

"PERSIMMONS."

It was near the close of a hot, sultry, midsummer's day: the clerks in the general ticket office of the — R. R. Co. (of whom I am chief) were busy with their several duties, now and then casting an impatient glance at the clock upon the wall, so slowly creeping round to 5 o'clock and liberty. A gentle tap upon the little wicket-gate which shut out the public attracted our attention and announced a visitor. Hat in hand, he stood just within the office, a young man of perhaps twenty-two years, dressed in a well-worn, though scrupulously clean suit of clothes, evidently "off the pile" as the boys were fond of alluding to a ready-made suit. "Can I speak with the gentleman in charge?" he asked one of the clerks, who had stepped to the counter to ascertain his wishes. "Certainly!" replied that personage the general ticket agent, leaving his desk and advancing toward the visitor. "What can I do for you to-day?" "I am looking for work, sir, and wish to apply for a situation in your office, if such can be obtained." "Oh! Very sorry to say we are all full," replied the official kindly. "Hope you may be successful elsewhere, but really, we can do nothing for you." With a polite "Thank you, sir," the applicant disappeared, and work was resumed, only to be interrupted again by the same voice speaking in another part of the room. "Can I see the gentleman in charge?" There was an explosion of laughter from the clerks as they divined the situation. Our office is a long one, running nearly the whole length of the building, with four doors opening into the corridor. The applicant for work had peered out of one door and into the next, where he had made his application for attention before noticing that he was in the same office. Toward him now came the man he sought. "Well, my boy! you mean business, I see. Now tell me what can you do?" "My duty, sir, whatever it is. I am something of an accountant, and only required the opportunity to serve you faithfully." For a moment our chief was buried in thought, then turning to us he said, in his usual genial manner: "Well, boys, he seems a persistent sort of a chap. Can't we arrange some sort of a desk here, and let him help out upon the tickets during the summer rush? That was a brave thing to do, make his second application, so soon after a rebuff, and I for one feel disposed to him. Got any references?" turning again to the now highly-pleased young man. "Yes, sir; here," producing a letter. "Perfectly satisfactory, perfectly. Commence where you are myself thirty years ago. Great things, courage and perseverance; good capital to start with. When do you want to commence?" "Immediately, if I may." "All right!" Boys fix him up, and show him the system." "And back to his private office passed the 'gentleman in charge,' leaving the new acquisition to us. His name was Simmons, Arthur H. Simmons in full, and it was this surname when written upon the blanks of our reports which we signed the general ticket agent's name per—our own that gave him the nickname "Persimmons."

just preparing to close and lock the great iron doors, when we were interrupted by the entrance of the paymaster. "Tom," he said, addressing me, "I want to lock this money in your vault for tonight. Just got it from the bank to pay off with tomorrow." "All right, sir, in she goes," I answered, "and you shall see the doors locked yourself." So saying, after placing the box containing the money inside, I swung to the heavy doors and shot the bolts into position. Our office is situated in the depot building over the train-house. Everything required to make the offices pleasant and attractive was furnished and to securely protect so much valuable property from fire the general manager had introduced the city fire-alarm, and we were provided with a private box to be rung in from the depot. After making sure that all was safe, with a joking admonition to "Persimmons" not to work too hard, I left him alone with his work. What transpired between that time and morning is best told in his own words, as he rehearsed it the next day to an admiring audience of his fellow clerks and out officials, gathered round his bed, for he was badly injured and racked with pain. Said he: "Between 9 and 10 in the evening, just as I was finishing my task two men suddenly made their appearance in the office, and holding revolvers to my head commanded me not to move or speak on peril of my life. "Now, my boy," said one of the ruffians, "we've got you foul, open that vault and be quick about it." "Impossible!" I said. "I do not know the combination, no one but the chief clerk can open that door." "Can't he? Well, you just set quietly there and see these little persuaders work it. I guess, Bill, we'll have to blow it; this chap seems to be giving us the straight tip. So get out the drills and go at it; there's twenty thousand in good greenbacks in there, we'll get all ready, and next time a train runs in below we'll touch her off, safe enough. The noise of the train will drown the explosion. "Say! Does the watchman come up often o' nights?" "No," I replied. "He knows I'm here, and thinks everything safe." "Well, if he wants to come up don't you stop him. We've got a pard layin' for him on the stairs, who's dyin' to make his acquaintance. Now you just open your mouth and take in these bits, while Sack there's puttin' on the hobble." "So I was gagged, and fastened securely to my chair with a handcuff round one ankle and the other ring locked round the chair leg. My hands they did not tie. I sat there some time watching their operations, and a great desire arose within my mind to spoil their plan and save the company's money. But how; I could not cry out, my mouth was stopped. I could not leave the room for wherever I went the chair must follow. I began to look about for something that would cry out for me. "What was there with which I could commune with those outside? Ah! the fire alarm. Could I reach the box unobserved, and ring in an alarm, how quickly the engines would respond, and the burglars be forced to leave, even if they were not captured. "No sooner thought of than undertaken. The chair in which I was seated was upon castors. "Luckily my chair was within ten feet of the box; slowly and carefully I commenced to push with my feet upon the floor, and moving nearer and nearer the goal. I worked it without attracting the attention of the burglars, who were back toward me busily at work. Quickly I seized the key, and with fingers trembling with excitement inserted it, unlocked, and threw wide open the little door, grasped the lever, one good downward stroke—and just as the ruffians discovered my movements and started for me, I heard the deep tones of the city hall bell, followed by the more distant ones like an echo of the first, strike one, then a second's space, and again one, two, Box 12, our own private box—all was safe. "Curses and blows from the baffled robbers followed, and I knew no more until I found myself in my own bed here, and they tell me the money is safe. With many congratulations upon his escape, and much praise for his bravery, we left him, and passing from the room were conducted to the street by a young and pleasant looking woman, clinging to whose skirts as if for protection from the unusual throng of visitors, were two lovely children. "He is my brother, gentlemen," she explained, in answer to our inquiry, and a braver or more generous brother never lived. He has been our only support since my husband died, two years ago, and without a thought of himself, he has devoted every dollar of his earnings to us. My children, sir, fairly worship him, and can see nothing bad in his misfortune, as 'it will be the means of keeping him at home with us for a little time." This then was his secret, this was he had for every cent. Well might his fellow clerks feel the shame they expressed, that sometimes during remarks had been made before him as

his "close fist policy," and determine that once again with us, they would make amends. But he never did return. After a brief convalescence some offer in the west, from whence he had originally come, attracted him, and coming into the office one day he bid us all good-by, and left us. To-day I met one of the boys who was with us as clerk that summer, now traveling agent for one of the western through lines. In conversation he said: "By the way! I saw our old friend 'Persimmons' in Chicago. He's general agent for the — R. R. there (naming one of the most prominent lines centering there.) I took dinner with him, at a pleasant little place in the suburbs. His sister still keeps house for him, and the children seem to have lost none of their regard for the old fellow. They are better fixed than they were here, but 'Persimmons' is the same old 'Persimmons,' in spite of his altered rig. He sent his regards to all!"

The Marriageable Age.

Swedish youths aged 21 may take as life partners maidens of 15, and in the Netherlands they must be 18 and 16 respectively.

According to the Roumanian laws the ages are 18 for males and 15 for females, but a guardian looks after the affairs of the husband until he has reached his 21st year.

At the age of fifteen the girls of Belgium may take unto themselves husbands, while those of the opposite sex transgress the law if they marry prior to reaching their 18th year.

Lapland's marriage code makes mention only of the age limit for the masculine gender, which must be 17, while in Norway and Turkey there is no fixed period for either sex.

Danish males and females must be, respectively, 20 and 17 before they can become man and wife, while in France the minimum age for the former is 18 and 14 for the latter.

In Spain, Portugal and Greece, the limits are the same—14 and 12—and in Switzerland cantonal laws are such that the ages vary from 14 to 20 for males and 12 to 18 for the gentler sex.

In Arabia, British India, Persia, Siam and Burmah, girls are allowed to wed at the age of 10 or even 9 years, and in many instances their husbands are not many months older.

England's laws provide that no female can marry who has not passed the age of 12 years, and the male must be at least 14. Marriages in that country are governed by many restrictions too lengthy to be quoted here.

When a Bavarian female is between the ages of 12 and 15 she can marry, but the males cannot legally do so until they are from 14 to 18 years old, the variation depending upon the district in which they live.

Russia has a law making 18 and 16 the legal ages at which the sexes may be joined in wedlock, and in some special cases the bishop of the diocese in which the couple resides may permit their marriage six months prior to the limits quoted.

One would naturally imagine that in Italy where males develop very rapidly the legal marriageable age would be much earlier than in colder climes. Nevertheless it is above the usual standard in that respect, being 18 for men and 16 for women.

State laws regulate marriage in the United States, and nearly all of them require the consent of the parents when the man is less than 21 and the woman under 18 years of age. In several states strict laws regarding marriage licenses are enforced even after both parties have passed the 21st milestone in their life journey.

In chilly Finland, if a couple desires to be married before the man has reached 21 and the woman 15, they must obtain an imperial decree. The only exception is made in the case of peasants engaged in service by the year or those who have a regular trade or business. These can wed respectable groom is 18 and the bride 14.

In Hungary there are canonical and civil marriages, but the legal limits of age are the same in both cases, the male being permitted to assume the weighty responsibilities of marriage when 14, while his bride may be two years younger. The father's consent is absolutely necessary, without which the union is considered null and void. At the age of 24 Hungarian youths to be minors, while the girls attain their majority at 16.

Wire Finer Than Hair.

We are at work just now on some pretty small wire, said a Pittsburgh metal worker, recently. It is 1-500th of an inch in diameter—finer than the hair on your head, a great deal. Ordinary fine wire is drawn through steel plates, but that wouldn't do for this work, because if the hole were any way so little it would make the wire larger, and that would spoil the job. Instead, it is drawn through what is practically a hole in a diamond, so that there is of course no wear. These diamond plates are made by a woman in New York, who has a monopoly of the art in this country. The wire is then run through machinery silk thread that is 600's of an inch in thickness—even finer than the wire, you see. This wire is used in making the receiving instruments of ocean cables, the galvanometers used in testing cables and measuring insulation of covered wires.

A PULLMAN CAR WOOLING.

Scene: Eastern-bound Pullman car at the Oakland mole. Enter elderly gentleman, carrying small valise and large hamper. Following him two ladies, evidently mother and daughter. Daughter in dark blue travelling costume, with a large bunch of violets pinned to the front of her jacket; is a pretty, slender girl of about 18. Both laden with flowers, books and numerous small parcels, which they deposit in section nearest middle of car. The following conversation ensues: "Gladys, dear, I am really worried over your taking this trip alone. Had you not better wait a day or so, to see if we can hunt some one up to accompany you?" "O, no, indeed, papa. It was unfortunate that Mr. Wilson was taken ill so suddenly this morning, so that Mrs. Wilson could not go with me this afternoon, but you see I'll have to start to-day to reach Omaha in time for Clara's wedding, especially as I'm to be bridesmaid. You and mamma must not worry, for I shall get along all right alone." In the meanwhile other passengers come in, and find their respective sections. The engine toots warningly. A few more kisses and hurried instructions, and papa and mamma are gone. The train moves off. Turning to inspect her fellow-travelers, she thought the few men and two rusty old ladies looked very uninteresting. Thrown carelessly in the section opposite was a valise and a man's ulster, but the owner was not visible. She then turned her attention to the books, candy and flowers piled up in front of her. Time passed, and with a reckless little yawn Gladys glanced at her watch and found it after 6. The porter announced that a stop will be made now at Sacramento for dinner. At the moment a familiar form came up the aisle, and in a second a tall, handsome young man was standing near with outstretched hand. A gleam of amusement was in his dark eyes as he quietly said: "How do you do, Gladys?" A delicate pink colored her cheeks as she shook hands, and answered him with a surprised and rather cool, "Why, Jack, where did you come from?" "From the smoking-room, where I've been for the last three hours, ever since I came in, and found you so wrapped up in the scenery you did not see me," he replied, moving some books away and sitting beside her in the most matter-of-course way. "Where are you going, Jack?" "To Omaha, Gladys." "What for?" asked she, suspiciously. "Partly business—partly pleasure. Business, to take care of you; pleasure to be with you," he answered conclusively. "Now, Jack, you know that is very foolish, after—" "Last night when you refused me again. Yes, I know; but you see I can't help being foolish. Was born so, I guess," said Jack resignedly. Dead silence followed this for about two minutes. Then he broke the silence by leaning toward her and saying in a soft persuasive tone, "Gladys, won't you reconsider what you said last night?" Looking around nervously, she answered: "No, Jack—Please don't go over that again for it won't do one bit of good." He looked disappointed; then he said, "well, we're almost to Sacramento. Come, let us go out to dinner." Gladys rose quickly, glad that she did not have to dine on candy after all; and helping her with her coat Jack casually remarked: "You have lots of flowers." "Yes, and these lovely violets—they came this morning with no card attached; but I think I can thank you for them," she said looking up brightly at him. A tender look came into his eyes as he said: "Yes, I sent them, and I am much obliged to you for wearing them." Gladys looked annoyed but said nothing, and in five minutes they were hurriedly eating dinner at the station restaurant. In the morning he helped her unpack the hamper and set the table in her section and in a perfect gala of fun they began their morning meal, sitting opposite.

"This is fun, isn't it?" said Gladys, spearing for a sardine with a cork-screw, for Jack, as company, was honored with the only fork. "Immense!" he assented so emphatically that she laughed gleefully. Emboldened by this, Jack in the act of carrying a piece of cold chicken to his mouth, leaned over, and, lowered his voice and fork at the same time said coaxingly, "Let's breakfast together always—shall we, Gladys?" She smiled in spite of herself at his tone and manner, even while a dainty frown slightly marred her pretty forehead, and she answered briefly and emphatically, "Couldn't think of such a thing. Don't be silly, Jack." "Oh, you cruel little girl!" said Jack dramatically, as he straightened up and proceeded to eat the morsel on his fork. Their merry little meal over the rest of the day passed in the usual routine of a Pullman car. Jack was all devotion from first to last. Reading talking and eating with hasty little promenades when there is any opportunity, was the order of the day. Jack Hollis had known and loved Gladys Preston since he was a boy of 19 and she a little girl of 14. He had proposed and been declined several times, but knowing that she did not dislike him, and believing that "everything comes to the man who waits," he was waiting, and in the meantime wooing to the best of his ability. The second morning Gladys arose with a severe headache. She snubbed poor Jack, who was all sympathy; refused the cup of tea he brought her when they changed cars at Ogden, and when the journey began again, lay back on the pillows he fixed in the seat for her, and would have nothing to say to him. How Jack longed to take the golden-brown head in his arms and stroke the throbbing temples. Toward evening, when the rest of the passengers were out to dinner he asked her with a passionate tremor in his voice to give him the right to do so. She was trying to swallow the tea he had again brought in to her. Pushing it away, she said angrily: "Jack, you bother me to death. Don't ever mention that subject to me again, for I will not marry you. Go away, and don't speak to me at all." Then her head drooped wearily back on the pillow. Jack paled, took the half-emptied cup, and walked silently out of the car. That was the last she saw of him that night. She had her berth made early, and, utterly exhausted, soon fell in a refreshing sleep, from which she awoke in the night with the headache gone. Her first thought was of Jack, and her eyes opened wide with shame as she remembered her rudeness to the man who had always been so kind to her. She recalled the pained set look as he had turned away the evening before, and resolved to ask his pardon the first thing in the morning, when of course he would forgive her and they would be good friends again. Morning found Gladys herself again, sweet and pretty as ever; but no Jack to be seen. After a lonely little breakfast by herself, she settled down comfortably with a book to read and wait for him. The hours passed however, and still no Jack. At luncheon time she saw him disappear in the eating room without so much as a look in her direction. Shortly after the train moved she carelessly sauntered in to his section. Meeting her wondering eyes he gravely bowed, then taking a book, was to all intents soon absorbed in its contents. Her heart seemed to sink a few inches as she fully realized that he had taken her hasty words literally and did not intend speaking to her. But pride came to her rescue and she was apparently as much interested in her work as he was in his. The afternoon rolled on, and still they read, never glancing at each other. As the train drew up at the dinner station he threw down his book and went out talking and laughing with one of the men. Gladys, who had not left the car that day, timidly asked the old ladies if she could go out to dinner with them and was promptly taken under their wing. After dinner Jack stayed in the smoking-room playing cards. Then, as the shadows darkened Gladys' spirits fell to the lowest ebb. Turning to the window, she gazed steadily out with fast-filling eyes. She realized and confessed then to herself how much she had missed Jack all day. The car lamps were lit and berths were being made up all around her. More and more lonely and low-spirited she grew. To-morrow morning would bring them to Omaha, where her friends would meet her. She would go one way, Jack another, and he would never speak to her again. The last thought was too much for her, and by this time she was crying softly but bitterly in the corner, with her face still turned to the window. Suddenly someone leaned over her and said, softly: "Why, Gladys, home sick already?" Startled, she turned quickly, and with a joyful little catch of her breath, dashed her handkerchief over her eyes, and answered shyly: "No, Jack, only homesome, and I'm sorry I was so rude yesterday." He sat down, screening her from any prying eyes, and said very low: "Gladys, darling, were you crying because I've been such an unmanly beast to-day?" The pretty head dropped lower—but no answer. Jack glanced around; no one was looking. Taking her hand he said: "Gladys, once more I ask you to be my wife. If you say no, I shall never trouble you again, but shall take the first train home from Omaha tomorrow a disappointed man. Which is it, dear yes or no?" "Still no answer." "Say yes, dearest," pleaded Jack, with his lips dangerously near her. An almost imperceptible nod was all the answer he got, but it seemed to satisfy him. Gently raising her head he stole a kiss, just in time to escape the porter's inquisitive eyes as he came up, kindly asking the young lady if

she was ready to leave the car. Blushing furiously, she said yes, she was ready to leave the car at night, love, and left him with the result of his proposal. Advice to Pious. It is extremely interesting to read of four attractive women who are not too old to be young enough to be given and exchange confidence and identity of retrospection. A moral A group of very successful and contented of this kind, says the beauty of a young girl has been spoken of. "When I look at her," complacent ladies, "I can see the ease with which she achieves a physical success only do a little studying, we were telling her her mouth she had. It was then in a crude way, but began to make the best of the first observation that she is sure to refer to her and exquisite lips. She is a ter basis to start on the of my acquaintance who tious to shine as a look used to look at herself in frankly acknowledge that from lovely. No features and her coloring was a degree. "Her hair was just pretty, but pretty hair is able. The young woman is nearly a whole season with a man said to her that she inal and graceful gait. She it was really the first ment she had ever thought it over and then to discover what it was that called forth the admiring man. She soon learned the slight swagger, an indication of the hips and shoulders, ed this swagger very disrefore long she heard every about her fascinating walk. she was flattered by seeing beauties attempting to imitate none of them could do it. ral grace that she exhibited. "She at once began to gence that hitherto she had dances she was sought she best men with the same was inspired by the handsome She bloomed as a rose when the sun and dew will bloom, she glorified in the finest set, as well as the most a walk. She was, as one put it, the most delicious back that mortal eye could It would have been a joy to walk a thousand miles. Slavery in New Brunswick. New Brunswick occupies place in the list of the coldest early abandoned the influence of slavery, as, early in the century, the practice had to and purposes, become a ail. The engraving we today present historic series is a facsimile of denture of the sale of a slave, the infamous system was nearing the only later one quoted by rence is that of the sale of a woman from Mansion Abraham De I'ester, one of the al grantees of Parr Town, or. This indenture was dated the July, 1797, only one week late that shown opposite. Thus later the question as to the of slave-holding was tested at sizes in Fredericton, before Bench, consisting of their Ludlow, (Chief Justice); Saunders and (pharm (Judges). For ter of the slaves, five barristers appeared as counsel; for the slave, all men of high standing in line, and noted for their social as well as for legal acumen. All conclusion of the trial the Bench was divided, the Chief Justice and Judge Upham supporting claimant, while Judge Saunders Allen pronounced in favor of the slave. No judgment was therefore but public opinion in condemnation the buying and selling of human was strong and the custom clause. Advertisements of newspapers occasionally still appeared in newspapers, but within a few slavery in New Brunswick had to exist. It is worthy of note that while was dead throughout all the Provinces of North America twenty-five years after the settlement, it existed in the States for over half a century and then was wiped out only long and bloody war. And yet men prate of the "liberty" held by inhabitants of that Republic as trusted with the freedom enjoyed the subjects of Great Britain. The Right of Property. Man (who had fallen into a while trespassing)—"Help! help! can't swim!" Owner of Property—"Come out that, ye villain!" Man (chokingly)—"Ae help I'm drowning!" O. of P. (not moving)—"If ye get drowned in the pool, ye sounder, O'll have ye locked up in Exchange."