

A BACHELOR'S ERROR.

Harris Clark, the hero of this sketch, was neither wise, useful nor agreeable, and had lived fifty years alone, when he might have been a husband with God's best gift to man—woman.

Bill, as Clark was decidedly a wealthy man, his friend Arthur Gould thought he would make an excellent husband for his sister, who was slightly on the shady side of 30. So one evening, finding him in his solitary apartments, looking downcast and miserable, Gould said:

"Clark, I know what ails you."
"What makes you think anything ails me?" gruffly inquired Clark.

"Because you are not lively and happy. You are lonely and want society. No one can enjoy life without companionship. In short, you need a wife."

"I've got along all these years without one, and I guess I can finish the same way."

"Because you have been a fool all these years is no reason why you should continue one."

"True!" said Clark. "Had I taken a wife twenty years ago I should have been happier today. But who would marry an old fellow like me now?"

"Many a nice girl would jump at the chance."

"I don't want an old maid," said this particular old bachelor. "Some pretty, bright girl might tempt me. But, then, this courting business I know nothing about, you see, and taking it on the whole I might pay too dearly in advance."

"Well," said Gould, impatiently, "on the whole, if the truth was known, I think you are a trifle too lazy to live."

"Why, I'm all ready for a bargain. Show me some of these nice girls you seem to think are so plenty."

"If you please to visit my family you will have an opportunity of meeting many ladies. I will introduce you to my sister, for one; she will introduce you to others, and—"

"Good! I'll spend tomorrow evening with you."

"We'll be glad to see you," they cried, and Clark's thick head was full of new ideas. At 6 o'clock the next night he stood before his mirror trying necktie after necktie, and carefully parting what remained of his hair. At last he was fully equipped and started.

On his arrival he found none but the family present, and being introduced to the ladies, passed a pleasant evening. He watched every movement of the younger lady, and before leaving had concluded to seek no further for a wife, providing the charming Miss Gould could be persuaded to become Mrs. Clark. She was attractive, pleasing in conversation, and graceful in manner.

"She is the woman for me," thought Harris as he said good-night, promising to call soon again.

He went home from his second visit happier than from the first, for, in addition to his increasing admiration for the lady, he felt assured, by her evident exertions to entertain him, that his feelings were reciprocated.

One unfortunate circumstance must be explained before proceeding. Owing partly to Mr. Gould's carelessness in presenting the ladies as his wife and sister merely, and partly Clark's confusion in confronting two women at once, he had mistaken one for the other, and fallen in love with Mrs. Gould (decidedly the prettier of the two), and who, perfectly innocent of his error, strove to make matters pleasant in behalf of her sister-in-law. She noticed once or twice that he addressed her as Miss Gould, but knowing him to be a somewhat illiterate man, let it pass for a slip of the tongue.

Time passed, and Harris determined to speak. One evening he found Mrs. Gould alone, and was informed that "Arthur and sister" had gone to make



"YOUR WIFE!"
a call, but would soon return. Harris expressed a little sorrow at their absence; now was his time, he thought; so, summoning all his courage, he commenced:

"My dear lady, forgive me for speaking my mind frankly when I assure you that the happiest hours of my life have been passed in your society."

"Why, thanks for the compliment," said Mrs. Gould. "It gives me great pleasure to welcome you here, and you will enjoy life better than in the solitary existence you have hitherto led. Arthur has a deep interest in you, and I shall always be pleased to entertain you to the best of my abilities."

"Thank you," said Clark. "I feel that a single life is an unhappy one, and if not too late I propose to amend."

"Indeed! Then you think of marrying. I congratulate you. May I ask who is to be the honored lady?"

"That depends upon you. I have never met with one who inspired me with such esteem, such love, as yourself. All I have I lay at your feet. Will you be my wife?"

He paused and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. Mrs. Gould

utterly confounded, sprang to her feet, exclaiming:

"My wife! Why, Mr. Clark, explain yourself!"

Her husband, just entering, caught the last words.

"What is the matter?" asked he, going alternately from his wife to Clark.

"No matter!" replied the astounded suitor. "You know as well as I do. Your sister appears to have taken fright at something—I don't understand what!"

"My sister! Why, that is my wife!"

"Your wife!" screamed Clark. "Why have you deceived me in this matter?"

"No one has deceived you, my dear fellow. You must have deceived yourself. That is my wife. This is my sister," pointing to the other lady now entering the room.

Poor Harris was struck dumb. His face, which had been a low brow, and annihilated space between the Goulds and his own "bachelor's hall," where in a short time he was seated before a fire built of fancy neckties, sachet bags, light gloves, and other superfluous articles of an old bachelor's toilet.

As to what he thought, said, or did after that time there is no account, but Mrs. Gould was his first love, and without doubt she was his last.—Emily Keating in Boston Post.

CHINESE EMPEROR ON REFORM

Wall of Weakness Such as China Has Not Heard in Two Hundred Years.

A curious decree by the emperor of China has, says the London Times, just reached this country. It deals with the necessities of China at the present juncture, and is of great length. It opens by saying that since the war with Japan, a great number of memorials, from officials of all grades, recommending what should be done to strengthen the empire and maintain its integrity, have been received. But when any question of vital importance with foreign countries arises, these men who are so eager to advise are always found wanting. This is their condition now (purposes the emperor), just when the country is surrounded on all hands by powerful and crafty neighbors, who seek advantages and combine to overthrow China, because they see that the defenses of the country are neglected and decayed, and that the fleet is small and insignificant. The main question, therefore, is reform and reorganization of the national defenses. The trouble is that the present resources of the country are insufficient for the purpose, and the deficiency in the exchequer seems to be very great. Lately, says the emperor, he sent out a decree ordering the provincial authorities to prevent speculation in the collection of tithes, and to disband useless territorial regiments which only suck the life-blood of the provincial exchequers. The replies to this decree did not attempt to deal with either of these two vital points; nothing was done toward discovering the exact number of dummy names on the rolls, and things now are just as bad as before. When the present dynasty began to reign (we are still summarizing the decree, and as far as possible using the emperor's exact words throughout) the armies were enlisted from the whole population. No one then had ever heard of tithes or miscellaneous duties, but there was no want of money and the troops were never wanting in their duty. At present there are many taxes, such as tithes and the opium duties, yielding large sums, yet the ordinary expenses are not paid. This is due to extravagance. Reference is made to the revenue in 1853 and 1856, and the expenditure in those years, and a recent memorial is quoted from one of the presidents of the boards at Peking, in which it is proposed that a careful statement should now be prepared, so that superfluous expense may be dealt with systematically. In particular it is said that the practice of putting dummy names on the regimental rolls, the corruption in the tithes and salt departments, and the sinecures for favored officials should all be dealt with, and the expenditure kept within the amount decreed in all departments. The emperor approves of these recommendations, and calls on the high authorities in Peking and the provinces "to aid one another to serve us loyally in our time of distress, and not to attempt to shift off upon one another important duties just because it happens that different provincial boundary lines separate one from the other." Further these personages are adjured to remember the favors hitherto bestowed on them, and loyally and diligently to attain the ends the emperor is now striving for. Again, brave and capable oficers are to be sought out elsewhere and their names brought to the emperor's notice, that they may receive suitable commands. "Thus may we hope to obtain officers who, with their men may be a human bulwark to the country against aggressive foes." It may be doubted whether any emperor for the last 200 years has ever allowed such an admission of weakness, or such a wall of helplessness, to be published to his subjects.

SENATOR CONGER'S ROMANCE.

Finally Wedded the Woman Whose Hand Was Once Denied Him.

Ex-Senator Conger of Michigan, who occupied a prominent place in public affairs for many years, and died at Detroit City was a very remarkable man, says a Washington correspondent. His father was a Presbyterian minister, who emigrated from New York state to northern Ohio early in the century, and sent his son to the academy at Avon, Erie county, and afterwards to Western Reserve college, where he paid for his education by serving as janitor of the college building, ringing the chapel bell, and attending the horse and milking the cow of one of the professors. He graduated with honors, studied law, and afterwards settled in Port Huron, Mich., which was his home during the rest of his life. Judge Humphreys, one of the great men of Ohio, eminent socially, professionally and politically, proud, rich and aristocratic, had a beautiful daughter named Stella, with whom Mr. Conger fell in love. His affection was reciprocated, and they became engaged, but Judge Humphreys's pride would not permit his daughter to wed a charity student. Miss Stella afterward married Gen. Shelby of the army, and lived for many years in St. Paul. Mr. Conger married a lady at Port Huron. One day when he was at the height of his fame and influence and was recognized as the republican leader in the house of representatives a page brought him a card from a lady in the gallery. It was the name of Mrs. Shelby, and glancing up into the gallery he recognized his old sweetheart. He was very soon at her side exchanging information about events of the quarter of a century that had passed since they had seen each other. "I am a widower," said he, "and I am a widow," said she, and when she asked him to call upon her at the National hotel he replied that he would be glad to do so if he might come to old terms. They were married a few days later, and their lives were very happy. She had wealth and ability, and although both of them were old-fashioned, unassuming people, they held a prominent place in the political circles of the capital. Since he retired from public life Mr. Conger had been living quietly with his sons in Washington. While he had taken little interest in current affairs he had seldom been seen at the capitol. Recently he had been so infirm that he was unable to get about. He was 80 years old at the time of his death.

CURIOUS LEAVE-TAKING.

Freshmen Made Things Lively for Their Dear Teachers.

The freshman class of Johns Hopkins university took leave of one of its professors in a way of its own. It was the last day of the class before final examinations and the large body of students assembled with broad smiles and an air of general expectancy, says the Baltimore Sun. In a few moments the door opened and a messenger boy appeared with a large funeral pillow on which were embroidered the words: "God Bless Our Teacher." He marched straight up to the professor, presented his funeral gift and demanded a receipt. The professor argued, but the boy didn't understand his logic, until the learned doctor looked threateningly and the boy "guessed he would wait for one." Then signs of trouble began to appear all over the classroom. One sign bore the line "To Keep His Memory Green," and another "Remember the Maine." Other choice and popular expressions, appropriate and inappropriate to the day, were strung up. Slowly an odor began to creep into the room. It may have been the hydrogen sulphide, but it might have been anything else which hadn't any business there. It stole gently through the keyhole, stifled the students near the door and moved in waves of ever-increasing circles about the room, carrying with it all the odoriferous suggestions of myriads of eggs of the middle ages. Suddenly in the middle of the class began to appear beasts of the field and fowls of the air. One rat was seen to dart from a crowd of students and make his way across the room, where he sought cold comfort in a last winter's radiator. A pigeon winged its way aimlessly to the back of a chair and several students were about to make impromptu addresses, which they had carefully prepared, when President Gilman appeared upon the scene. The students began to look innocent and shocked. The pigeon crawled back into the bosom of its erstwhile tormentor; the rat struggled up to the radiator; the signs disappeared, and even the odor began ingloriously to take to flight and lose itself in space. President Gilman said a few words, but they cut the overburdened atmosphere like the crack of a ten-pounder. It was a "sad but glorious day for President Gilman," said one of the freshmen as he sought the haven of refuge in the gymnasium.

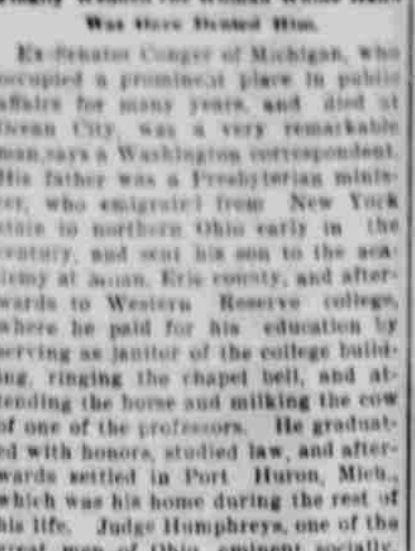
A Shrewd Man.

Many and strange are the methods the westerners adopt in money making. In the early days of Seattle a man pre-empted a site on the water front of the town. The law required that he have a house. Near by on the beach was a weatherbeaten hull of a vessel. He drew the remnant of his lot and started a second "Rudder Grange." It was not long before sites on the shore were in demand and the shrewd "squatter" sold his lot for \$250,000.

Gratified.

Manager—What qualifications have you for the position of nightwatchman? Applicant—Why, I wake at the least noise.—Tit-Bits.

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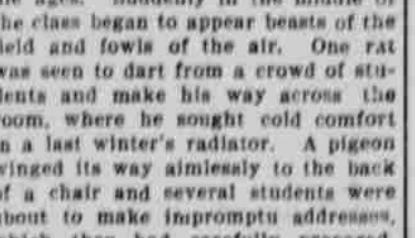
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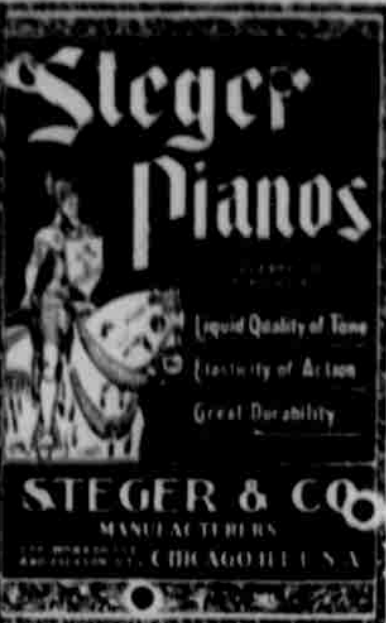
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