. Several had made strenuous efforts to find a good home for him; but without avail, and he was finally sent to one of the homes for the poor. I have only seen him a couple of times since then, for my duties have been so heavy I could not go to visit him," the nurse concluded, with a regretful sigh.

Mr. Carrol then related something of what James' life had been, and how he had at length fallen into his hands, when, becoming deeply interested in him, he had resolved to see if he could not trace his friends and restore him to them.

"But," he concluded, with a doubtful shake of his head, "it looks now as if that would be an impossibility."

"Would you do with him, then?" the woman inquired, earnestly. "Oh!" she added, feelingly, "he was such a beautiful child I was sure that he belonged to a fine family, and it nearly broke my heart to have him sent to that dreadful almshouse."

"I have not yet decided what to do with him if I do not succeed in gaining some new clue to his parentage," Mr. Carrol gravely replied. "I have no home of my own—no friends with whom I could place him; but of one thing I am sure—I will allow him to drift back into the slums, whence he came. You feel sure that the woman was his nurse?"

"Certainly—she could have been nothing else; there was nothing in common between them, and besides, she wore the nurse's cap and apron, while the baby looked the little aristocrat in every line and feature."

"And does now," said her companion, "in spite of his rude, unpolished, and even somewhat repulsive exterior, after he had been subjected to a vigorous bath and was decently dressed, to find what an interesting child he is. Will it be possible for one to see this 'Crazy Moll,' as she is called?" he inquired, in conclusion.

"Yes, if you wish; although I am sure you will reap no satisfaction from the interview. But I will arrange for her to come to you," the nurse returned, with ready compliance, as she arose to leave the room.

She was absent some time, but finally returned, and was followed by a woman of perhaps thirty-five years.

She was a quiet, demure looking person, having a good, honest face, in spite of its vacant expression, black hair and eyes. She was very neatly clad, had a plump, well-formed figure, although she was somewhat awkward in her movements.

"This is the gentleman who wished to see you, Mary," said the nurse, by way of introduction, and Mary made an awkward courtesy, but without betraying the slightest interest in her visitor.

"I suppose it will be of no use to question her?" Mr. Carrol remarked.

"Not the slightest—that was tried, times without number, years ago," the woman returned.

An expression of sadness swept over the young man's countenance; but after studying the unfortunate creature's face intently, for a few moments he put a couple of shillings into her hard red hand, and kindly told her that she might go.

She now looked eagerly up at him and laughed out like a child that had received a coveted toy, thus showing that she knew something of the value of money; if she was daft on all other subjects, she thanked him, made another courtesy, and then, at a gentle signal from the nurse, left the room.

Durin' the afternoon Mr. Carrol called at the apartment to which Mr. Seaver had directed him, but, to his disappointment, he was told that the family had not yet arrived.

On his return to his own lodgings he found a letter from that gentleman, telling him that he would be one day late in getting to London; but that they should look for a call from him very soon. The letter closed as follows: "Mrs. Seaver and Miss Richardson join me in kind regards and the hope that you are fully recovered from the accidental, which so nearly proved a fatal disaster. We should have lost our dear girl, but for you."

A very tender, tremulous smile quivered about the young man's expressive mouth as he read this.

"Ah! they can have no suspicion of how dear she has become to me," he murmured.

The second day after receiving Mr. Seaver's note he made a careful toilet and started forth to make his call.

First, however, he bent his steps toward a well-known florist's in Oxford street.

As he drew near to it, he observed a lady just quering from a book-stall.

She was elegantly and tastefully clad, and there was something familiar about her air and figure, although he could not see her face, that sent the swift color into his cheek and an electric thrill into every pulse.

Almost at the instant a tall, coarse looking man approached her, and addressed her with a menacing air.

She turned and glanced at him with a look of astonishment, and now Mr. Carrol saw that the lady was Florence Richardson, as he had already suspected.

As he approached nearer he heard the man observe in a harsh tone of irritation:

"You can't play that game on me, you obstinate hussy; you just come

along with me if you don't want to make a scene."

"I do not know what you mean, sir," said Florence, backing away from the man, who, as she became aware of her blue eyes flashing indignantly upon her assailant, "I never saw you before, and you will let me pass, if you please."

"Well, but I don't please, Miss Inpertinence; and you never saw me before, so you think," sneered the man, coarsely. "It's pretty well done, my girl, but it's a game that you work, so you just come along as you are told, or—there'll be a row—d'ye hear?"

He laid his powerful hand upon her shoulder as he concluded, and would have forced her away from him, signalling at the same moment the waiting cab, if Mr. Carrol had not suddenly appeared upon the scene and confronted him.

With one upward bow of his head he released Florence from his grasp, and he sternly demanded, as he the same instant shot a reassuring look into the frightened eyes of the girl:

"The man gave vent to an angry oath and cringed with pain, for the blow had been no light one."

"It's none o' your infernal business, young fellow! You just quit your interference and get along with your own affairs. The girl belongs to me and with me she's going, and I'll see that she stays with me, in spite of those fifty officious dudes like yourself."

And stalking to Florence's side, he again seized her rudely by the arm. "One agile spring forward, one quick, and powerful stroke straight from the shoulder, and Florence's great, raw-boned, ungainly persecutor lay sprawling upon the pavement at our hero's feet."

(To be continued.)

SUCCESSFUL MOTHERS

You will always find that the mothers who are successful in bringing up families of hearty, healthy children are those who are careful to note the slightest evidence of illness and to check it at once. The wise mother gives her children Tablets at the first symptom of any childish ailment, and almost at once the little one is all right. Mrs. Thos. Stevenson, 13 Bishop street, Halifax, N. S., says: "It gives me pleasure to be able to speak of the great value of Baby's Own Tablets. I always give them to my children when they are ailing in any way, and they speedily make them well. I would advise every mother to keep the Tablets in the house."

The Tablets allaying irritation, cure colic and stomach troubles, prevent constipation, destroy worms, allay fever, and break up colds. They can be given safely to a new born child. Sold by all medicine dealers or sent by mail at 25 cents a box by writing to Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

BIG OCEAN SHIPS.

Belfast Expert Tells Why They Vibrate—Cunard's New 25-Knot Boat.

Thomas Andrews, naval architect and consulting engineer for Harland & Wolff, Belfast, builders of the Baltic, who came over here to watch the performance of the big ship, said before sailing back that it was not too much to expect the 850-foot, 950-horse or even the 1,000-foot ship within a few years.

"The question, he said, is not one of shipbuilding, but of channeling the vibrations. The Mersey was almost put to the limit of her resources with the 800-foot ship, because there was comparatively little space to turn. The new one is a ticklish one, as a false move or too much steam at the wrong second might ruin the ship. The only drawback to the ship of 1,000 feet was the limited wharf facilities in New York and the danger of turning at Liverpool."

He said the White Star line would sooner stop the enlargement of its fleet than giving up Liverpool as a terminal.

Mr. Andrews is only 33 years old, but has had control of the countless details involved in the construction of the Oceanic, Celtic, Cedric and Baltic. He told the American Syren and Shipping that the Oceanic was his favorite, and really the most luxurious vessel on the Atlantic, representing everything needed in the way of comfort and safety, although not as showy as some other vessels. She had, he said, all the speed that Atlantic travellers required, being less than a seven-day boat. He also said the Adriatic, the mate of the Baltic, would have received the same treatment in the building of the latter.

"The Baltic," continued Mr. Andrews, "burns about 235 tons of coal a day. I know one greyhound that consumes nearly 750 tons a day. The limit for speed is reached when the lines are willing to run ships on a losing basis."

"The Baltic has 14,000 horse-power, but the Adriatic will have 15,000 horse-power, or a speed of seventeen and one-half knots more than the Baltic, which will bring the Adriatic into New York on a Wednesday. The extra power will be imparted from five additional single-ended boilers. The Adriatic will make her first appearance in New York waters next spring."

"I doubt if the twenty-five knot boats contracted for by the Cunard line will receive the expected patronage. It is an awful hardship to travel on a fast steamer. The vibration is not due to machinery, but to the policy of driving the ship through mountainous waves regardless of structural consequences."

"The Atlantic comb has a strength of 250 tons. A craft repeatedly struck on the starboard bow by 250 tons before she has time to recover from the wave gone by, the force of the preceding wave has too much to withstand. The machinery gets the blame for the vibration, when it is really the pounding into a new wave while the ship is shaking like a leaf and trying to recover from the wave gone by. The minimum vibration in the Baltic is due to the movements of the screws and can never be obviated."

"The great breadth of the Baltic at the bows and her enormous displacement serve as a sort of automatic check upon the machinery when a big wave hits her forward."

"Captain Lindsay, of the Celtic, has never had to slow in a heavy sea. The Celtic does it of her own accord. That is where the value of moderate speed machinery comes in. The vibration of the Baltic is caused by her screws revolving at an increased rate of speed when her head falls into the hollow of a wave and the propellers catch water of

Value of Agricultural Fairs.

The New Educational Features—A Substitute for the Fair.

It is a self-evident proposition that agricultural fairs which receive grants of public money should give the public something of value therefor. It is not the province of governments in these days to assist in providing amusement for the people. A good many agricultural societies are now making an earnest effort to improve their fairs by the introduction of educational features, and their example is being followed by the large exhibitions which do not ordinarily receive legislative grants. There are still some fairs, controlled largely by the business men of the towns, which seem to be held for the purpose of attracting visitors who will prove good customers, but the number is fortunately becoming few. It is now generally recognized that shows exist primarily for the purpose of improving agricultural conditions.

Teaching Market Requirements.—The up-to-date fair secures the services of expert judges, who explain the reasons for their decisions in the ring and give addresses on the best types of horses, cattle, sheep and swine. In this way the judging may be made an educational feature instead of merely an allotment of premiums by men who are often incompetent or biased in their judgment. The awarding of prizes at a fair is a comparatively unimportant matter as compared with other considerations. What is really desirable is that fairs should be the means of disseminating information and of fixing correct ideals in the minds of the public. The production of food-stuffs and on whom the prosperity of Canada depends. Desirable and undesirable types of fowls may be shown, with lectures on the fattening of chickens for the British and domestic markets, and exhibitions of killing, plucking and packing for export. A model poultry house, with incubators, brooders, fattening crates and other appliances, interested thousands of visitors at the Toronto fair this year. Practical demonstrations of the proper packing of fruit for export should be given in fruit districts by expert packers, and the most approved styles of fruit packages exhibited.

To Improve Farm Crops.—Another feature worthy of adoption by all agricultural societies, but which only a few have yet taken up, is the growing of illustrations plots on the fair grounds. At a small expense a very interesting and instructive exhibit can be made of grasses, clovers, millets, sorghums, corn, fodder and pasture plants, turnips, mangels and sugar beets can be provided. By studying these plots farmers

may learn just what crops and what varieties are best adapted to their farms, thus bringing home to particular attention of soil and climate the general conclusions arrived at by the experimental farms. In all kinds of farm crops the yield per acre may be materially increased and the quality substantially improved by the use of seed which has been graded up by careful growing and systematic intelligent selection, continued without interruption from year to year. This fact cannot be too soon brought home to the farmers of Canada, and one of the best ways of doing so would be to have on view at the fairs representative exhibits of the great work being done by members of the Canadian Seed Growers' association.

Interesting the Women and Children.—Demonstrations of agricultural processes are interesting to everyone, but the operation of a model kitchen and dining room, with exhibitions of cooking sample dishes and addresses on domestic science, will appeal especially to the farmers' wives and daughters. That the children may be led to take an intelligent interest in the fair, prizes might well be offered for exhibits by school children of cut-flowers, grains, clovers and grasses, roots and vegetables, fruits, pressed and mounted wild flowers, weeds and weed seeds, beneficial and injurious insects and native woods. These exhibits could be supplemented by essays for which prizes might be offered. Whenever tried this plan has proved to be effective in inducing children to begin the fascinating study of nature. Every precaution should be taken to have a good clean fair, where all the boys and girls may go to spend a pleasant and instructive day without coming in contact with any injurious influences.

Keeping Good Sires.—Many agricultural societies, particularly in Quebec and the Maritime provinces, do not hold fairs, but in lieu thereof buy and maintain pure bred sires for the use of their members. This is a practice which might well be imitated more largely in Ontario, where the number of fairs seems excessive. By adhering to one breed of cattle, horses, sheep or swine, as the case may be, the stock belonging to the members of a society may be graded up wonderfully at a small cost, but the habit of changing continually from one breed to another must prove fatal to all plans for bettering the stock of a farm. A flock of grades, which is just what a good farmer needs.

Yours very truly,
W. A. CLEMONS,
Publication Clerk.

Mr. Rider Haggard is deeply interesting as suggesting the possibility of telepathy between man and animals. That the force which causes the brain of a dog to act in the same way as that which actuates the brain of man there can be no question. That the dog's extremity of mind, finding the master's brain at rest, should have been able to act upon it, though not perfectly, yet impressively, appears quite believable. It is, I think generally admitted that a horse may feel the fright or nervousness of his driver.

For one person to speak of that which is already in another's thoughts is a common occurrence among the intimates of friends. My son and I were far along on an intricate Adirondack wandering when I suddenly said: "We have forgotten the map." "I had but just thought of it when you spoke," he replied, and this was but one of several such occurrences during the same trip. A practical and sensible college-boy as he is, my son declares that these coincidences have so frequently occurred to him that he can have no doubt of telepathy.

BULLETIN OF WEED SEEDS.

The seed division of the Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, has just issued an illustrated bulletin on the Weed Seeds Common to the Province of Ontario and Red Clover Seeds. It is well known that large quantities of seeds of many noxious weeds are each year unwittingly sown with grass and clover seed. The resemblance of many weed seeds to the common clover seeds with which they are found makes their detection difficult to an untrained eye, even if they be present to the extent of several hundred per cent. It is therefore of great importance to be able to identify at least the seeds of those weeds which are seriously injurious in agriculture. The text and illustrations of this bulletin (No. 16, New Series) are published with a view to assist farmers to identify the more dangerous weeds common to grass and clover seed. The illustrations of seeds are from drawings by J. H. Faulk, lecturer in botany, University of Toronto, and the descriptions are by G. H. Clark, chief of the seed division, Ottawa, to whom applications for copies of the bulletin should be addressed. As the edition is limited, it will be sent only to those who apply for it.

He Couldn't "Recover."—A young clergyman in making his weekly visits among the poor of his parish in a nearby country village quite recently learned of a poor sick man who had recently come from Ireland with his wife and one child. When the minister called at the house he was given a little recreation. When the clergyman returned a week later he found the husband still in bed.

"Haven't you been out of bed since I was here?" asked the man of the doctor.

"No, sir, he has not," replied the wife. "I don't like to tell you, sir, but the doctor gave my husband up a week ago and we sold the clothes. That's the reason he didn't go to the garden."