

THE ARCHITECTS WIFE.

If it were lawful to add another to the eight beauties given in the catechism, I would add the following: "Blessed are they that marry a sensible woman, for theirs shall be domestic felicity." And if it were lawful to illustrate the beauties with historical notes, I would append to the aforesaid ninth the following explanation:

In the middle of the Fourteenth century the Bastard, Don Enrique de Trastamara, was besieging Toledo, which offered a brave and tenacious defense, being loyal to that king called by some "the Just," and by others "the Cruel." Many a time and oft had the faithful and courageous Toledanos crossed the magnificent bridge of San Martin, one of the handsomest and most useful architectural treasures of that monumental city, and hurling themselves upon the camp of Don Enrique, established in the Cigarrales, they had wrought bloody havoc amid the besieging host. To prevent the repetition of such sallies Don Enrique determined to destroy the bridge of San Martin, which, as has already been said, was the noblest of the many that form the girde of the city of martyrs, of councils, and of cavaliers. But what value have artistic or historic monuments in the eyes of the ambitious politicians whose dream is to bury a dagger in the breast of a brother, than they may see themselves in the throes he occupies. Well known it is that the Cigarrales of Toledo, to whose fame so much has been contributed by Tirso and other great Spanish poets, consist of multitudes of villas and country houses, with their lovely gardens and fruitful orchards, all shut in by hedges.

One night the leafy branches of these trees were lopped off by the soldiers of Don Enrique, and piled upon the bridge of San Martin. The dawn was beginning to open, when a glow of wondrous brilliance lit up the devastated gardens, the waves of the Tajo, the ruins of the palace of Don Rodrigo, and the little Arabian tower reflected in the waters of the river, at whose foot, so history hath it, the daughter of Don Julian was bathing when the ill fated king set eyes upon her fateful beauty. An immense fire blazed on the bridge of San Martin, and the cracking of the massive carved beams, wrought with all the skill of the chisel which created the marvels of the Alhambra, seemed the pitiful plaint of art crushed by brute force. The Toledanos, awakened by the sinister glow, ran to save their beloved bridge from the imminent ruin which menaced it, but they ran futilely, for a frightful crash that resounded luxuriously through the hollows of the Tajo told them that the bridge stood no longer. When the rising sun gilded the domes of the imperial city the girls who went to fill their jars with the cool and crystalline water of the river turned homeward again with the vessels empty and their hearts full of sorrow and indignation, for the current of the Tajo ran turbid and boiling, carrying on its whirling waves the ruins of the bridge of San Martin, which still were smoking.

This act of vandalism roused to fury the indignation of the Toledanos, who saw thus cut off their only direct passage to the paradise like Cigarrales, which they had inherited from the Moors, together with the Moorish passion for groves and gardens. The valor of the citizens, which had grown feeble, gained unexpected vigor, and ere many days they had blotted out the camp of Trastamara, the blood of whose soldiers ran in torrents over the Cigarrales. Many years had passed since the fratri-cide of Montiel destroyed the bridge of San Martin. Kings and archbishops had exerted all their powers to have it replaced by another which should be its equal in strength and beauty. But the genius and creator of the best architect, Christian and Moorish, had not been able to gratify the ardent wishes of the Toledanos, for the rapid current of the river always swept away foundations, piles and stagings before the placing of the gigantic arches. Don Pedro Torporio, one of the great archbishops to whom Toledo owes almost as much as her kings, sent proclamations to almost every city and village of Spain, calling for architects to rebuild the bridge of San Martin.

One day a man and a woman, entirely unknown, entered Toledo by the Cambron gate, and, after inspecting the ruins of the bridge, they hired a horse close by, and shortly thereafter the man took himself to the archiepiscopal palace. The archbishop, surrounded at the moment by cavaliers and prelates, was overjoyed at the arrival of an architect, immediately gave him audience, and welcomed the stranger kindly.

"My lord," said the arrival, "my name, no doubt unknown to you, is Juan de Arevalo. I am an architect, and I am brought here by your proclamation summoning such."

"Do you understand the difficulties comprised in rebuilding the bridge of San Martin, friend?"

"I do, but I believe myself capable of overcoming them."

"Where have you studied architecture?"

"At Salamanca."

"And what works testify to your skill?"

"None whatever. Noting the frown on the face of the archbishop the stranger hastened to add: "I was a soldier in my youth, my lord; but leaving the profession of arms I devoted myself to architecture, and if no firm and well proportioned pile attests my knowledge it is that for the sake of bread I have relinquished the edifices of my construction across the Tago and the Duero. And for the rest, I place your life in pledge of my competency."

"How do you speak in riddles. You must know that men are no longer put to death for failure to perform the conditions of a promise."

"Aye, true, my lord; but when the main arch of the bridge should be completed the place of its architect is on the levantine, and if the arch prove false and fall, its builder would fall with it."

"That offer is surely fair," said the archbishop, "as a proof of your earnestness and sincerity. Let the work be begun to-morrow."

Juan de Arevalo hastened to the humble dwelling, in whose embrasured window sat watching the woman who had accompanied him to Toledo; a woman still young and beautiful, notwithstanding her face bore the traces of vigils and privations.

"Catalina! my Catalina!" exclaimed the architect, embracing his wife fondly, "among these monuments that glorify Toledo there will be one that will transmit to posterity the name of Juan de Arevalo."

No longer could the Toledanos, approaching the Tajo over escaped rocks and masses of ruins, exclaim: "Here was the bridge of San Martin!" for already

the new bridge reared itself in shapely proportions upon the rent foundations, now made solid, of the ancient structure. The archbishop and other wealthy Toledanos were showering rich gifts upon the fortunate and skillful architect who had succeeded in throwing the three great arches of the bridge, in spite of the gigantic daring of the work and the furious currents of the river.

On the eve of the day of San Yldefonso, patron saint of the city, Juan de Arevalo informed the archbishop that his task was completed, saving only the removing of the scaffolding from the three arches. It was a perilous test—the taking down of the complicated system of heavy iron scaffolding which braced the enormous mass of delicately carved timbers; but the calmness with which the architect awaited the issue, which he promised to meet standing on the central keystone, filled those about him with confidence. With proclamations and pealing of bells was announced for the following day the solemn benediction and dedication of the bridge, and the Toledanos, from the heights commanding the vale of the Tajo, conferred with devout attention their beloved Cigarrales that for years had been sad, lonely, almost deserted, and which were now to recover their old time beauty and animation.

Toward midnight Juan de Arevalo climbed upon the scaffolding of the central arch to see that all was in readiness for the morrow's ceremony. Meanwhile he was raptly singing. All at once the song died on his lips, the light faded from his face, and sorrowfully he descended, and slowly took his way homeward. His wife, Catalina, came forth to meet him, full of love and contentment, but a frightful pallor overspread her face at sight of the despairing countenance of her husband.

"Oh, Father in heaven!" she cried; "what is it then, my dear one? Art thou ill?"

"Ill—no! dead—yes—in hope, in power, in honor! Aye! in life itself, for I will not survive the dishonor of to-morrow. Nay, the only shred of honor I can wrest from fate will be mine but in dying!"

"No! no!" cried Catalina. "Juan, thou dreamest! Thy great excess of labor has deranged thy thoughts, my dear one. Come hither; let me call the leech and heal thee."

"No, no. It is the truth I tell thee. When I was most sure of success, most confident of triumph, now on the eve of the test, I have discovered an error in my calculations that to-morrow will bury in the Tajo the bridge and the unfortunate who unsuccessfully planned it."

"The bridge may fall, beloved, but thou shalt not go with it. On my knees I will entreat the archbishop to exempt thee from that horrible promise."

"And if he yield, then will I not accept the absolution. I care not for life without honor."

"Now I swear that thou shalt lose no life nor honor," murmured Catalina, softly, yet with infinite resolution.

It was already almost dawn. The cocks were crowing. Catalina seemed to sleep, and her husband, soothed in spite of himself by her calm demeanor, at last fell into a fitful, feverish slumber, that was full of nightmare horrors. Catalina arose as silent as her motions, as the passing of a shadow, and, opening a window, looked out on the vale of the Tajo. No sound was heard but the murmuring current of the river and the wind that whistled through the timbers of the scaffolding at the bridge. A dense and somber pall of cloud overhung the city, and from its gloomy bosom darted, now and then, lightning rays of terrible brilliance that blinded the beholder. As yet no rain was falling; and the terror of the impending storm seemed concentrated in the thick palpable darkness, the ominous brooding silence, and the sultry, breathless thickness of the close atmosphere.

Closing the window, the wife of the architect caught up an unextinguished brand that smoldered still on the hearthstone. Out into the night she went, and, for all the pitchy blackness that marked that last dark hour before the day should quicken, she sought not to guide her steps by the light of the firebrand, but rather to conceal its gleam with the folds of her raiment, as she hurried over the broken and littered way to the river, and with pain and peril climbed upon the planks of the staging. Below her the wind shrieked among the timbers, and the river roared and belowed as it hurled itself upon the opposition of the piles, and Catalina shuddered. Was it for the solitude and the darkness? for the danger of losing her footing and tumbling headlong? or because she realized that those about her, overlooking the sacrifice of affection, would see in her movements only the odious deed of a criminal?

She recovered her calmness with an effort, shook until it burst into a blaze in the blist the torch that until now she had hidden, and applied it to the lighter braces of the staging. The resinous wood caught with a vigorous flame, and, fanned by the wind, leaped abroad and climbed with terrible rapidity up the scaffolding.

Not less swiftly, by the light of the spreading fire, Catalina recrossed the dangerous path she had trodden, and reached her home and her chamber while her husband was still sleeping.

By this time the massive sleepers of the bridge of San Martin were cracking. A little after dawn and prolonged murmur was heard throughout the city, and from a hundred bellies tolled the ominous fire alarm, to which lugubrious signal ensued a crash that called from the Toledanos the same cry of distress that they had uttered when the bridge succumbed to the vandal attack of Don Enrique the Bastard.

Juan de Arevalo awoke with a species of spasms. Catalina was at his side, apparently sleeping. Juan clothed himself hurriedly, and as he reached the street his heart leaped with joy as he realized that the fire had obliterated the proof of his faulty judgment.

The archbishop and the Toledanos attributed the fire to a belt from heaven, and the sorrow they felt for their own loss was tempered by the sympathy felt for the architect, whom they deemed to have seen the results of his labor derided even in the hour of triumph; and the architect himself, who was a pious soul, of a profound faith in the protection of heaven, was devout in the same conviction.

As for Catalina, she assured her husband that she was entirely of the same opinion, and, as women are rarely guilty of falsehood, surely so venial a lie may be forgiven to one who had saved the honor and the life of her husband.

The conflagration only retarded for a year the triumph of Juan de Arevalo, for a twelvemonth later, to a day, on the fete of San Yldefonso, the Toledanos crossed the bridge of San Martin to their beloved Cigarrales, and the successful builder of the structure was the toast of the occasion, and the honored guest at the banquet spread in joyous celebration.

—Y. H. Addis in The Argonaut.

THE FLYING MACHINE PROBLEM.

Lesson Taught by the Bird—Three Indisputable Facts.

The reason of this wonderful effectiveness of the animal machine is obvious. See how this machine has been gradually perfected throughout infinite ages, especially in birds. During the whole geological history of the earth this machine has been steadily improving in structure of skeleton, energy of muscle and rapidity of combustion of fuel, by struggle for life and survival of only the swiftest, the most energetic and the hottest blooded, until an almost incredible intensity is reached in birds. Moreover, in them everything is sacrificed to the supreme necessity of flight. Viscera, skeleton, legs, head, all are made as small and light as possible to make room for the great pectoral muscles working the wings. Add to this the exquisite structure of the wings and feathers, adapting them for the greatest effectiveness, and we must admit that a bird is an incomparable model of a flying machine.

No machine that we may hope to devise, for the same weight of machine, fuel and directing brain, is half so effective. And yet this machine thus perfected through infinite ages by a ruthless process of natural selection, reaches its limit of weight at about fifty pounds! I said, "weight of machine, fuel and directing brain." Here is another prodigious advantage of the natural over the artificial machine. The flying animal is its own engineer, the flying machine must carry its engineer. The directing engineer in the former (the brain) is perhaps an ounce, in the latter it is 150 pounds. The limit of the flying animal is fifty pounds. The smallest possible weight of a flying machine, with its necessary fuel and engineer, even without freight or passengers, could not be less than 300 or 400 pounds.

Now, to complete the argument, put these three indisputable facts together: 1. There is a low limit of weight, certainly not much beyond fifty pounds, beyond which it is impossible for an animal to fly. Nature has reached this limit, and with her utmost effort has failed to pass it. 2. The animal machine is far more effective than any we may hope to make; therefore the limit of the weight of a successful flying machine cannot be more than fifty pounds. 3. The weight of any machine constructed for flying, including fuel and engineer, can not be less than three or four hundred pounds. Is it not demonstrated that a true flying machine, self raising, self sustaining, self propelling, is physically impossible?—Professor Joseph Le Conte in Popular Science Monthly.

Driving Away Malignant Spirits.

Whenever we are to ascend a dangerous rapid—and nearly all are so considered by the native itinerant, and probably are at certain seasons of the year—a boatman brings out an old rusty four barreled blunderbuss, rams the barrels full of powder, picks in fuses and stations himself at the side of the boat for the most serious business connected with the ascent. As the boat strikes the first fierce breaker, one barrel is discharged into the water; the gun is then dropped upon the deck, and the sailor tugs for a while at the ropes; when we have swung around and plowed and plunged sufficiently with little progress, he drops his work, whatever it may be, fires another fuse and explodes the half ounce of powder into the foam; the third and fourth chambers are likewise emptied if the business is continued long enough.

This may seem a curious and useless custom to those unacquainted with the Chinese ideas of demonology, but once having mastered this branch of their intricate religious system, it will appear to be the most natural and necessary proceeding. Malignant spirits are in and around all dangerous places, and ready to do all manner of mischief. They can be frightened by terrific sounds; ergo, in passing all such spots the boatman naturally yells, beats a gong, explodes fire crackers or powder in any form. At worship, at weddings, funerals, in times of severe sickness, the greater the noise the more likely the demons are to hide themselves. The water is crowded with such demons, and they are either frightened or propitiated by the boatman.—"Western China."

Scenery in Central Africa.

Day after day you may wander through these forests with nothing except the climate to remind you where you are. The beasts, to be sure, are different, but unless you watch for them you will seldom see any; the birds are different, but you rarely hear them; and as for the rocks, they are our own familiar granites and gneisses with honest basalt dikes boring through them, and leopard skin lichens staining their weathered sides. Thousands and thousands of miles, then, of vast thin forest, shadeless, trackless, voiceless—forest in mountain and forest in plain—this is east central Africa.

Once a week you will see a palm; once in three months the monkey will cross your path; the flowers, on the whole, are few; the trees are poor, and, to be honest, though the endless forest clad mountains have a sublimity of their own, and though there are tropical bits along some of the mountain streams of exquisite beauty, nowhere is there anything in grace and sweetness and strength to compare with a Highland glen.—"Tropical Africa."

The German Emperor's Childhood.

The German emperor was a bumptious and overbearing child, and never endured being beaten in any game. If he could not get his own way, he would first strike, and then try and take advantage of his position as a "royal child." But this was never allowed. The rule in the nursery was strict equality, and the nurses had stringent orders to enforce it. He has a cold, proud manner, which made him anything but popular with his other playmates. It was quite the reverse with Prince Henry and the little Princess Sophie, who were beloved by all.—New York Tribune.

"Bullet Playing" in Scotland.

The Scotch miner has many ways of amusing himself. Quoits is a favorite game of his, so is a game called "rounders"—a sort of baseball, cricket—and cricket itself is popular among the younger men, but with them football is the favorite pastime. Leaping, running, throwing the hammer, and tossing the caber are all practiced, and in some parts a game called "bullet playing" is in high favor. I have never seen this played except in the Lothians and Stirlingshire, and there it was at one time the crack amusement. Rather a peculiar amusement it is, too. It is played in this manner: A certain distance, say a mile out and a mile in, is fixed upon as the ground to be covered by the players, and the man who does so in the fewest number of throws is declared the winner. The bullet is a polished ball of hard whinstone, and weighs from ten to fourteen ounces, and this ball the player takes into his hand, and, running to a line drawn on the roadway, he swings his arm and throws with all his might. This is termed "hanching the bullet," and a good player can cover the mile in five or six throws.

The game is one mainly of strength, but a good deal of skill can be shown in it. Each player has a man in front to show where the bullets should be landed, and his business is to see that if his directions are followed the bullet of his player will have the best part of the road to run on. The game is always played on the best highway in the neighborhood, and the authorities object to it as being dangerous, although I never have heard of any accident arising therefrom. A bullet match is to the Scotch miner what a dog fight is to his Northumbrian or Staffordshire congener, or a prize fight to an East End Londoner. The fact that it is forbidden by law adds to its attractiveness, and it affords ample opportunities for betting. Bets are made on the throw, on the distance out, and on the complete match, and when two "dois" are played the excitement runs high.—Nineteenth Century.

Invention of the Shot Tower.

There was once a mechanic at Bristol, England, who had a queer dream. Watts was his name, and he was by trade a shot maker. The making of the little leaden pellets was then a slow, laborious and, consequently, costly process. Watts had to take great bars of lead and pound them out into sheets of a thickness about equal to the diameter of the shot he desired to make. Then he cut the sheets into little cubes, which he placed in a revolving barrel or box and rolled until the edges wore off from the constant friction and the little cubes became spheroidal.

Watts had often racked his brain trying to devise a better scheme, but in vain. Finally, after an evening spent with some jolly companions at the alehouse he went home and turned into bed. He soon fell into a deep slumber, but the liquor evidently did not agree with him for he had a bad dream. He thought he was out again with the "boys." They were all trying to find their way home when it began to rain shot. Beautiful globules of lead, polished and shining fell in a torrent and compelled him and his bitulous companions to draw their heavy limbs to a piece of shelter.

In the morning, when Watts awoke, he remembered the dream. He thought about it all day, and wondered what shape a machine that would take in all may be, fire another fuse and explodes the half ounce of powder into the foam; the third and fourth chambers are likewise emptied if the business is continued long enough. This may seem a curious and useless custom to those unacquainted with the Chinese ideas of demonology, but once having mastered this branch of their intricate religious system, it will appear to be the most natural and necessary proceeding. Malignant spirits are in and around all dangerous places, and ready to do all manner of mischief. They can be frightened by terrific sounds; ergo, in passing all such spots the boatman naturally yells, beats a gong, explodes fire crackers or powder in any form. At worship, at weddings, funerals, in times of severe sickness, the greater the noise the more likely the demons are to hide themselves. The water is crowded with such demons, and they are either frightened or propitiated by the boatman.—"Western China."

Importance of Recording Deeds.

Due record of deeds is a matter of vast importance in transfers, even though a deed be "perfectly good with out record against the grantor himself and his heirs," and although "a deed not recorded is just as good as if it had been recorded against any parties or the heirs of the grantor by a subsequent deed, even for a full price, if they had at the time notice or knowledge of the prior and unrecorded deed." Neglect of registration is a fruitful cause of expensive worry and litigation. Registered judgments, heirs unexpectedly turning up, mortgages whose satisfaction has not been recorded, rights of dower and courtesy, both of which conveyances would gladly abolish in order to facilitate transfers, are difficulties in the way of undisputed title. Equity ultimately decides in courts of law who is entitled to possession, but due precaution in search and record would, in most instances, nullify the need of resort to it. All titles are cleared by sale under judicial decree.—Richard Wheatley in Harper's Magazine.

Idaho Streams That Vanish.

One of the peculiar features of Idaho scenery is the frequent occurrence of dark rocky chasms and channels of lava into which streams and rivers plunge and are apparently forever lost. These fissures are supposed to be old lava beds. The outside of the molten mass cooled and formed a roof, the fiery stream below became exhausted, leaving an empty chamber. A break in this roof having occurred, an opening was formed into which the river or stream now disappears, or springs as a mysterious lake, leaping or spouting on some distant mountain or plain.

On the banks of the Snake river one of these streams reappears, gushing from a high cliff in a cataract to the waters below.—Scientific American.

Why Called "White House."

The White House at Washington derives its name from the fact that the Virginia freestone, of which it is built, was painted white to conceal the discolorations caused by smoke and soot.—New York Evening World.

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