

OLD AND IN THE WAY.

I sit in the chimney corner, and hear the young folks say:
"The world is weary of her—she is old, and in the way.
And a vacant chair were better—a solitary place—
Than the palsied, wrinkled hands of her, and the tear-wet, furrowed face!"

I nursed 'em at my bosom ere Life's sun went down the West;
I sang Love's sweetest songs to them and rocked their hearts to rest;
And now, that the sad time hastens—the closing of Life's day—
I am only a useless woman—I am old and in the way!

Thank God, it will soon be over—Life's sun is sinking fast;
My feet are in the valley and I see my home at last!
And I say, while the angels beckon, "Poor, and old, and gray,
There is room for me in heaven, where I'll not be in the way."
—Atlanta Constitution.

A Club Woman's Essay

WHEN the chairman of the Program Committee of our club invited me to write a paper for one of the literary afternoons it was a very easy matter to say "Yes." The subject—"The Rise and Fall of Superstition"—interested me, and it was a pleasure to treat it from my own point of view. But when I received the club book for the new year and saw the subject for the 13th of November with my own name in fat black letters as the essayist, when I realized that I was to read the production not only before the members of the club, but in the presence of visitors from various parts of the world, my very soul began to quake with fear and bitterly did I repent me of my easy yielding to persuasion. I had appeared before the public many times in print, but never in person where I was the chief attraction, excepting upon two occasions, one of them when I read a sentimental commencement address in a quavering voice and the other when I walked up the aisle to the tune of a certain march from Lohengrin.

So far I had made but one acquaintance in the fashionable apartment building which was our home at the time of which I write. But Mrs. Herbert was worth a dozen ordinary



HER PASSION WAS THE THEATER.

friends, for to me there could not be a more fascinating personality. She was not beautiful, she was not even pretty, but she was one of those mercurial beings whose very changefulness is more attractive than mere perfection of feature. She had a way of relating the most trivial incident that compelled attention, her manner of relating anecdotes was inimitable and about her there was ever a quality of effervescence and sparkle rarely found even in the women of the Latin race. She had been a widow for half a dozen years, she told me, and although rich in the world's goods she cared nothing for society and never had belonged to a woman's club. Most of us have a favorite pastime, however, and Mrs. Herbert's ruling passion was the theater. She saw every reasonably good troupe that came to Chicago, attending the play about four evenings a week, upon which occasions she usually was attended by her brother, a quiet, pale young man with a wooden expression. She had told me but little of her past, and I decided in my own mind that she had been brought up in a quiet country town where the delights of the theater were unknown, and that she was now bent upon gratifying an inordinate taste for the drama.

Mrs. Herbert came to my rooms one evening just as I had finished writing my club paper, which at her request I read to her. Seated on a low Indian stool, with her soft draperies billowing about her, and with her slender hands clasped about her knees, she listened intently, her earnest eyes fixed upon my face. But when I had finished I noticed that her straight brows were puckered into a slight frown.

"It is very interesting," she said, slowly, "but, my dear woman, you would ruin the finest literary production ever born in mortal brain by the rat-tat-tat way in which you read it. Now, those anecdotes would be thrilling, positively thrilling, if properly related, but under your treatment they become commonplace."

"I shall read it in a large hall, and I shall raise my voice, of course; it will sound much better there than here," I replied, somewhat nettled by her caustic criticism.

"Pardon me," she returned, "it will sound much worse in a large room than in this one. You have a way of dropping your voice at the end of every sentence which would be absolutely maddening to an audience anxious to hear you. You must get rid of that habit, and pray raise your eyes from your notes when you are telling these stories."

"Oh, I couldn't!" I exclaimed, terrified at the very thought. "I should be sure to catch the glance of some one

I know which would confuse me, and when I returned to my manuscript again I should lose my place and suffer an agony of embarrassment."

She shrugged her shoulders slightly. "Then read it to me again and I will coach you a bit."

I obeyed while she moved restlessly about the room, occasionally interrupting me with such remarks as: "Now that little incident really was pathetic, but you tell it with no more feeling than a phonograph," or "If you don't raise your voice there the point you are trying to make will be entirely lost." When I had finished she pronounced it much better, but frankly added that there was still much to be desired.

Events seldom slip into expected grooves, and upon the morning of the 13th of November I awoke with a pain in the back of the head which clutched me like an iron hand. It was my old enemy which two or three times a year comes to blot a day from my calendar. The present attack was so acute that my husband, who was planning a week's absence from the city, wished to postpone his departure, a suggestion to which I would not listen. But the little hammers beating in my brain could not drive out the recollection that an audience would assemble this afternoon to hear me, and that a substitute must be found. "Please take my paper to the club rooms," I said, "leave it in the hands of the custodian and explain the situation. Then ask Mrs. Herbert if she will send me the headache cure she brought from India. Set the catch of the door so that she may enter." When the good man returned from breakfast in the cafe I heard him moving about in the adjoining room as he packed his valise, after which he took his departure, safely closing the door behind him.

Shortly afterward Mrs. Herbert came in with the desired medicine. "This is the day I was to have read my paper," I murmured as she poured a small quantity of amber liquid into a tiny glass she had brought with her.

"Too bad!" she replied. "What will they do about it?" "I sent it down to the club. Some one will read it; I hope it will be well read, for I should hate to have it fall flat."

My friend offered me the little glass, saying, "This will make you sleep for three or four hours, and it will make you feel like a different woman."

She took a chair by the bed where she seemed to fade slowly away like a phantom which reluctantly returns to the nether world.

When I awoke the clock was striking 6 and my headache had entire disappeared. A maid entered bearing an appetizing dinner ordered for me by Mrs. Herbert. On the tray was a note stating that my friend had been called to New York by a telegram and bidding me good-by for a week.

The evening papers gave brief notices of the club meeting, and I searched those of the following morning to find who had read my essay. The notices of the paper on "The Rise and Fall of Superstition" were full and most gratifying, but none mentioned the fact that the writer was unable to read it. My astonishment may be imagined when on the inside sheet of a sensational journal I found a sketchy portrait of myself. The likeness was not striking, but the dress and the hat were my own. The unusual embroidery pattern on the corsage was faintly but unmistakably indicated, and the shape of the hat was the same as that which now reposed in the box on my top shelf. My usual style of headgear was a small bonnet, but listening to advice from Mrs. Herbert I had for this occasion purchased a hat with a brim and drooping plumes. So far I had not worn either of these articles, yet here they were reproduced in the portrait! I hurried downstairs and telephoned to the chairman of the program committee. "Oh, you dear thing!" she exclaimed. "I was so sorry you were obliged to run away yesterday before we had an opportunity to congratulate you upon your charming paper."

"Run away! I?" I gasped. "Of course your explanation was sufficient, but how horrid of your friends to choose just that day to leave for Europe! I am sorry you could not have heard the fine things that were said of you."

The president and several members of the club called me up to congratulate me, and not one expressed a regret that I was not present, though all were sorry that I had not remained for the usual reception and the "social cup of tea." I could arrive at but

one conclusion. Leagued together they were playing a practical joke upon me which I deemed in the circumstances very bad taste, to say the least. I then called up a new member, who was a comparative stranger to me, and who was not likely to be in the plot. "Did you attend the club meeting yesterday?" I asked.

"Yes. Who are you?" "Never mind just now. The essayist was very ill yesterday. Will you kindly tell me who read the paper for her?"

"Ill! Then she was the liveliest invalid I ever saw, for she was there and read it herself."

"Indeed you are mistaken." "Indeed I am not! I know her very well by sight; moreover the president introduced her by name."

"Very well. Good-by." Even she is mixed up in this silly business, I thought, with disgust, as I hung up the receiver.

The afternoon mail brought a letter from my husband, which made me wonder if I were going mad. "You know it by this time of course," he wrote, "and I know that you have a choice rod in pickle for me. You see, I left in such a hurry. Usually, you know, I am not a bad fellow at remembering things, but I laid your essay on the hall table and never thought of it again until five minutes ago."

His letter dropped from my hand as I rushed to the hall. There on the table lay my manuscript, where he had left it. Then it had not been read at the club, which was the cause of all this joking. But the daily papers declared that it had been read, and more than one of them had given a synopsis of it. What was the explanation of this mystery? Could it be that my otherwise, the fetch and ghost of me, had read the paper and, judging from the commendatory remarks of my friends, had acquitted itself better than my corporeal self could have done? An examination of the gown, however, showed a tiny rent in the lower ruffle, a discovery which brought with it a savor if no less startling a solution of the puzzle. A spiritual body could not wear a material gown and a material hat, that was certain. Under the influence of the Indian drug I had gone to the club and had performed my expected duty. For some inscrutable reason I had made up a story of departing friends and had taken my leave at an early hour. How lucky it was that I had donned a correct costume. But had it been altogether correct? A dreadful suspicion took possession of me that I must have worn a certain pair of scarlet wool slippers with gaily flaunting bows which might have been in evidence as I walked across the stage. Without loss of time I went to see a dear friend who had never told me anything but the truth.

"I was so proud of you yesterday," she said coming to meet me with a beaming smile. "I had no idea that you could be so entrancing."

"Between ourselves," said I, "I had taken a drug for my headache and I am afraid it made me a trifle, just a trifle you know, delicious. Did I—did I act with perfect propriety?"

"Most certainly. I should advise you to take that drug every time you read a paper. Why the way you told the story of the Hindoo priest and his disembodied spirit made the very hair stand up on our heads and the story of the gamekeeper's wife and the haunted-house with your mimicry of the cockney dialect was simply killing. Wasn't it gratifying to find your audience so appreciative?"

"Very gratifying," I murmured, wishing that I had known something about it at the time. "But did I look all right? My shoes for instance—"

"I didn't notice your shoes. The only criticism I could make was regarding your veil. You claim that they are injurious to the sight and I never have seen you wear one. I was surprised that you wore one yesterday when you read in public." I, too, was surprised. I did not own a veil, I must have bought one, or, not being responsible for my acts, I may have stolen it. The thought was anything but pleasant.

I began to cherish a sentiment of bitter resentment against Mrs. Herbert. She must have known the effects of the wonderful Indian drug which she had so often urged me to take. Why did she not tell me what it would do, why did she not give me the option of remaining in pain or of wandering forth in a state of resembling somnambulism? Thus I expressed myself to her in a long letter relating the events of that wonderful day. I will quote from her reply:

"I have been too busy to write sooner, but I supposed you would know that it was I who read your essay. I rarely mention the fact that I once studied for the stage, for it is a sore subject with me. I had obtained an engagement where my rendering of even the insignificant part assigned me as a beginner was warmly praised by the critics, when my uncle died, leaving a will in which he made me

his heir upon condition that I should give up the stage forever. Never was fortune so reluctantly accepted, and you must have noticed that 'the play's the thing' with me. That morning when I saw your manuscript lying for good on the hall table I was seized with a longing to impersonate you, and to render that excellent production as it ought to be given. I have a genius for make-up, but in this case it was not so great a task as you may suppose. We are of about the same height and figure. Your eyebrows are darker and more arched, your eyes are darker and your nose is shorter, difficulties not hard to surmount, with a becoming veil to help the disguise, and of course it was easy enough to reproduce your perfectly white pompadour. I borrowed your hat and gown because my own things are not like yours, and also were the quaint jeweled chain so often seen about your neck. I imitated your gait in walking, and I flatter myself that my introductory explanation was accompanied by your voice and manner to the life. I let my voice drop at the end of the sentences as you do, and one or two calls of 'louder, please!' showed me that you would have been obliged to contend with had you been in my place. It was not necessary to retain your voice when I began to read, and I will venture to say that for once at least your club listened enthralled. I had arrived late, and left as soon as I had finished, so I managed to speak at close range to no one. You cannot imagine how much I enjoyed that little three-quarters of an hour when I was once more an actress; remember this and forgive me for having taken your place."

The man of the house declares that there is not a word of truth in Mrs. Herbert's statement. Says he: "She was frightened at the harm she might have done in giving you the medicine, and she wanted to smooth your ruffled feathers. She couldn't have fooled all of those club women every moment of the time. No, you were there yourself and very much under the influence of the Indian drug."

It may be that he is right, but I have not yet solved the riddle to my own satisfaction.—Chicago Record Herald.

BANKS WAS SURPRISED TWICE
Ran Off to a Ball, Thought He Saw His Wife, but It Was Her Maid.

When Banks, who has been married only a few months, went home and told his wife he had accepted an invitation to a bachelor dinner he expected her to object. Instead she urged him to go.

The dinner over, one of the party remembered that the Arion ball was being given and proposed that they all go. The proposition was accepted, but not without hesitation on the part of Banks. Once at the ball, however, Banks became as gay as the gayest. His scruples were forgotten and he enjoyed himself to the limit until he saw in the gay crowd a woman who seemed strangely familiar. She was masked, but she wore the costume his wife lately had purchased for an approaching private masquerade ball. He could swear to the costume.

It suddenly dawned on Banks that this really was his wife, who, he had supposed, was home asleep. The woman was leaning on the arm of a tall stranger, who appeared to be devoted to her.

To make certain of his suspicions Banks passed the domino and placed himself so that the couple must pass close to him. On they came, arm in arm, chatting, but when the woman caught sight of Banks she started like a guilty thing and dropping the man's arm fled.

Banks hurried after her, and when he finally cornered her she cowered down on a seat and, unable to utter a word, extended her hand as if begging for mercy.

"Forgive me," she pleaded, "and I promise you—"

Before she had completed the sentence Banks tore the mask off her face. Then he gasped. The woman was his wife's maid. She had purloined the costume of her mistress and wore it to the ball.

Banks had not told his wife, because she might inquire why he was at the ball.—New York Press.

Driving the Grizzly West.
In the days of Kit Carson the grizzly had not learned to look upon man as a foe to be shunned at any cost, but the quick-firing magazine rifle had taught him that if he possibly can he must keep out of man's sight. He has now been driven back into the almost inaccessible solitudes of the northwest Rocky Mountains, and the sportsman who wishes to add his pelt and dangling necklace of claws to his collection of hunting trophies must travel far and endure much hardship and labor, for "old Ephraim," as he was called by the Western pioneers, is as cunning as he is fierce.—St. Nicholas.

Browning's Modesty.
The only son of Robert Browning and his illustrious wife was a diligent student when he grew to manhood. He was believed to have a promising career, but once when the father was showing a friend some of her son's pictures, he expressed a fear that he might suffer from the high hopes built upon him.

"He is placed at a disadvantage," said Browning. Then he explained further, in a phrase as modest as any ever uttered by a great man:

"People expect much from him, you see, because he had such a clever mother."

From a stage point of view a divorce without publicity is worse than marriage.

BOSTON BEANS IN LONDON.

One might persuade an Italian that a Digger Indian could learn to cook spaghetti, and one might convince a Chinaman that it does not need an oriental chef to prepare chop suey, but no one will ever make a Yankee believe that beans can be properly baked outside of New England, or at least by anybody but a New Englander. That conviction will probably strengthen when Easterners review a recent pitiable attempt to impart the secret of "Boston beans" to the people of the mother country.

The recipe for the delectable dish is found in the housewives' column of Pearson's Weekly, a London publication. "Soak half a pint of small haricot beans overnight," it directs, "drain next morning. Cover with boiling water, and cook slowly for about two hours. To test if they are done, take up one or two on a spoon, blow on them, and if they are done the skins crack."

"Drain the beans when cooked," the recipe goes on blithely, "turn into a deep buttered dish, add a tablespoonful of finely chopped onion as well as salt pepper and half a pint of tomato pulp. Cover closely and bake in a slow oven for four hours."

"About a quarter of an hour before serving, remove the lid and put in an ounce of butter. Serve in the pot in which the beans were cooked."

Haricot beans, soaked and parboiled to the vanishing point, but baked only four hours and without pork, at that! This is bad enough, but the loyal New Englander will most bitterly resent the insinuation that half a pint would suffice if "Boston beans" were really in question. Paul Bourget did not probe very deeply into the domestic institutions of this country, but even he learned better than that.

"At Marblehead," Bourget wrote in a series of random jottings printed in a Paris newspaper, "a curious eastern vessel called a beans-pot, it and similar being used, I am informed, to prepare the Sunday breakfast of families; capacity of the beans-pot, about two gallons."

EXPLOSIVES.
Forpedo Used by Chinese, Described as "an Egg Which Comes Forth Burning."

The unfortunate outbreak of hostilities in the far East, and the successful use of the Japanese are making of explosives, is likely to bring up the vexed question of the real discoverers of gunpowder, which has given to the intellectual element the sole mastery in warfare, says the Liverpool Post. The long-entertained conviction that the Greeks or Romans invented what is palpably understood by gunpowder has led to some confusion. Combustibles like naphtha, to which class Greek fire belongs, were in use in the armies of the Califs, and were confounded with explosives. Marcus Graecus seems to have had a recipe for making gunpowder from saltpetre, coal and sulphur, and his career has been placed as early as the ninth century, but it would be more correct to place his life in the middle of the thirteenth. A critical sifting of the whole of the evidence leads to the conclusion that saltpetre was first known in China, but not before the middle of the twelfth century. In the successful defense of the Chinese city Pianking against the Mongols explosives, blasting bodies and rockets were employed against the enemy; and some diagrams exist which show the form in which these explosives were used. There is, too, some evidence that a torpedo was used between 1275-1295, described in Chinese as "an egg which comes forth burning," and a picture of this destructive engine is given in a book attributed to Hasan, a copy of which exists in the Paris library.

Women vs. Unions in Chicago.
The working women of Chicago have long since passed through that preliminary and almost inevitable phase of their social and economic development. From the emotionalism of a few weak "auxiliaries" they have evolved, step by step, to the cool sanity of a complex, splendidly organized system of individual trades unions, recruited exclusively by feminine wage earners, and controlled by "lady" bosses and "lady" walking delegates.

As a direct result of these organizations the wages of women have increased from a minimum of ten to a maximum of forty per cent. Their working day has been reduced from a basis of sixty hours per week, and upwards, to a maximum limit of fifty-three hours per week, with ample pay for overtime. Child labor has been totally abolished in those industries where it had long been most flagrant, and in the few instances where it yet remains it is doomed to an early death, so unremitting is the war now being waged against it. Along with these have come radical sanitary improvements, larger and better ventilated shops, and, not least important, a generous and well-regulated allotment of holidays and half-holidays. The inter-relationship of employer and employee has been reduced to a complex system of rules and agreements mutually binding and reciprocally effective, which the millionaire proprietor cannot disregard with less impunity than may the young girl toiler in his shop or mill.—From Trades Unions in Petticoats, in Leslie's Monthly.

Distric Technical Schools.
Special district technical schools for improving the artistic education of the working girls and designers are about to be opened in certain centers in St. Etienne, France.

Reflection on His Neighbor.
"Paw, what is a 'white fence'?"
"Any backyard fence, Tommy."—Chicago Tribune.

OLD INDIAN BATTLEFIELD.

Where Iowa and Kansas Tribes Struggled for the Mastery.

George Remsburg believes he has discovered the scene of a great fight had between the Iowa and Kansas Indians near what is known as Oak Mills, in Atchison County. The Kansas Indians held the country along the Missouri River until about the time of our revolutionary war, when they were driven away by the Sac and Iowa tribes, which came down from the North and conquered the region. The Oak Mills location is supposed to have been the place of one of their greatest battles. At this point many human bones and implements of war have been plowed up.

Kansas has been the scene of Indian battles innumerable and almost every county has traditions of fights of this character.

One of the most remarkable engagements of the kind took place in comparatively modern times between the Pawnees and Sioux in the valley of Beaver Creek, near the northwest corner of Kansas. The Pawnees were slaughtered in great numbers, the Sioux being the victors. After the battle the Pawnees returned and cared for their dead. They did this by erecting platforms out of poles and branches, and putting the bodies of them out of the reach of wolves and other animals.

When the first fringe of the white settlement had reached as far as Phillips County some of these platforms were still standing and still supported the whitened bones of the dead reposing upon them. A buffalo hunter once told Topics of a curious sight he saw at this graveyard. Some "horse hunters" were hunting in the vicinity. Horse hunters were those who chased the buffalo on horseback, and they were hated cordially by the "foot hunters," who stalked the game, because they ran the buffalo out of the country.

On the occasion mentioned the horse hunters stamped a great herd of buffalo right through the Pawnee graveyard. They struck the rotting poles in their mad flight and sent the bones of the dead flying in every direction. Indeed, when they had passed not a platform remained standing. In the years which followed many passing hunters picked up skulls and other bones and carried them away as curiosities.

One of these skulls was secured by a man at Hays City. It was remarkable from the fact that an iron-pointed arrow had gone through one side and nearly through the other. People who had seen the bow only in its toy form used to look at this skull and marvel at the prodigious force which the Indians could give to their primitive weapon.—Kansas City Journal.

Kept for Thankfulness.
Mrs. Alice Morse Earle, in her recent book on costume in America, devotes much space to that curious dressing gown or negligee costume for men called the banian: a flowing garment so popular with the fine gentlemen of a century ago that they frequently elected to wear it when having their portraits painted. It could be made of any degree of richness in texture and brilliancy in color, and was often enhanced in effect by a gaily colored turban, sometimes worn rakishly on one side, replacing the warm and heavy wig of full dress.

Copley's painting of Dr. Nicholas Boylston, owned by Harvard University, depicts that eminent benefactor and sober citizen in a banian of sky blue brocade, a scarlet turban and scarlet morocco slippers.

The most interesting banian which she describes is still in existence, and is made of a cotton fabric with varicolored palm-leaf design and lined with soft silk of brownish orange spotted with green and white. A piece of which been sewn on the cuff is inscribed with its history:

"This banian was made in Canton in 1792 for Archelus Brown by Chinese Tailors. It was made by order of his son, Rufus Brown; Supercargo of the bark The Lively Nancy. He cleared \$100,000 of Chinese gold cast for a venture of \$100 of Ginseng; an 1 Barrel of dried Sage of his Mother's venture cleared a Chinese tea set, Crane Shawls and \$100. All lost by Shipwreck but one small Chest of mostly Books. He was mourned 1 year as Dead & He came in on horseback wearing this Banian for the last of his clothes was worn out and rotten with Salt Water and Sun. A very live dress he said for a Dead Man. Which I kept for Thankfulness."

Her Room Was Ready.
Lady Constance Mackenzie, the British beauty, recently made a long trip through Texas, says the Boston Transcript, in the course of which she found unstinted hospitality every where.

At one place a wealthy ranch owner invited her to visit him, and she accepted the invitation. The owner of the ranch was determined to give his guest a fitting reception, so he telegraphed his manager:

"Lady Mackenzie coming to-morrow. Make every preparation to treat her royally."

The manager had never heard of Lady Mackenzie, but as the business of the ranch was raising blooded horses as well as cattle, he decided this must be some fancy race horse.

The famous guest arrived the next day with her party, and found all ready. A clean box stall with abundance of fresh hay awaited her.

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