

THE JOKER'S PARADISE.

Things go by contraries in China, we're told: We'd like to be there for a day: We're weary of writing of incidents old That occur in the same prosy way. There the kind servant girl, she explodes, we presume. And blows up the kerensie can. While the male is kicked into a midnight of gloom. By the hoof of the meek hired man. The buzz-saw rubs up against some one to see if he's really and truly alive. And is all mangled up to such a degree That it can't be for a moment revived. There sons all are staid, sober, earnest young men. And husbands find wives who can bake now and then. A cake quite as good as their mas'. The old way-back farmer comes into the town With a strange deck of cards in his sleeves, And falls on the sharpers and does them up brown. As their pockets of cash he relieves. The gun which so often brings sorrow and woe Because it has strangely exploded, Is blown out of sight since it really don't know That the man whom it foos with is loaded. In China our jokers could take their old jokes And turning them 'round the end to Might work them all off on susceptible folks. As something entirely new. The reason there's nothing fresh under the sun In the newspaper columns to-day Is because everything that may happen is done In precisely the old-fashioned way.

A HASTY JUDGMENT.

Why Gerald Changed His Opinion of Annis Leighton.

"Gerald! Bless the boy, I believe he's dreaming."
"No, mother, not quite," Gerald Trevor answered, arousing Hattie. "Only thinking. What was it you wanted?"
"Young people are apt to be thinking on the morning after a party, especially when they didn't get home till past midnight," Mrs. Trevor said, dryly. "She shrewdly suspected of whom her son was thinking. "I have an errand for you at the store. These things are wanted—I've written out the list, so you can't forget."
"A necessary precaution!" laughed Gerald.
"A written list is as safe as anybody's memory." Mrs. Trevor replied, not choosing to argue the point.
Gerald was passing out when a young lady hurried in to say eagerly, "Oh, Cousin Gerald, will you do me a favor by the way?"
"Why not, if I can? What is it?"
"Annis Leighton promised to lend me that book of Miss Parlova's. If you wouldn't mind stopping for it—I'll write a line if you'll wait a minute, only I hate to stop for anything till the morning work is done up."
"You needn't bother. I guess I can command sufficient language to tell Miss Leighton you sent me for a book she promised you."
"Do you really think so? Now I shouldn't wonder a bit if it took you nearly twenty minutes to get it said," remarked his second cousin demurely. "But, of course, I am the more grateful for your willingness to sacrifice the time for me, and I am really very anxious to get that book and try house-keeping as a fine art."
"All right. It won't be my fault if you don't have a chance to try it by this afternoon," Gerald answered with a manly unconsciousness that his sentence would have been far more welcome without the last words.
His mother knew better, and when Gerald drove off thinking only that Cousin Hattie would make a model housekeeper for somebody, some time, Mrs. Trevor said grimly: "You're downright obliging, Hattie, to give him an errand to Annis Leighton."
"He would go there anyhow," Hattie replied, shrugging her shoulders. "And he might just as well bring me my book and save the trip."
"You think it is a settled thing, then?"
"You'd have thought so if you had seen their eyes last night. Like as not he'll ask your blessing when he comes back."
"Well, I don't know as I'm sorry," Mrs. Trevor remarked slowly. "Annis is a good girl, though not the girl I'd have chosen. I'm no admirer of blue stockings myself, and from all I can hear Annis reads more books every year than I've read in all my life. I don't know where she gets the time, I am sure. My housework keeps me busy. I don't know what sort of a cook she is, nor how she keeps things. Still she's a good girl, friendly to everybody, a good church member, and smart as can be, if a body likes to hear a young girl talk about science and politics and such like men's business. Gerald likes it, and no doubt when she's married she'll take a pride in her house-keeping, too. I'm not going to complain."
"I'm sure I've seen prettier girls," commented Hattie, glancing at the mirror.
"She'll do well enough," Mrs. Trevor answered dryly. "The new Hattie would have been quite willing, but in her secret heart the mother was rather glad Gerald had chosen some one else."
"Hattie's a nice girl, I know," she told herself, "but I like Annis's frank, outspoken ways best. It isn't best for girls to be so smooth and shrewd and almost shy. If Gerald could only have fancied Nellie East now—but boys will choose for themselves and not for their mothers."
Meanwhile Gerald was whistling happily along the road, forgetting all about Hattie and her good housewifery, forgetting Nellie East, though he had met her and had noticed how neat and pretty she was—forgetting everything but Annis, bright, keen-witted Annis, who could hold her own with any man in town on almost any topic—wise, queenly, gentle Annis, who had not a peer in the world, he was sure. How

enchanting had been their conversation last night! How her eyes sparkled with intelligence and sympathy! How pretty her home was—that little brown cottage with its broad porches covered with vines and bowered in flowery shrubs! She would be all alone in the pretty sitting-room, he knew, for Mrs. Leighton was away, and the lively brothers would be at school or in the field with their father. Annis would be alone, sewing, or perhaps busy with her books or music. He knew just how fresh and pure and dainty she would look. He must be careful not to stay too long, but—why the door was open! Should he steal softly upon her, or—He stood still in the open doorway, in utter amazement, and not untinged with displeasure. The pretty sitting-room, hitherto always so neat and dainty, was now unwept, undusted and in decided confusion. Worse yet, through a half-open door could be seen the breakfast table still covered with the morning's dishes over which the flies buzzed merrily. What did this mean? Half-inclined to retreat, he knocked loudly.
There was a sudden stir, and in a moment Annis came out of her room. Her crumpled dress, disordered hair and sleepy eyes told plainly of a morning's nap, though after that first start she came forward to greet him as gracefully as ever.
"You find me rather a lazy bones this morning," she said, brightly, though coloring slightly as she closed the dining-room door. "Come in, please."
"No, I won't detain you," Gerald answered, stifly, thinking how his mother resented an interruption before her house was in order. "I only called by Hattie's request for a book she said you promised to lend her."
"Oh, yes!" brightly as ever, though the pink deepened on her cheeks. "It is here, I think. Hattie seems to take a great interest in cooking."
"You are not ill this morning?" he asked, almost anxiously.
"Oh, no! Quite well, only tired. Here is the book. Wait one moment till I pick a bunch of roses for your mother."
He waited, but the charm was broken. The untidy house, unwashed dishes, disordered hair and crumpled dress were fatal flaws in his peerless diamond. Asleep at that hour in the morning, with the work all undone! To be sure, it was late when they got home last night. She might be excused for wanting a nap, but surely the breakfast table might have been cleared first. He was sorely disappointed in her, and showed it in spite of himself when she brought the rose with that arch unconscious smile.
"Thank you. Mother will like them. I am sorry you found last night's pleasure so fatiguing."
Annis flushed a sharp glance into his face and then stepped back with a changed expression.
"I think I shall survive it," she answered, coldly.
Gerald didn't whistle any going home, and the keen-eyed mother saw at once something was wrong. What it was was not so easy to say. Hattie had a strong suspicion. Had not Mrs. Green whispered to her last night: "I expect the Leightons'll be glad when their ma gets home. Annis neglects the housework shamefully. Always on the go. When she ain't off enjoying herself somewhere, she's over helping those sick Thompsons. Well, charity's all very well, but I say charity begins at home, and a woman's first duty is to keep her own home decent."
Yes, Hattie had a suspicion, but if Gerald said nothing, why should she? So she studied Miss Parlova and manifested great interest in cooking and housewifery with a clear conscience.
Nor were there any definite results to arouse her self-reproach. Gerald praised her progress when it was called to his attention, and ate her fancy cooking unconsciously when it was not, but never approached nearer love-making than to remark gayly that somebody would have a treasure of a wife by and by. He had no fancy in that line himself. Because one's diamond proves mere paste, shall one snatch up the first pebble that lies in his way?
It was nonsense to think of Annis any longer. Bah! What sort of a home would a man have with such a wife. He could not see her now, however fresh and dainty her dress might be, without thinking of that disorderly room and unwashed dishes. He even noticed—or was it Hattie's remark that made him notice—that a tiny rent carelessly made in her pretty blue muslin on the night of the party was still there when she wore the dress again several days after. Jove, what a housewife she would be. Yet he was no more inclined to marry a mere household drudge than before. He felt more inclined to swear eternal celibacy.
But fate threw pretty Nellie East in his way presently—one of the sweetest, most modest girls in town, and known to be her mother's right hand. First, an unruly horse acted as Cupid's assistant, then a pelting storm in which Gerald's umbrella proved a welcome refuge. After that I suspect good Mrs. Trevor had a hand in causing several meetings, until Gerald's increasing fancy made further strategy unnecessary, and in a few months from the time of that morning call Nellie was Gerald's promised wife.
If Annis wore the willow she did not proclaim the fact. She carried herself throughout with her own bright, gentle independence, and remained on the most friendly terms with Nellie, though cool and even a little disdainful sometimes toward Gerald. Then, one day came a revelation Gerald never forgot. It was at a sociable. Some one had criticised the absent Annis as a "blue-stocking" too wrapt up in her books to be a practical friend or housewife, when old Mrs. Thompson flushed up indignantly.
"A 'blue-stocking' is she? Well, maybe, but she's ten times over the friend in trouble that some of your spick-and-span fine housekeepers be. She'd rather read her book than scour her kitchen floor, I s'pose, and no shame to her either. She's got brains enough to understand books" (with a malicious insinuation in the tone.) "But when our folks were so sick last

June she was over there all but day and night. Just hurry through the work at home—skimp it, too—and over she'd come. Yes, I know you ladies couldn't spare time, you was so busy scrubbin' your doorsteps and makin' your lemon pies. But Annis Leighton ain't that sort. She don't let her neighbors die for want of help while she's fussing and primping. She could quiet our Charlie when nobody else could, and she might worse herself out doing it, too. You mind the night of Drew's party? Annis had been with us pretty near all the night before, and half the day. She would go to the party because she said they were 'toting on her for some charades or something, but the minute she got back she changed her dress and ran over to our house. She stayed till daylight. Then she went back and got breakfast, and was so dead tired she laid down while the boys ate, and when they finished she was fast asleep. They went off without waking her, and I believe she'd 'a' slept all day if somebody hadn't happened to come and wake her. That's the kind of neighbor Annis Leighton is. She told me once she hadn't opened a book nor sewed a stitch for a fortnight except a little mending she did for me. She said her own fixing could wait."
Gerald escaped from the room at the first opportunity. He was confounded, dazed and bewildered. Was this Annis Leighton, the girl he had spurned—despised and deserted because, forsooth, she was worn out with generous toil for others?
What a horrible injustice, what a cruel wrong he had done her! And now it was too late to repair it. He was engaged to Nellie East. The cruelty must go on, and who knew how she might suffer? In his bewilderment he almost ran against Annis herself, coming slowly up the street, and involuntarily a part of his feeling broke forth.
"Annis, I have just heard—just discovered what a blind fool I was. Can you ever forgive me?"
"What for?" Annis asked with startled eyes.
"For misjudging you so that day I called for the cookbook—for thinking that a neglected house meant idleness, when it really meant unselfish devotion to the comfort of others."
"Oh! You have found that out last, have you?" she said, with an amused smile.
"Why didn't you tell me then, Annis?"
"You didn't ask me—and I hate brag. Besides I was provoked. I thought you would find out some time."
"Yes, now when it is too late to do any good," Gerald muttered, under his breath.
Annis heard, however, and the soft color he remembered so well tinted her cheek again.
"And why too late?" she asked quickly, a bright fearless meaning in her glance. "We are both very much alive yet, and may be for years to come—and I like to be respected now as much as I did then. Besides, begging your pardon, I think a man ought to learn that appearances are deceitful before he is married, and not to be blindly accusing his wife of waning affection because her corns ache or of hypocritical machinations because she is planning a birthday surprise. Nellie is so sensitive, it would hurt her cruelly."
How lightly she spoke! But Gerald could not so easily drop the graver view of the case.
"I shall never forgive myself. Such a stupid blunder to have altered perhaps the whole course of two or three lives!" he said—and then could have bitten into his tongue for such presumptuous clumsiness.
But Annis only laughed, and her answer was as frankly bold as his words.
"Oh, well, there is no harm done—though more by luck than good management, I grant. No need to regret. Nellie is fair and true and tender enough for any man, no matter where you find him. And I—well, Ernest Howells is good enough for me, at any rate."
"Brother Howells, the young minister? Are you engaged to him?" Gerald gasped, a sense of great relief curiously blended with keen mortification that he should have been replaced so soon—if, indeed, he had ever had the sure place he fancied in her affections.
Annis assented, a happy pride in her dark eyes. No wonder. That young minister, earnest, eloquent and fearless, was a man of whom sweetheart or wife might well be proud.
"I congratulate you," Trevor said, as soon as he recovered his breath. "Then you will find it easier to forgive me, since there has been no harm beyond a passing vexation."
"Good to forgive, better to forget," quoted Annis, lightly. "Though I suppose we had better remember the lesson. It isn't safe to rely on Providence to save us from the consequences of our own blunders. I for one, don't propose to go to parties again till the house is in decent order. There's Nellie. Dear little girl! I'm going to tell her that you and I are friends again!" —Ada E. Ferris, in Arthur's Home Magazine.

GRASPING AT STRAWS.

Republican Exuberance Over the Rhode Island Election.
One of the encouraging signs for democracy is the eagerness with which the opposition seizes upon the slightest political event that can be tortured into evidence of popularity regained with the people. The republican organs of high and low degree are especially jubilant over the news from Rhode Island. A clear view of the situation fails to justify their exuberance. The republicans were in a minority at the previous state election in Rhode Island, but they were in power and simply asserted the right of possession, despite the fact that they were outvoted by the democracy. The democrats of that state polled about the same vote that they did a year ago, but six thousand new republicans put in an appearance from some unexplained quarter and scored a victory.
If it could only be assured that this new vote was brought out by patriotism and not by cash the outlook for the republicans in Rhode Island would be more encouraging. They held the government as against a superior number of democrats, and it is better for the reputation of the state that they have a title which they can defend upon moral as well as legal grounds. But experience enables every reading man to understand the political reactions and to realize that they go to the feelings rather than the convictions of the people. Time and again the voice of the electorate has made itself heard with results such as those recorded in the recent elections. There is little in the election of a constable, an assessor or even a mayor to indicate a change of belief as to the merits of the tariff question or a sound financial system.
It would be idle to say that there is

A RIOT BREEDER.

American Laborers Damaged by the Protection Policy.
Perhaps there is no more serious menace to American institutions than is to be found in the conditions prevailing in the mining district of Pennsylvania, where the late riots have thrown an extensive community into a state of terror and almost of anarchy. The latest phase of the strike is that the Hung and Slavs accuse the Irish and Germans of having worked up the riots in order to create prejudice against the former, and thus secure their expulsion from the region. Thus the conflict is seen to be one in which foreign populations fight out their national differences.
Under our high protective system we have carefully excluded the product of the "pauper" labor of Europe, but we have thrown wide our gates to the paupers themselves, and the American laborer has no protection against the competition of a class of men whose antecedents and native surroundings render them dangerous to free institutions, as well as incapable of properly assuming the responsibilities of American citizenship. The Poles, the Hungs, the Italians, the Russian Jews come among us and establish their own communities. They drive out the American laborer, because they are accustomed to live more meekly than he, and will work for less wages than he. The protectionists who hire them pretend that their object in asking protection is chiefly to make wages higher, and Tom Reed, of Maine, who is the spokesman of this party, announces a new school of political economy which makes wages the measure of a country's prosperity; because, he says, unless wages are high, wage-earners will not spend much money. That is the whole argument offered by him. Yet

SCHOOL AND CHURCH.

—The Christian church has one preacher in the foreign field for each two hundred at home.
—The gifts of Christian Endeavor societies to the American board and the woman's board, during 1898, amounted to \$13,535.
—In the United States and British America there are 130,197 Sunday schools. These are attended by over 10,000,000 pupils.
—Of the 34,276 Protestant clergymen of England and Wales, only 222 are of foreign birth; while of the 2,511 Romish priests, 365 are of foreign birth.
—London is stirred over a discussion touching religious instruction in the public schools. The non-sectarian influence in school matters is growing.
—The Evangelist relates that when somebody once asked Dr. Philip Schaff how he was able to accomplish so much literary work, he replied laughingly: "Oh, that's easy. You must get up early and sit up late, and keep awake all day."
—The pennant for last spring's New York state intercollegiate field day has at last been officially awarded to Syracuse. The reason for the delay was that there was some dispute as to the eligibility of certain contestants. The field day this spring will be held in Syracuse, May 30.
—Teaching the children temperance should be an important department of school work. There are encouraging signs of the excellent work done for the good cause in the instruction in regard to the effect of alcohol on the human system, which is in practice in all state schools, and all states and territories except six.—Pittsburgh Catholic.
—The late Mr. S. M. Hamilton, of Baltimore, Md., bequeathed \$20,000 to the trustees of the Seventh Baptist church, of that city, the interest of which is to be used in city mission work, under the direction of that church. The Seventh Baptist church has, in addition, some \$10,000 at interest, which will enable it to do a fine work in city evangelization.
—The city of Charleston, S. C., has six public schools, four for whites and two for negroes. The white schools are as large and commodious as those for the colored pupils. The population of the city is five-twelfths white and seven-twelfths colored. Owing to the fact that so many colored pupils have to be turned away, two large private schools have just been established where payment is required, one having 250 and the other 400 pupils.
—Dr. F. E. Clark, president of the United Society of Christian Endeavor, is receiving a fund for the erection of a Christian Endeavor Technical school in Japan. It is to be in connection with the earthquake orphanage of Yokohama, in which two hundred of the children orphaned by the terrible earthquake are being sheltered. The work of feeding, clothing and educating the children is conducted on faith, like the Bristol orphanage, which George Muller founded.
—In Madrid recently Don Andres Gomes, a dean of the church, was flogged with all the ceremonial exactness of the ancient form. After expressing repentance for having been a freemason he was taken in solemn procession, led by priests and friars, to the official residence of the bishop, where his upper garments were taken off. As he knelt the bishop whipped him with cords over the bare shoulders, while the priests chanted "Miserere Mei."
—Hitherto the English and American Bible societies have enjoyed the privilege of circulating magazines and tracts and of maintaining traveling agents in Russia. But recently the various establishments at Kiev and other large cities in the dominions of the czar have been closed by the police, the doors locked and sealed, and the employees ejected. Moreover, steps are now being taken to put a stop to the facilities which the societies have hitherto enjoyed in the exercise of their labors and in the extension of the sphere of their operations.
Thinking of Something Else.
Judge Peterby is very absent-minded. An interesting family event, which had been expected for some time, had occurred. The judge was at his desk studying some abstruse problem when the door opened, and servant announced that it was a boy.
"What is his name, and what does he want? Is he a messenger boy?" asked the judge absent-mindedly.—Alex. Sweet, in Texas Sittings.
As Good as Dead.
He—What's this terrible thing I hear? I am told that you are not a widow, but a married woman with a husband still living—and yet you have engaged yourself to me.
She—Don't let that worry you, my love. We will never meet him. He does not move in our set.—Puck.
Curious.
"Have you got any brothers?"
"Yes, one."
"That's strange! I was just talking to your sister and she said that she had two brothers."—Hello.
A Delicate Question.
First Girl—Don't trust Jack, he's a good deceiver.
Second Girl—Do you speak from experience?—Hallo.
—No man is a greater stickler for honesty than the grocer who dispenses thirty-eight cent and forty cent butter out of the same tub.—Puck.
—The power of steam was discovered by a Florentine officer, who was idly experimenting with a glass bottle and a few drops of water.
—The first line of Russian railroad was opened from St. Petersburg to Charsko-Selo, in 1857, a distance of sixteen miles.
—Albert is from the Saxon, meaning All Bright; thirty-two kings and princes have borne this name.

SOWING THE SEED.



THE HARVEST.—Chicago Herald.

not unrest and dissatisfaction resulting from causes which voters are not analyzing with the same care which more frequent occurrence than anywhere else in the land, and these riots are invariably the work of pauper Europeans, who have come here to be employed by the men whose solicitude for the wages of labor does not prevent their employing this troublesome and irresponsible class, because this class works for less wages than our own people will work for.
It is a serious question—this grafting onto the Anglo-Saxon stock of the inferior and deteriorated races of Europe. The men and women who made America great were not bred from that class of Europeans who supply the rioters and the anarchists of the world. The infusion of such blood can only do harm, as harm it has already done. This country welcomes honest men, men capable of comprehending what it means to be a member of a commonwealth that guarantees individual liberty to every member; but it has no place for the ignorant hordes whose instincts rise little higher than those of hungry wolves.—Louisville Courier-Journal.
Republican Lies.
Every intelligent person knows that for the past two years the republican newspapers of the country, almost without exception, have been asserting that the public debt was decreased under Harrison by a much larger amount than under Cleveland. The amount usually given is \$75,000,000. If any correspondent questions and asks for the figures he is given those of a bonded debt, the republican editor paying no attention to the increase in the unbonded debt. This erroneous statement has been reiterated so often that there is no republican, and hardly a democrat, who has not accepted it as true. It is useless to show a republican that he has been lied to. Lies are his daily food. But there is no reason at the present time, when he is not excited over political matters, why he should not have a little truth thrown at him, and the proof that the public debt was decreased under Cleveland \$62,000,000 more than under Harrison made so plain that the next time he asserts the contrary it will give him a pain in the neck.—N. Y. World.

—The common clover furnishes an excellent illustration of the sleep of plants. Every evening as the sun goes down two leaves fold together, face to face, while the third closes over them.