

PAPERS BY THE PEOPLE

DON'T WEAR MOURNING.

By Ada C. Sweet.

One of the almost unnoticed blessings of our time is the modification of mourning dress and customs. In late years there has been a great improvement in this respect, the hideous and unsanitary crepe veil having entirely disappeared, at least from the costumes of well-dressed women.

All impressionable people are depressed by the sight of the unrelieved, or mourning black costume. Who can remember the cloud that used to fall upon the children of a family when a visitor came, wearing the dress of a widow, such as fashion prescribed until a very short time ago? Many men detest the sight of mourning dress, and I have heard more than one say that he would not have a woman in mourning garb employed in his office. To be continually reminded of death, grief and anguish is acceptable to no one. Why should the afflicted afflict every one who sees them? A plain dress, one such as a woman who is not engrossed in thoughts of dress might naturally wear, is suitable for one in deep affliction. But this garb should not be depressing in its influence, on the wearer, or upon whoever sees it. The French custom of making the period of mourning short is humane and Christian. Death is as natural an event as birth. It is inevitable, and therefore must not be looked upon with dread, nor be made more sad and full of awe than it has been made by nature.

Moreover, most of us believe that when death comes it is only to open the door to a new life, one of growth and development beyond the possibilities of this world. Why, then, should we cover ourselves with black, saddening all who see us, simply because we are sad over the loss, for a time, of one we love?

FATHER'S LOVE IS GREAT AS THAT OF MOTHER.

By Delia Austrian.

As a general thing, when a novelist wishes to show the joy of home life and the sacrifices made by devoted parents, he paints the picture of a devoted, happy mother, overlooking the fact that fathers play an important part in the making of a home and the happiness found there. However devoted a man may be to his business affairs, he is glad to exchange those irksome duties for the pleasures gained with his children. Even rulers and the heads of governments find their truest recreation with their families.

Many women are so tired when their homes are put in order and the rest of the work done that they are anxious to seek their recreation out of the home; but it does not matter how hard some men work they feel that the best way to refresh themselves is by playing with their children. They would not exchange their daily romps, runs and outdoor sports for all the trips abroad.

We often hear of women getting so homesick for their families when they go on visits that they do not try to

finish their stay. But this is mild in comparison with what some men suffer when they send their families on a holiday. Men would send their families off on vacations much oftener than they do were it not for the fact that they cannot endure the thought of being alone. They sit on the doorstep and smoke the first night, go to their clubs in search of friends the second, and the night following stay at home with a case of genuine blues. When the visit is over they take an oath to themselves that it never shall be repeated unless they go along. At least if the children go the wife must stay at home and keep them company, but they try this plan with no better result.

It generally is conceded that a mother is more patient with her children than is a father. This is true, but a father finds it harder to correct the shortcomings of his children. How often we hear a wife tell her husband to make his boy or girl behave, and he will explain, "Let them have a good time. You can't expect children to act like grownups." Men who are exacting in their business and relations to other people are often lenient with their children. Fathers are as proud of their girls as of their boys, and they take as much pleasure in their companionship. A girl often will go to her father for favors and confide secrets to him that she would not share with her mother.

KNIFELESS SURGERY NEW ERA IN HEALING.

By Gustavus M. Blech.

The battle cry of the humane surgeon is, "Do no harm!" The surgeon's knife, which has proved a blessing to suffering humanity, and which in many instances is the only means of saving life, is not without danger and risks. While it must be admitted that modern methods of operating enable a well trained surgeon to undertake bold operations without having to fear serious injury to the patient from the operation itself, the fact remains that the knife, irrespective of the outcome, is in itself an undesirable therapeutic agent. Few patients consent readily to an operation as they do to take a bath, an electric treatment, or a bottle of medicine. In the majority of instances the patient submits to the knife either because he has failed to obtain relief from less risky methods or because there exists an urgent demand to save life.

The Roentgen or so-called X-ray is the first discovery which has proved useful in certain forms of cancer (epithelioma, sarcoma) and the surgeons were glad to lay aside the knife and make use of this agent. Now a number of inflammatory diseases are treated successfully without operation, the surgeons relying on physiological methods. Professor August Bier of Bonn, Germany, has shown that if we succeed in introducing the right kind of blood by purely mechanical means into a diseased organ, many infectious and inflammatory diseases will get well without the knife. And they do! This only is the beginning of the era of knifeless surgery. The end is not yet.

FAR AWAY.

The old home, the old home, the home so far away,
The pumpkins in the cellar and the apples in the bin;
The paths we used to wander in, the games we used to play,
The loads of smelly clover that the horses trampled in;
The creek beyond the orchard, the meadow path and wall,
The fields of nodding daisies, the fields a thousand-eyed,
The memory of yesterdays, the birds that used to call,
And then another memory—the little girl who died.

Oh, blue eyes; oh, true eyes; oh, maid of long ago,
I was just a little fellow, but I loved you true;
It was just a schoolboy fancy, anyone would tell me so,
But I see you, see you smiling just the way you used to do;
And I'm walking, walking with you half-ashed and scared and glad
Down the dusty, twisty highway to the little country school,
And the old cat birds are mocking in their sober colors clad,
And the maple trees are bending to their shadows in the pool.

Oh, wee girl; oh, sweet girl; oh, girl of long ago,
The years between are many, years of gladness, years of rue,
I was just a little fellow, but I loved you, loved you so,
I can see your red lips smiling just the way they used to do;
In checkered gingham aprons and in starched pinafore—
Who hasn't got a sweetheart down the ways of long ago,
Some one he brought red apples to in dear old days of yore,
Some one to dream of sometimes, and to say: "I loved her so."
—Houston Post.

A BIT OF DIPLOMACY.

RUTH WING generally thought Lenox fairly bearable. It was built on the regulation lines of a small Middle West town, wide, lonesome looking streets, a few stores set around indiscriminately, a jumble of houses, then an expanse of vacant lots, constant illustrations of the Western thrift which leaves room for a boom, even if thereby, in a manner, it has to tuck down its coat tails and sit on its feet.

Here and there a big gabled, porticoed homesteaded itself from among its humbler neighbors, with something the effect of a store tooth inserted among nature's studs in an ancient wood.

When it was green, or when it was white, it wasn't so bad; but that evening, as Ruth stood on the wooden platform in front of the store and looked at the prospect, she made up her mind it was unspesakable; the "general merchandise" sign above her occasionally flirited extra drops of water down her neck as she struggled with her umbrella. Behind her she knew every thread in the patterns of the gingham and wool goods in the right hand window, while the cut plug tobacco, dried

and it was considerably later, almost at the end of the cream toast and eggs, before she made a little announcement. "I had a letter from Mr. Willard today, mother. He is coming down on the 8 o'clock train to-night."

Mrs. Wing's mild, sweet face began to look troubled.

"I don't mean to interfere, Ruthie, dear, but I am dreadfully afraid he is going to ask you to marry him. He's been coming pretty nearly every week lately."

"Well, mother, if he did, would you mind, can't you like him?" There was a note of decided anxiety in Ruth's interrogations.

"Why, yes, I like him. I guess he's real nice, as men go, but I wouldn't, oh, dear, no! Ruth, I wouldn't want you to marry him."

"But why, mother?"

"Haven't you and I got along together for twenty years, no trouble to speak of, or anything?" Mrs. Wing's voice was quite piteous. "If a man comes in, you just can't tell how things are going to go. Anything is liable to happen. I know clerking in the store is hard, trying work, but it isn't a circumstance to what some married women have to put up with."

"Mother, dear, you married."

Mrs. Wing's fingers twisted nervously.

"It was such a little while, though, Ruthie, and so long ago, that I don't rightly consider by experience I know anything about it. Only a year and a-half; but I have seen so much since, don't talk about it, dear; I just can't think of it, even."

Ruth sat and thought with a troubled face. This tender, timid little mother had been her charge ever since her sturdy babyhood. It was so seldom she ever expressed a wish, or objected to anything, and now, to object to this, the one great light that had come into her barren, monotonous girlhood! He had asked her in that letter to marry him, and to-night he was coming for his answer.

Looking at it just from a worldly standpoint, how it would lift them from their pinching life!

Every one knew Arthur Willard, and how he had prospered from the time he first came to Lenox, a beardless, open-faced boy, soliciting his first orders for Belfast & Mayhew, paper manufacturers, until now he was head salesman of the firm.

She did not especially love clerking in the general merchandise store of Spencer & Spencer; but the codfish and calico had been glorified a good many times, when the big yellow grip, marked A. W. on the ends, entered the store-door.

She knew very well what her answer would be; it had sung itself in her heart all day; but if her mother objected so much, that settled it, for the time, anyway.

When she told Arthur that night, she was indiscreet enough to give her opinion first.

"My dear little girl," he said, with generous, masculine superiority, "she will get over that and enjoy the city immensely; possibly your servant, too, Mistress Ruth, when she knows how nice I am. Let me talk with her."

The embarrassed, nervous little lady in the next room certainly did not seem very formidable; but she did look so appealing that he said, very gently and quite deprecatingly:

"You must have known my feelings toward Ruth for some time, Mrs. Wing. I hope you are willing that I should marry her."

"No," Mrs. Wing answered desperately. "I am not willing. How dare I be willing? I don't know how it is going to turn out. Anybody is wicked to be willing to have a daughter marry."

"Why, Mrs. Wing!" the young man answered, rather taken aback. "A great many people have been willing. It is natural that people should marry."

Mrs. Wing was not arguing the abstract question, so she ignored the last remark.

"I am very sorry," she said, tremblingly, "but I know I am doing it for Ruth's good. I wish you would just let it go—for quite a while, anyway." This last relenting in response to the distress in Ruth's face.

The silence that followed seemed to Ruth and Mrs. Wing interminable. "Then Mr. Willard spoke slowly: 'I am both grieved and surprised. Mrs. Wing, I hardly think I deserve it. Still, feeling as you do, and knowing Ruth as I do, there is nothing to do, I suppose, but obey you. I would like to ask just one favor of you, though, and that is, that you and Ruth will spend Easter in the city with me. I planned that little recreation for us all, quite a while ago. Think of me as a friend, if you will, and grant me that much.'

"If Ruth wants to, Mr. Willard, I guess we can," Mrs. Wing responded, a trifle faintly. Her sudden triumph was rather dazing, even if it did fill her with delight.

Although Lenox was so near the city, it had been years since Mrs. Wing was there; and she began to feel a good deal of surreptitious pleasure in the idea of the trip. As a friend, Mr. Willard was entirely acceptable. For the other part, Ruth's silence helped settle the small prickings of her conscience. Like a good many old people who have forgotten their own love affairs, she had very little faith in that sort of thing, anyway, and an overweening fear of the terrible risk in marriage; a risk, in her mind, much greater than its possible benefits.

Easter was late that year and the spring rather advanced, so that the short ride to the city was a pageant of young, vivid green. The country broke into smooth, rolling little hills; through them they caught frequent glimpses of fanciful country homes and substantial brick farm houses. The pretty toy stations had all been freshly painted, and a general air of smiling freshness pervaded everything.

Once Mrs. Wing made a remark. She turned an instant from the window to Ruth: "I didn't know things could be so pretty so near to Lenox," she said; then turned eagerly again to her contemplations.

Mr. Willard took them to one of the great hotels of the city. Their room was respresented in all the luxuries of soft carpeting, glistening brass bedstead, Turkish couch and easy chairs; opening from it was the tiled bathroom, with all its marble and porcelain appointments.

Mrs. Wing viewed it with a beaming face.

"Ruth," she said, "I am going to take a bath. I have sort of felt all my life as if I'd had to bathe in a soap dish. I'd like to stretch out once."

Later, when she emerged, moist and rosy, her soft gray hair in damp little curls on her forehead, she sank down in an easy chair with a deep sigh of satisfaction.

"Well, dear, for once in my life I feel as if I had been in the lap of luxury," she remarked gently.

In the great dining room that night the polished floor reflected back the myriads of colored electric lights. Gorgeous panels of the seasons emblazoned the side walls. An army of waiters in full dress moved noiselessly among the glittering tables.

Mrs. Wing studied her dainty menu with pleased appreciation.

"Of course, I shouldn't like this sort of thing all the while, but it's real stirring," she whispered to Ruth.

Sunday evening after dinner, they wandered through the long series of artistic reception rooms.

In the Moorish room, in the shadow of a great group of palms, stood a divan piled high with cushions. The room was empty and the lights dim.

"I think I will sit here awhile; you two may go on, if you want to," she said.

Somewhere in the distance she could hear faintly a piano and a voice singing. She closed her eyes and leaned back against the cushions in dreamy content. She could see again the great, dim church fragrant with flowers, and hear the joyful waves of Easter music. It had echoed in her soul all day. Then the park came in the afternoon, in all its young green beauty and freshness! She knew just how it would look in June, when the fountains played and the flowers bloomed.

Her heart had always gone out with great longings to the tame, monotonous, commonplace nature she knew, but this, this satisfied her. Other things seemed different, too; she remembered her long-dead girlhood's husband, and the look in his eyes; she had seen the same expression on Arthur Willard's face a dozen times when he looked at Ruth, and Ruth, how bright and happy she was! Maybe there wasn't so much danger, maybe.

She heard a slight movement and opened her eyes. Mr. Willard stood by her. How very strong and self-assertive he looked!

"Getting lonesome?" he questioned.

"Lonesome?" she echoed.

He sat down beside her and began to talk. She could see Ruth through one of the archways, sitting with a magazine in her hand.

She began to edge off; she knew of nothing she was particularly anxious to say. How well he talked, though! She began to grow interested in spite of her distress. After a while a silence fell between them.

"Mrs. Wing," he said abruptly.

She jumped nervously, then waited.

"Do you really think it would be such a dreadful thing for Ruth to marry me?"

Mrs. Wing's face was both perplexed and anxious. Why should they keep thrusting this thing on her for decision?

"I suppose I am a selfish, fearful old body," she said finally. "Maybe you will do better by Ruth than I can. I can't do anything but just be good to her. You can give her a great many beautiful things to enjoy, and they are beautiful; when a body has just starved for them all their lives, they know how beautiful. They won't amount to anything, though, if you aren't good."

There was a tremulous appeal in her voice.

The young man took her hand reverently.

"I will try," he said solemnly, "to be good."

There was another little pause, then Mrs. Wing continued hesitatingly: "I can't say yet I am willing. Still, if Ruth wants to risk it, I don't suppose I ought to interfere, do you?"

"I think you might leave it to Ruth. She is a very sensible girl, Mr. Willard answered gravely.

Then he leaned over and kissed his prospective mother-in-law on her soft, pink cheek with a right good will.—The Housewife.

It is a test of a good housekeeper if she can light a lamp, and the house doesn't immediately begin to smell of kerosene.

Trains of thought have many head-on collisions.



The sailor's Wife.
And are you sure the news is true?
Is this a time to think of work?
Ye jades, lay by your wheel!
Is this the time to spin a thread,
When Colin's at the door?
Reach down my cloak, I'll to the quay
And see him come ashore.
For there's nae luck about the house,
There's nae luck at a';
There's little pleasure in the house
When our gudeman's awa'.

And gin to me my bignest,
My bishop's-satin gown;
For I mean tell the ballie's wife
That Colin's in the town.
My Turkey slippers maun ga on
My stockin's pearly blue;
It's a' to pleasure our gudeman,
For he's baith teal and true.

Rise, lass, and mak' a clean fresside,
Put on the muckle pot;
Gie little Kate her button gown,
And Jock his Sunday coat;
And mak' their shoon as black as sleek
Their hose as white as snow;
It's a' to please my ain gudeman,
For he's been long awa'.

There's twa fat hens upo' the coop
Been fed this month and nae;
Mak' haste and thrash their necks about,
That Colin weel may fare;
And spread the table neat and clean,
Gae like a thing lock brow,
For wha can tell how Colin fared
When he was far awa'?

Sae true his heart, sae smooth his speech,
His breath like caller air,
His very foot has music in't
As he comes up the stair—
And will I see his face again?
And will I hear him speak?
I'm downright dizzy wi' the thought,
In troth I'm like to greet!

If Colin's weel, and weel content,
I hae nae naer to crave;
And gin I live to keep him sae
I'm blest about the lave.
And will I see his face again?
And will I hear him speak?
I'm downright dizzy wi' the thought,
In troth I'm like to greet.
For there's nae luck about the house,
There's nae luck at a';
There's little pleasure in the house
When our gudeman's awa'.

—William Julius Mickle.

BED FOR A LIFETIME.

Size Increased or Decreased, as the Emergency Requires.

Children are known to grow sometimes with alarming rapidity, adding inch after inch to their height. Whether this necessitates the purchase of a new bed every year to accommodate their increased length or not is hard to say. To provide for such emergencies, however, a wide-awake woman of Massachusetts has designed a bed that can be increased or decreased in length to fit the occasion. The change is so easily accomplished. The side rails of the bed are made in two sections, one fitting into the other and held together by pins inserted in corresponding apertures in a life. A bed such as this should last a lifetime if properly cared for. Guests of different sizes could be readily cared for, and to make the bed doubly useful, she also provides for the attachment of a gymnastic apparatus in the form of a horizontal bar. The latter is held in position in the center of the bed by uprights at each side. The uprights are also firmly attached to the side rails of the bed by pins. By such attachments modern furniture is made serviceable to its owners in more ways than one.

Gold from a Smelter Chimney.

A chimney connected with a gold smelting furnace in Vallejo Junction has enriched the company's coffers \$7,000.

The chimney had been filling up for the past year, and finally became so troublesome that the managers of the plant ordered it cleaned. The refuse was afterward treated in the gold room, and was found to contain gold dust worth \$7,000. The directors immediately ordered appliances attached to the chimneys to prevent refuse from passing out into the air. This small bonanza is the result of one year's accumulation. It is not known how much was lost.

Exports of Attar of Roses.

The exports of attar of roses from Bulgaria in 1905 amounted to 11,483 pounds, valued at \$752,400, as compared with 9,130 pounds, the annual average for the seven preceding years. The United States bought only about twenty-five pounds of attar of roses from Bulgaria in 1897, but took 20.8 of the product in 1905. France came next with 28.8 per cent; the United Kingdom, 16.8 per cent; Germany, 15.4 per cent; Russia, 4.5 per cent, and Turkey, 4.3 per cent.

Unexpected.

"My dear, these are not a bit like the ones my mother used to make."

"Of course not. But would you mind telling me if they are so very different?"

"As different as day from night. Yours are fit to eat."—Baltimore American.

THE RETURN.

He sought the old scenes with eager feet—
The scenes he had known as a boy;
"Oh, for a draught of those fountains sweet,
And a taste of that vanished joy."

He roamed the fields, he mused by the streams,
He threaded the paths and lanes;
On the hills he sought his youthful dreams,
In the woods to forget his pains.

Oh, sad, sad hills; oh, cold, cold heart!
In sorrow he learned thy truth—
One may go back to the place of his birth—
He cannot go back to his youth.

—John Burroughs.

Not an Expert Lover

THE gas was blazing in the chandelier in the most wasteful and extravagant manner. That was because the young man of sedate demeanor had not had the nerve to turn it down. He was unaccustomed to that sort of thing; in fact, it was by the merest accident that he had arrived at the point of declaring himself. Even then it was in a sort of impressionistic fashion.

The young woman under the circumstances wanted to be assured of certain things in precise terms. It is not enough to have a mild gaze of affection directed at once through a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles while one is asked if one could care enough for another one sufficiently to intrust one's future to him. When the answer to that question happens to be constructively favorable, something more is to be expected. Having one's hand held really doesn't count for anything in particular.

"Are you quite sure that you—you love me?" she asked.

"I'm quite positive," replied the young man, "I don't see what else it can be."

"What else what can be?"

"The way I feel toward you. I don't think I ever felt quite the same toward any other young lady of my acquaintance."

"Are you quite sure?"

"I think so. Not that I can remember, at least."

"What makes you love me, do you think?"

"I couldn't say."

"Do I seem different to any of the other young ladies you are acquainted with?"

"Er—well, yes, in a way."

"What way?"

"Well, you are different. I don't think that any two persons are exactly the same, do you? Of course, in some respects you are like other people, but in other respects of course you aren't."

"Well, you didn't fall in love with me for my beauty—"

"No, I don't think that would be a very sensible sort of thing to do."

"Because I know I'm not beautiful."

"Perhaps not beautiful, exactly. But there are other qualities besides mere beauty to admire. I've heard that beautiful girls are apt to be selfish and exacting. They are used to attracting attention from the opposite sex and it spoils them; no, I'm glad that you are not beautiful."

The girl gizzled nervously. "How

funny!" she remarked. "And are you glad that I don't attract the attention of the opposite sex?" she asked.

"Yes, indeed," replied the young man.

The young woman released her hand from the somewhat feeble clasp that had held it. "It's strange that I ever attracted your attention, don't you think?" she asked, sweetly. Then, in a slightly irritated tone, "I wish you wouldn't sit quite so close to me."

The young man increased the space already between them by about two feet and looked still more uncomfortable. "I beg your pardon," he said, earnestly.

The young woman smiled. "You don't answer my question," she said. "Since I am such an extremely unattractive sort of person how has it happened that you have fallen so desperately and passionately in love with me?"

"Excuse me," said the young man. "I didn't say that at all."

"That you were desperately—madly—hopelessly in love with me? Oh, I beg your pardon. I must have misunderstood you. It has been a beautiful day, has it not?"

The young man looked genuinely distressed. "You misunderstand me so," he complained. "You take me up so quickly that I don't know—"

He paused and, pulling his handkerchief from his pocket, wiped his face. The girl leaned back on the cushions at the

time to modify it. When I said that I was glad that you were not beautiful I meant beauty in the altogether perfect and unusual sense of the word, not to imply that you were possessed of no personal charms. That would be altogether absurd. I am very short-sighted, as you know, but I am not altogether blind."

"Oh!"

"I meant to say that young ladies who are in the sense beautiful are so continually reminded of it—from infancy, I might say—so habituated to the admiration that beauty excites, that they become entirely self-centered. They demand absolute deference on the part of others to every caprice and are quite inconsiderate of the feelings or the comfort of those about them. They are not exactly to blame for it. I should not be inclined to judge them too harshly."

"Dear me," said the girl.

"But, after all," pursued the sedate young man, "admiration of that sort is a very superficial and evanescent thing. It seldom stands the test of continual association. It is nothing, for instance, to the feeling that I have for you, because it is based on something comparatively worthless."

The girl did not look quite so malicious as before. "Then you do think I am passably good-looking?" she said.

"More than that, to be exact," replied the young man.

"And not altogether unattractive to the other sex?"

"If you were I should have been spared quite a great deal of anxiety."

"But you are not madly and desperately in love with me?"

"Not 'madly' or 'desperately.' But I do love you."

"I'm sorry," said the girl, "because I am afraid that I can never marry you. I know I said I thought that I might, but I had not considered sufficiently."

The young man gasped. "Why, I thought—you said—why do you think that? Grace, if you reject me I shall be most unhappy. I shall be mad and desperate, I'm afraid, Grace!"

He rose in great agitation and began to pace the floor. The girl laughed and he turned sharply upon her, his spectacles absolutely flashing.

"Oh, come and sit down!" said the young woman. "George, you're a awful stupid and I'm going to have a great deal to put up with, but—Come over here and sit down!"—Chicago Daily News.



extreme end of the lounge and watched him maliciously.

"I—er—I meant to say that I had no intention of saying that you were unattractive," he explained. "It would be untrue to say that. I think that you are very attractive."

"This is encouraging," murmured the young woman. "I shall be quite vain presently. I am afraid you are just trying to flatter me."

"No, indeed," protested the young man. "I hope I am incapable of that. Believe me."

"I believe I do," said the young woman, with gentle sarcasm.

"Thank you," he said, gratefully. "I have always tried to be sincere in what I say. I want to make myself as clear as possible, but I find it difficult. I meant to convey something altogether different from what you seem to imagine. There are very few girls who could justly lay claim to your loveliness, in—"

"My what!" exclaimed the young woman with an air of amazement.

The young man blushed. "I said your loveliness. Perhaps that may seem a romantic sort of word and I might have said 'prettiness' or that very few were as good-looking. Still, I don't think I am exaggerating when I say 'loveliness.'"

"But this isn't at all what you told me a few minutes ago. Don't you told you said I was—"

"Pardon me. I said that I was glad that you did not attract the attention of the opposite sex—or, rather, I assented to the question that you put in that form and you hardly gave me

praise from a husband's lips is always pleasant to the wife; but the praise may be too discriminating to suit her.

"I thought it was nice of you to tell that carpenter, who seemed to think women know nothing, that I could hammer nails like lightning," said Mrs. Morse to her husband. "But I'm afraid, dear, you are not an unprejudiced judge. I really don't think I'm such a very good hammerer."

"Oh, he knew what I meant," said Mr. Morse, cheerfully. "You know lightning never strikes twice in the same place, they say."

Not an Armless Venus.

"Ah! Miss Strong you're a regular Venus," said Jack Nery as he attempted to kiss her.

"That's what," she replied as she gave him a right-arm jolt on the nose and followed it up with a left-arm swing to the jaw. "But, unfortunately, I'm no Venus di Milo."—Philadelphia Press.

The Mean Thing!

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herring, box of oranges and peck of onions in the other window were equally familiar.

The snow had melted off, leaving the winter's accumulation of debris scattered over the black, puddly surface of the earth. There was a depressing drizzle, through which the jagged outline of the houses loomed blackly against the murky sky.

Ruth stepped gingerly down on to the sloppy sidewalk, her skirts held high, and her straight little nose lifted quite out of its ordinary angle. In spite of it all, though, her brown eyes sparkled, and there was a hint of a smile on her pretty, firm lips. She walked as rapidly as she could under the circumstances down the muddy streets, and with a sigh of relief clicked the gate shut behind her.

The low-browed little house beyond the gate looked as sullen as any of them, but the light flashed up just then, and her mother opened the door.

"Bless her dear heart!" she said, in a gentle, solicitous voice, "if she isn't just completely mired down. Here's your slippers, an' wrapper an' everything to get right into."

Ruth slipped out of her muddy clothes and into the soft, clean wrapper, with a little gurgle of satisfaction.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "how good and respectable I feel!"

Mrs. Wing picked up the discarded heap.

"How dreadfully they do smell of tobacco smoke, Ruthie, dear!" she said, with as much of a sniff as her mild voice was capable of.

"I expect so," Ruth answered, with a little laugh; "I believe half the farmers in the county came in and sat around the stove visiting. The smoke was so thick sometimes, you couldn't tell who they were; and I couldn't even stay up at my end of the store. Jim has the gripe and wasn't there to-day, so I had to go over and help on the grocery side. There wasn't a very big dry goods trade, anyway; two spoons of thread and some dress linings. Oh, yes, Mr. Peters got a calico dress for his wife."

"As it pretty, Ruth?" Mrs. Wing asked anxiously.

"Well, I should say. Do you remember that old purple piece we have had so long? He took that because Mr. Spencer said I could let him have it half a cent cheaper on the yard."

"Oh, dear!" Mrs. Wing murmured sorrowfully. "I was so in hopes she'd have something pretty once. Come, dearie, supper's ready, and I know you need it. I just don't see how you can keep so bright."

Ruth blushed rather self-consciously,

"I hardly think I deserve it."