

MY OWN COUNTRY.

The west wind blows, the ruffled rose
Is drooping in the vale;
The fragrant flowers of woodland bowers
Make sweet the cooling gale.
Earth's flowers may bloom awhile for some,
But nevermore for me!
The sun is low, and I must go
Home to my own country.

Oh, sweet and fair the flower there,
Yea, sweeter far than here:
One spring for aye; one endless day:
Fields never turning here!
Oh, sweet are all the streams that roll
Along each heavenly lea!
No pain nor gloom can ever come
Into my country.

I would not live; I could not grieve
Longer in this strange land,
Since I may tread the streets o'er spread
With gold by God's own hand!
Ah! then adieu, sweet friends, to you;
Would you could go with me:
To walk the streets, and taste the sweets
Which bless my own country.

Oh, stay not long when I am gone;
Come over soon to me:
You're welcome where the best ones are,
Come to my own country!
Earth's flowers may bloom awhile for some,
But nevermore for me!
The sun is low, and I must go
Home to my own country.

—G. W. Kellomann, in the Current.

AN ODD MISTAKE.

Mr. Gray was a man who had committed a great blunder. He had retired! And now time hung heavy on his hands, and he knew not what to do with himself. So, for the lack of better occupation he took to calling on a certain plump widow of his acquaintance, who had a remarkably pretty daughter.

Bessie Peeploe was a younger edition of her mother. They had the same black eyes, rosy cheeks and, truth compels us to add, the same quick temper.

"I'll never marry old Gray," Bessie told Mrs. Peeploe, defiantly, after the manner of the young lady who refused a man before he "axed her," for Mr. Gray had not yet proposed, although every evening he presented himself at the widow's dwelling, and sat by the fireside in the most comfortable chair in the room.

"We shall see," returned the elder lady, and her bright eyes flashed, for she had set her mind upon the marriage, and already regarded Bessie as the mistress of Mr. Gray's comfortable house in the high street of the little town in which they resided.

"Yes, we shall see," muttered Bessie, and putting on her hat slipped out to have a walk with her admirer, Jack Wilkins, to whom she confided her trouble.

Jack was poor, and for that reason had refrained from offering his hand to pretty Bessie; but when she told him that old Gray was after her he could no longer disguise his feelings, and before they parted the girl he loved had consented to be his wife.

"What will mother say?" thought Bessie with a sigh, as they parted at the gate of Mrs. Peeploe's cottage. "That horrid man will be there."

That horrid man was there, in an armchair opposite Mrs. Peeploe.

He smiled at Bessie as she entered; but Bessie frowned on him in return, and his face fell. That evening the girl was absolutely sullen; she spoke in monosyllables, and ill-temper deprived her pretty face of half its beauty.

"I am afraid her mind is set against it," Mr. Gray told himself with a sigh, "and we might as well be so happy if she could only look at the matter in a proper light; but I suppose it's natural."

And he redoubled his efforts to be agreeable—poor little man! for he had an affectionate heart, and his big house was dull and lonely.

But Bessie's face never relaxed its set expression. She hated the man, and meant to let him see it, in defiance of her mother's angry glances. What business had a man old enough to be her father to come courting her?

"You have behaved disgracefully," her mother said, when Mr. Gray had taken his departure. "It is so wicked to trifle with the love of any man."

"I have never trifled with his love," replied her daughter. "He must know that I hate him. I have never attempted to disguise it; now, have I, mother?"

"You are a fool," replied her mother, bluntly. "Mr. Gray is the best chance you have ever had, or will ever have, and I insist upon your saying yes when he asks you to be his wife."

"Mother," cried Bessie, impulsively, throwing her arms around her mother's waist, hiding her face in her bosom. "Mother, I have already said yes to somebody else—somebody I love dearly."

"What?" gasped Mrs. Peeploe, freeing herself from her daughter's embrace. "What?"

"It is true enough," said Bessie, in a faltering tone. "Jack has asked me to marry him and I have said yes."

"Without consulting me!" exclaimed her mother angrily, looking at her with a stern, reproachful face.

"I love him," returned Bessie. "He is the only man in the world I could ever care for."

"Stuff and nonsense!" cried Mrs. Peeploe. "Even if I liked the young man—which I don't—your marrying would be out of the question. He can't afford to keep you."

"I am not afraid of poverty," said Bessie, bravely; "besides, we are not going to marry in haste. We can wait."

"Poor fool!" and Mrs. Peeploe's lips curled. "I know what this waiting means for a woman. She goes on trusting and believing in his promises; and then, when her beauty has faded, he turns round and marries someone else."

"Even then," said Bessie, "the woman is better off than if she had tied herself to somebody she could not love."

"Oh, yes, you are mad—quite mad," returned Mrs. Peeploe; "but, thank goodness, you have a mother who won't allow you to make an idiot of yourself. You will marry Mr. Gray, and forget all about that misguided young man, who ought to be ashamed

of himself."

"What for?" asked Bessie, with resentment.

"For proposing to a girl whom he has no means of keeping in comfort," returned Mrs. Peeploe. "You are a pair of lunatics; but, fortunately, I've some sense left, and I won't stand by and see my daughter ruined for life."

And she flounced off to bed without giving Bessie the usual good-night kiss. Poor girl, she missed it sorely, and sobbed herself to sleep; but she meant to be true to Jack all the same. Not even her mother's anger would induce her to give him up and marry old Gray.

She treated the object of his dislike with the greatest coldness on the next visit, and succeeded in making him look thoroughly miserable. But he brightened considerably when Mrs. Peeploe, to atone for her daughter's rudeness, sought to engage him in conversation. Indeed, the grateful little man ventured to give the elderly lady's hand a genuine squeeze when he rose to take his departure, and, to his surprise and joy, it was warmly returned.

"Now, if Miss Peeploe would only get over her objection, how happy and comfortable we should all be," he thought as he trudged home. "Hullo!" coming suddenly face to face with a handsome young fellow in a shabby ulster. "How how are you, Jack Wilkins?"

"Oh, I'm all right, thank you," said Jack, sulkily, and strode on without another word, while little Mr. Gray stood gazing after him with a look of comprehension on his face.

"I suppose she has been telling him all about it," he said to himself, with a sigh. "It's natural, I suppose, but it's selfish, too. Yes, it's a little bit selfish of them." And, shaking his head, the old gentleman knocked at the door of his house—that large, gloomy house that had never seemed homelike since the death of that sister who had been his right hand.

That evening Bessie was not at home. She had gone out to tea with some friends, Mrs. Peeploe said.

"I'm glad she's not at home, dear Mrs. Peeploe," said Mr. Gray, looking very red and nervous. "I am glad she is not at home, because it gives me an opportunity of saying something that is near to my heart."

He edged a little nearer to the widow as she spoke, and she smiled at him in an encouraging way. She was a handsome woman, and her smile revealed the whitest teeth in the world.

"Pray, go on, Mr. Gray," she said, "I am all attention."

Mr. Gray coughed and looked excessively uncomfortable. He wished that the widow would avert her bright eyes from his face; he steadily gazed confusedly at her, and he scarcely knew what he was going to say. He hardly liked to risk popping the question, for refusal would mean banishment from the cheerful fireside where he had spent so many pleasant hours. But the widow was waiting for him to speak, and he could not back out now; he had gone too far. Poor little man! His heart was beating like a sledge hammer.

How still the room was. He started as the ashes dropped upon the hearth. This awful silence must be broken, or what would the widow think of him? He must say something.

"You must have known my object in coming here so often," he blurted out at last.

"Well, I think I have guessed it," returned Mrs. Peeploe, continuing the stitches in the stocking she was knitting.

"I thought you would," observed Mr. Gray, considerably embarrassed by her reply, but relieved at the same time, for it saved him the ordeal of a long explanation. "Well, since you have guessed my secret, can you give me hope?"

The widow was silent for a few moments, and Mr. Gray gazed at her in the deepest anxiety, his heart throbbing with joy and fear. His home would seem more lonely than ever if he returned to it a disappointed man.

"I will be frank with you," she said presently. "As far as I am concerned there is no possible objection to the marriage, but Bessie is so young and foolish that—"

"Oh, yes! I thought she would object," said Mr. Gray, rubbing his face with a red silk handkerchief. "But don't you think you could bring her round? I'll be so kind to her that I'm sure she would get over her dislike of the idea. Now couldn't you induce her to be more reasonable?"

"I have tried my best," said the widow, with a deep sigh. "But the girl is wild and headstrong. I seem to have lost all influence over her."

"Then, after all, there is no hope for me," said Mr. Gray, looking terribly crest-fallen. "I thought we should be such a happy family—we four."

"We four?" repeated Mrs. Peeploe, staring at him as if she thought he had completely taken leave of his senses.

"Yes, we four! Why not?" asked Mr. Gray. "I know Jack Wilkins is very fond of Bessie, and I fancied we should all be happy together if I could only induce you to say 'yes!'"

"Then it is not Bessie you want," said the widow, dropping stitches in her stocking and blushing like a girl, as the truth flashed through her mind.

"Bessie!" exclaimed Mr. Gray, laughing heartily. "What should I want with a child like that. Didn't you know, here he grew suddenly grave, "that it was you I wanted, Jane?"

"We all thought it was Bessie," stammered Mrs. Peeploe. "Oh, what a fool I have been!"

"Don't say that," returned Mr. Gray, in a sad tone of voice. "It is I who have been a fool to think you could ever care for me."

The widow made no reply to this, but gave him a glance that spoke volumes. In another moment his arms were around her waist, and he had stolen a kiss.

"And you think that Bessie won't object?" he asked anxiously.

"I am sure she won't," returned Mrs. Peeploe, with a twinge of conscience, as she thought of the way in which she had received Bessie's confession of love for Jack Wilkins.

"I don't know so much about that," said a merry voice from the doorway, and Mr. Gray hastily withdrew his arm from the widow's waist as Bessie entered the room.

That kiss had opened the young lady's eyes as to the real state of affairs and she knew in a moment that her mother had been the real object of Mr. Gray's affections. But why had she not seen it before? She was angry with herself for being such an idiot. What in the world would Jack say? Would he be pleased to find that Mr. Gray was an imaginary rival?

Bessie pulled aside the blind and looked out to see Jack, who had escorted her home, standing on the opposite pavement with his eyes fixed on the cottage. Mr. Gray followed her, and, after peering over her shoulder, vanished from the room, while at the same moment her mother called her away from the window.

"Bessie," said Mrs. Peeploe, between laughter and crying, "forgive me for all the hard things I said of you."

"I will, indeed," returned Bessie, heartily, as she kissed her mother. "But what fools we have been! We must have been as blind as bats not to see that it was you he wanted all the time."

Just then the door opened, and Mr. Gray entered, accompanied by Jack Wilkins. The four looked at each other in silence for a few minutes, and then, tickled by the absurdity of the situation, Jack went into convulsions of laughter. His mirth was contagious and all laughed merrily, although Bessie tried to look indignant.

"All's well that ends well," observed Mr. Gray, rubbing his hands, then he bent forward and audaciously kissed Mrs. Peeploe right before the eyes of the young people.

It was not long before a double wedding was celebrated, Mr. Gray having lent Jack the money to start in business for himself, and from that day to this neither of the two couples have regretted their choice.

The Horseman.

All horsemen look alike. They may have different features, may be of different sizes, may be different in a thousand ways, yet they all look alike. Horsemen are born, not made by the capriciousness of circumstances. Trace a horseman back to the days of his childhood. As a boy he cared but little for school-yard sport. He ignored a ball and looked with contempt upon "bull pen" and "sheep meat." His peculiar habits impressed the school master. "That boy," he would often say, "will be something great. Just notice him. He is taciturn and peculiar, and, to tell you the truth, I believe he will develop into a poet." Follow the boy. When he arrives at home, he does not haul out a truck wheel wagon or a bow and arrow. He goes to the stable and looks at the horse. The horse may be an inferior animal and his neck may be long instead of being arched, yet the boy watches him with interest. He carries the horse and rubs him with a piece of blanket. Education with this boy is a side issue. The horse is supreme. The boy may be sent to college and may be graduated with high honors, yet his thoughts dwell not upon the masters of learning, the great poets and scientists whom his classmates worshipped but upon the horse. He knows the records of all the fast horses and he is happy when he can escape from his stilled surroundings and indulge his soul in a talk with a livery stable man. To him a Jay-Eve-See is a Daniel Webster, and a Goldsmith Maid can take the place of a Henry Clay. If he value man at all, it is as a horse medium.

To him, the man who knows most with regard to horses is most intelligent, for changing a little from Pope, a well made horse is the noblest work of God.

The horse boy leaves home at an early age, and starts out for himself. He secures employment in a livery stable and is happy, not on account of the pay which he receives, but because he can feast his eyes on horse flesh. By this time his features or rather some part of his face has received that peculiar stamp which distinguishes all horsemen. He has forgotten his grammar, and many words of refinement have slipped from his memory, but the vocabulary which he so dearly loves has been enriched by many horse terms. Now he talks horse with old men and is flattered when they tell him that he is well posted. When he takes up a newspaper he turns at once to the horse news. If there be but little paper news, it is very entertaining. As a rule he does not become a drunkard. He does not always become a sporting man, though he is passionately fond of the race course simply because he sees so many fine horses there. When he grows old and settles down on a farm, he has fine horses and is vexed because his sons do not worship them. His last days are spent in the stable. Early in the morning he totters out to look at Dick, old Cal and Juno. He is now an oracle. The horse boy—who has come from afar—listens with reverence to him, treasures up the words which the old man treasured up when he was a boy. On his death bed, the old man, upon the careful, silent entrance of his horseman, looks up and asks about the horses. He is not so anxious with regard to his children for he knows that they can take care of themselves, but his horses must be governed with a rod to which they are not accustomed. He has spent a horse life. He knew many men, but horses introduced them to him. He valued men, but it was from the horse standpoint.—*Arkansas Traveler.*

The Doctor Nonplused.

A little fellow happened into Dr. Hutchins' office a few days ago on an errand. The physician looked him over and rather startlingly remarked: "You're just the kind of a boy I'm looking for. I'm going to kill you."

The small chap was not a whit abashed, but looking wisely up into the doctor's face, asked: "Do you kill many boys in the course of the year?"

The doctor gave him a quarter in place of a dime, and forgot to ask for the change.—*Minneapolis Tribune.*

Miss Marjorie, the Tennesseean, writes so plainly that the letters in her script are big and clear enough to be read by the ordinary eye some four feet away.

A SAD EXPERIENCE.

How a Tenderfoot Is Broken into the Ways of the Wyoming Cowboys.

A tenderfoot, or green hand, is not very cordially received by the cowboys, writes a Cheyenne, Wyoming, correspondent of *The San Francisco Chronicle*. Wages are much lower than they used to be, and the riders blame the numerous recruits for the depreciation. Many of the newcomers quit the business after the first season, disgusted with their hardships, so that although there is a plentiful supply of apprentices, they never develop into plenty of good hands, and the experienced riders in an outfit have to do more than their share of the work. The most unpopular specimen of tenderfoot is the youngestster whose father sends him out to the range to spend a college vacation or break extravagant habits. These "New York dudes," as they are indiscriminately called, are always sons of the staid owner's friends, and they are prone, especially if fresh from college, to think very contemptuously of an illiterate puncher. If they let such a sentiment manifest itself the puncher promptly displays his sense of equality, if not, indeed, of superiority, and is quite ready to try conclusions on the spot. He dearly loves to guy a conceited youth, and does it very thoroughly when he sets about it.

"So you're from college, are you, Johnnie? We had a college buck in the 'Two Bar G' last year. Told us his old man was going to give him a big herd of his own, and gave every waddy in the outfit a song and dance about hiring him for his boss. When the round-up was camped high town he borrowed one buck's \$30 spurs and another buck's \$100 bridle, because he wanted to have his picture taken with a pony. Then he went back to college. You're pretty lean, ain't you, Johnnie? I reckon it ain't polite to call you Johnnie. Let's call him Fatty—he'll fill up to it when he gets some old persimmon and beans into him. Can you ride, Fatty?"

Perhaps the boy youth rather fancies himself as a horseman and says: "I have been riding ever since I was 10 years old. I haven't tried my saddle yet, and I never rode anything but an English tree. But I was out with the hounds at Newport last season, and did pretty well. I guess I can ride these ponies anyhow. You talk about their bucking and all that, but I don't believe they are as hard to sit as a wicked three-quarter-bred horse."

We ain't got any three-quarter horses, but we got some little ponies that's all-fired hard to stay with. We're going to clean out the strays in the bull pasture this morning, and that'll be a chance for you. Jim, you let Fatty ride that gotch-eared buckskin of yours. The boss won't mind, and Fatty ought to have a good horse to begin with. He's a little mean to saddle, Fatty, and he's kind of stiff-gaited in his lope sometimes, like as if he was pitching, but he's lightning after a cow."

When they go down to the corral someone obligingly robes the buckskin, and, handing him over to Fatty, tells the latter to saddle up. The confusion of straps and the absence of buckles puzzle Fatty, and the boys, eager to see the fun, help him to saddle, the buckskin kicking and plunging all the while. When everything is in order Fatty prepares to mount. Just then the buckskin rears and falls backward. As he picks himself up again and stands lowering at Fatty, someone says: "If he goes to do that when you're on him tell him you're from college and he won't fall on you, young fellow."

This time Fatty gets his hands on the horn of the saddle, and just as he is going to swing himself up the buckskin whirls and kicks his hat off. A kindly hope is expressed that his head is on loose, so that if the buckskin kicks that off next time it won't wrench, and then the boss tells Fatty to hold the check-piece of the bridle with his left hand until his leg is over the saddle, to prevent the horse's whirling round again. He succeeds in mounting, and the prophecy that he will get off easier than he got on is no sooner made than it is fulfilled. Someone catches the buckskin, and the tenderfoot eagerly explains that he was not fairly seated before trouble began.

"We'll hold him for you, Fatty," and two stalwart waddies hold the buckskin by the ears until Fatty has screwed himself down in the saddle and cinched his teeth.

The buckskin walks off peacefully, and Fatty tries to feel at home in the round-seated saddle, longing for the knee-pads of the familiar English pigskin. He touches the buckskin with the spur to wake him up, and finds himself shot up in the air. He comes down on the horn of the saddle. Next trip up he lands on the buckskin's neck. The third ascension leaves him in the mud of the corral, with a corner kicked off his ear and every bone in his body jarred.

Self-Evident.

"Them's mine," said Colonel Yerger.

"All right, Colonel," replied Jules Barnfield, the bartender.

"And be careful not to charge me with them twice."

"That's something I never do."

"You had better not overcharge me, because I keep all the drinks I take in my head."

"I knew that, Colonel, before you spoke. Anybody can tell that just by looking at you."

N. B.—Colonel Yerger's face looks as if it had been painted red and varnished.—*Texas Siftings.*

A Queer Fish.

The flounder or flat fish, when first hatched, has eyes placed like those of other fish. Soon one eye begins to move down nearer the mouth and over to the other side of the head, until finally both eyes are on the same side, usually the right. The flounder lies on its side partly to escape its enemies, which it does by burying itself in the sand, and partly because it has no air-bladder and its fins are imperfectly developed.

CURIOUS CHINESE CUSTOMS.

A Amusing Lecture by an Oriental Humorist.

Yan Phoo Lee, a young Chinaman with a very dry way of saying very funny things, stood in the hall of the Young Men's Christian association Tuesday evening, says *The Brooklyn Eagle*, clad in the garb of his countrymen, and wearing the national cue with a skull cap surmounting it. He talked for an hour or more about Chinese customs, endeavoring to correct American mistakes. When the lights went out the map of China shone out on a big sheet over the platform and Mr. Yan Phoo Lee continued his lecture with the aid of a stereopticon. He said in part:

The first thing which strikes even the casual observer in China is what to a foreigner seems to be oddity in the people and their customs. The contrast between these and those prevailing in the western hemisphere has afforded an endless topic for newspaper wit and satire. This would not be the case if the origin and meaning of Chinese customs were understood by the gentlemen who make merry over them, for their laughter arises from wonder, and wonder, as a great writer says, is the result of ignorance. I will attempt tonight not so much to trace these customs to their sources as to show their right to exist—to show that their character of liberty is still valid. Let us first consider the customs which surround the advent of those little angels which we call babies. Under every bed in China there is a little idol and censor, dedicated to Poo Paw, or auntie. This takes the place of the maiden aunt in China, for we have no maiden aunts there. [Laughter.] She is supposed to protect every baby. This, of course, is a part of our superstition. A few days after the birth a christening ceremony takes place and a name is chosen for the child. Names in China are not conventional. They are taken from the dictionary because of their happy meaning. For instance, take my name, it means wealth through imperial favor. My grandfather had expectations of my becoming a great mandarin through the bounty of the emperor. Of course you see that his expectations were not realized. [Laughter.] Those names which you see on the fronts of Chinese shops are not the names of people. They are business titles or mottoes, something like your "Reliable Insurance company." "Hop Sing" means "fit to prosper." A drug store bearing the sign "Chung Sing Yung" means "Long life to all." "Lung Fat" does not mean that the owner of the sign has fat lungs; it signifies "prosper and get rich." We have a custom of giving pigs' feet and ginger to a mother after the birth of a child. The pigs' feet are boiled in ginger and are supposed to be very nourishing. About a month after the birth of the child we have a ceremony which we call the "full moon." It is the custom then for friends and relatives to make presents of cloth and cakes and jewelry. Sometimes the parents thereupon give a feast and send back to the givers of presents slices of roast pig, for roast pig is esteemed a great dainty in China. The next event in the child's life is the ceremony of shaving when the embryo cue is formed. Americans have a wrong notion concerning the cues. It is merely worn in China because it is a fashion, not because it has any religious significance. I am frequently asked whether, if I went back to China, I would wear my cue? Yes, I would, but not growing upon my head. What is to prevent my wearing it like this (taking off his skull cap with the cue attached)? I would wear my cue in China because it would be very uncomfortable for me to walk through the streets there without it. I would be pelted with sticks and stones and other substances, for the people would say: "That man is a Christian, because he has given up Chinese fashions." Chinamen got their cues in the first place from the Manchu Tartars. A civil war was reigning in China at the time, 1670, and the emperor of the Manchus was invited to ally himself with one of the chiefs. He did, and after he conquered the common enemy he conquered his ally also, and became emperor of China. He introduced the cue force through an edict by which he sentenced to decapitation all who would not wear cues. So we got the cue force at first. Since then it has become popular and is now the thing to wear in China. Our costume also underwent very considerable modifications at the hands of the Tartars. Previous to their coming the dress of the Chinese was much more pretty than it is now. I saw in *The Youth's Companion*, not long ago, a portrait of Confucius wearing a cue and a dress like this you see me wearing. It was about as appropriate as bangs would be upon the mother of the iracchi. [Laughter.] It is very hard for children to learn the Chinese language because it consists of words of one syllable only. As there are forty thousand words in use and as the organs of speech are limited as to the variety of sounds they can make we have many words with a dozen different meanings each and some with even more. It is hard also to learn our written language, because there are as many characters as there are words. These characters were pictures of the objects meant by the words in the first place, but they have been greatly modified, and could not be recognized as the pictures of anything now. You hear it said that children turn their backs on the teacher when they recite. They do; there is no catechising of children in the Chinese schools; they simply learn a thing by heart and go up and repeat it. They turn their backs so that they may not be able to see the lesson. The ferrule is frequently used in Chinese schools, though it has long been banished from those of America. The teacher will prompt once or twice, but the third time his ferrule comes down. So that the education of boys and girls in China proceeds under considerable difficulty. Girls go to school till they are 11 or 12 years of age. It is not deemed necessary for them to know as much as the boys. If they can write letters to their fiancés they will do very well.

A Feathered Traitor.

Peter the Great of Russia had scarcely finished his war with Sweden when he began to occupy his mind with another plan to extend. He resolved to go to war with Persia.

He particularly desired that his designs in this direction should be kept a profound secret, and in order that no outsider should suspect anything, he consulted with the Empress Catherine and his prime minister, Prince Menzikoff, in the boudoir of the Empress. Peter was in the habit of discussing all his plans with the Empress.

Prince Menzikoff and the Empress were very much opposed to Peter's plans for the invasion of Persia. Frequently during the animated conversation that ensued Peter exclaimed: "K' Persi padjom," or, in English, "We go to Persia." That was his first and last word on the subject.

Before the conference was ended the Emperor took occasion to impress upon Menzikoff and the Empress the imperative necessity of maintaining a positive silence in regard to the proposed campaign.

Two days afterward Peter being in an unusual good humor, engaged one of the servants of the palace in conversation. The servant happened to be, as is usual for most people in Russia, under the influence of liquor.

"What's the news, Ivan?"

"Nothing, little father, except that we all are going to Persia."

"What did you say?" asked the astonished monarch, who could scarcely believe his ears.

The answer was repeated.

"Who told you so?"

"Kurief, the waiting maid of the Empress, told me so."

"Tell her to come to me at once."

"She has gone with the Empress to the summer palace, and will not return before night."

The Czar was impatient to find out from the waiting maid how she had obtained his secret. When she returned to the palace he questioned her closely, but her explanation was so incredible that he accused her of lying. He then went to the Empress and upbraided her in the harshest terms for having disclosed a secret, which like any information about Yum Yum came under the head of a state secret. The Empress expressed her willingness to swear on a stack of Bibles that she had not opened her mouth on the subject to any living human being.

Furious with rage, Peter next hauled the unhappy Menzikoff over the coals, threatening even personal assault, but the prime minister swore by everything that was sacred he had never said Persia to anybody.

"Then Ivan was right after all," said the Czar, pointing to a green parrot with a yellow head in a cage. "Here is the traitor and he ought to have his head chopped off like other traitors."

And such was the fact. The parrot was in the room when the conference between Peter, the Empress and Menzikoff took place. It heard the Czar say several times: "We go to Persia," and repeated the words to the servant, who, in turn, had disseminated the news through the palace.

There is a lesson in this to everybody who harbors a parrot on his premises. Such persons should be careful not to say anything in the hearing of a parrot which they would not care to have published in daily papers. An expression repeated several times emphatically will be retained in the memory of a parrot and brought out before company with startling fidelity. That is the way parrots are taught to converse.

As far as Peter the Great was concerned the treachery of the Empress' pet was not attended by any evil consequences, but from that time on the parrot was removed to another room when any State secrets were under discussion.—*Texas Siftings.*

Women as Listeners.

Woman is primarily a being who listens. She has in these days lost much of her original teachableness, but she has not yet entirely discarded the appearance of being teachable. In her capacity for hearing without obeying lies her true power. As a talker, she has her peers; as a listener, she is unequalled.

If, as a French writer says, the conversation of women in society is like the straw in which china is packed—worthless itself, but without which everything would be broken—the listening of woman is what saves us from a babel of tongues that would bring the sky about our ears in no time. Not that woman is always, or as a rule, unwilling to use her tongue (there is no need of being radical), but the listener who encourages you with eyes and expression and appreciative laughter, is a woman. She never lets her glance wander in an absent manner, to be brought back to meet yours at an important point with an effort of which you are both keenly conscious. To whom are you tempted to relate bits of curious personal experience, the suffering caused by some random shot of outrageous fortune, the fancies suggested by some book, some view, some journey? To a clever, sympathetic woman, whose eyes brighten with interest or sadden with sympathy as she listens, who seems to anticipate your next word with eager pleasure, and who, for some reason or other, just then, while you are in this confidential mood, has very few experiences or fancies of her own to communicate—only hints at them—just enough to keep you in countenance. *Lippincott's Magazine.*

A Reasonable Request.

Bill Simpson is an engineer on the I. & G. N. railroad. He was off duty at Austin a few days ago. He met Judge Peterby, with whom he was acquainted.

"I say, Judge, I wish you would do me a favor."

"I'll do it."

"It will be appreciated by all the engineers on the I. & G. N. railroad."

"What can I do for you?"

"Please don't hang around the depot when the trains are coming in. They are overlastingly mistaken your red nose for a danger signal and it confuses them."—*Texas Siftings.*