A BROKEN APPOINTMENT.

"MAY!"

"Oh May!"

"Mr. Wilmarth didn't call on you last evening!"

"Did Mr. Wilmarth call last evening?"

May Davis, coloring hotly, looked up as the two noisy schoolgirls, their shrill voices ringing through the house, came rushing into the cozy little studio where May painted placques and panels, and pastel portraits.

"No," she replied quietly, "Why?"

Gertie Davis, and her particular friend, Katie Lyons, exchanged solemnly significant glances.

"We knew," went on Gertie, impressively, "that he had asked permission to call on you last evening. We know he did not. And we know," dropping her voice till it sounded really sepulchral, "why he broke his appointment."

"That I shall also know in good time," said May, somewhat frostily. "I had a telegram from Mr. Wilmarth last evening."

She remembered, howeqer, that the dispatch had said simply:

"Pardon my absence. Am unavoidably detained."

"I think I'll go home," ventured Katie, a little nervously. "Perhaps May would rather not hear what we saw."

May, holding a palette and sheaf of brushes, deliberately turned around to face the speaker.

"Tell all you have come to announce. Katie," she advised, quietly.

May Davis was a pretty girl of 22. Her face in repose had a gravity which made her appear older than she was, but when her seriousness broke in smiles she looked bewitchingly gay and youthful. Her wavy brown hair she wore parted, and brushed simply back from a fair, smooth brow. Her sincere eyes were gray, shadowed by long, dark lashes.

"Well," began Miss Lyons, who was at the angular age of 14, "you know that great brick building, the Langham apartment house, which is just across the street from our place?"

May nodded, and Katie went on.

"Well, last evening, Gertie and I—you know Gertie was staying over night with me—were dressing for a class social in our room, when we got to talking about you and Mr. Wilmarth. Gertie was saying how much he seemed to think of you, and how often he came to see you, and—and everything. All at once—she was dressed and leaning against the window, waiting for me, she said:

"'Why, there he is!' burst in Gertie, unwilling that her friend should longer monopolize the relation of their sensation in a nutshell. "And there he was! I could see him quite plainly in the brightly lighted room of the Langham. And as Katie and I were watching him—"

"A lady came into the room," exclaimed Katie, breathlessly.

"And," cried both together, "he kissed her!"

They stared, round-eyed, at their victim.

"Is that all?" queried May.

"All!" repeated the scandal-mongers, faintly.

"Yes. Why shouldn't he kiss her? He may be engaged to her, for all we know to the contrary. It seems to me you have been exciting yourselves needlessly."

"We—we thought," stammered Gertie, "that he was engaged to you!"

"Mr. Wilmarth has never honored me with a proposal," May declared, still in that level tone. "And now, if

MOST CONFIDENTLY."

you girls have nothing more important to say to me, I shall be glad of an opportunity to finish this panel."

Feeling cheated and abashed, the girls took themselves away. May rose, and fastened the door behind them. She returned to her seat, and stared at the hollyhocks on the half-painted panel. What ugly, sprawling things they were! and only an hour ago she had the bad taste to consider them beautiful. She did not again take up her palette. She only sat there, conscious in some stupid way of being aghast at her own emotion.

"Any admittance?" queried a laughing voice.

The fur-covered shoulders, Parisian hat, and sparkling eyes of Nancy Luders confronted May when she opened the door.

"You falsifier!" cried the visitor, gayly, as she embraced her friend. "You refused to make one of my theater party last evening because you had given Mr. Wilmarth permission to call. And, behold, Mr. Wilmarth failed to materialize."

May felt surprised and indignant. Was the whole town taking up the question of her admirer's broken appointment? Who, besides herself, was concerned with the fact that he had staid away?

"He sent me word that he was detained," she said, stifling her annoyance.

Nancy smiled, knowingly.

"He was. When we were taking the suburban theater train at the Northwestern, he was seeing off a lady who was going on the St. Paul flyer. I knew he could not have been out this distance and reached there by that hour. May, dear—perhaps I ought not to mention it—but you really should know——"

"Go on," said May, in an even voice.

"Well, their parting was most affectionate. He kissed her, and said: 'I shall write you soon, dear.' And she answered: 'Do, Edwin. I shall be most anxious till I hear from you.' One of our party happened to recognize the young lady, who was quite pretty. He says she is a gay, wealthy young widow named Mrs. Vastine, and that she lives in St. Paul. I told you all along, dear May, that I distrusted Mr. Wilmarth. I feel so grieved for you, after all the attention he has paid you."

"Oh, don't waste your sympathy!" said May, looking straight into her friend's eyes with a serene smile. "There is no necessity whatever for condolence, I assure you. And I do not wish to hurry you, dear, or to seem rude, but this panel is an order, and I am rather rushed to get it finished by the date mentioned."

"Oh!" murmured Nancy, taken aback, "if that is the way you feel about my kindness—"

And, in a very bad humor indeed, she departed.

The young artist went back to her hollyhocks. She thought them uglier than ever. She deliberately lifted her blender, and with a few swift, circular strokes merged the varied, brilliant tints in one indistinguishable daub. All at once she laid aside palette, brushes, rest stick, and, leaning her head on her hands, burst into tears.

Well-born, comfortably off, attractive, accomplished, she had had many admirers, but not one had touched her heart until she met Edwin Wilmarth. Her cheeks now burned with shame as she recollected she had given him her love unasked; but had not his manner toward her been that of the most eager lover?

The afternoon light faded. She heard the street door open. Her father must have come home. She would hardly have time to dress for dinner. She dropped her brushes into a can of turpentine, and rose listlessly. There was a step in the hall without. A tall form darkened the door-way. She turned to see Edwin Wilmarth.

"I wonder if you will forgive me, Miss Davis," he said, coming forward, hat in hand, "for invading your retreat. The servant told me I should find you here. I owe you an explanation as well as an apology for my failure to keep my appointment last evening."

She did not answer him. In a kind of a dream she waited for the explanation. She wondered faintly if people were to keep forever coming up those stairs to talk about a mere absurd appointment that had been broken.

"One who is very dear to me," went on Wilmarth, "whom I had not seen for years, owing to my long absence in Europe, chanced to be in the city yesterday. She was leaving for her home last evening. I knew you would pardon me, if I took the liberty of wiring you my regrets. I went to the Langham where she was staying with a friend. She so much wished to make your acquaintance. I'm afraid" with a boyish laugh, "I had raved of you a good deal."

May felt the warmth come back to her heart with a rush.

"Who—who is she?" she asked, in a voice that to her sounded far away.

"Did I not tell you? How stupid of me! She is my only sister—a widow. Her name is Vastine—Cynthia Vastine. She lives in St. Paul. Why—what is wrong, May? You have been crying."

He had just caught a glimpse of her face, till now resolutely turned from the light.

"I spoiled my panel. It is absolutely ruined."

"That is a pity. But, May——"

"Yes."

"I told Cynthia my hopes. She is so anxious for my sake. What can I write her? That you care for me at all—I love you so! Dear, will you trust your future in my hands?"

She lifted to his a radiant face.

"Most confidently," she whispered.

Gertie Davis and Katie Lyons confided to each other that May certainly could not have any pride. Miss Luders disclaimed responsibility after having "warned May concerning his treacherous conduct." But when they learned that Mr. and Mrs. Wilmarth were about to pay a visit to the groom's sister—the pretty St. Paul widow, Mrs. Vastine—not one of the three said: "I told you so!"

Co-Operation on Every Hand.

Co-operation in shopping is the latest extension of the co-operation principle. It has taken root in Brooklyn, and blossomed in the Sociologic society. The members of the society are heads of families living in the neighborhood, who buy their groceries, meats, books and other things through a purchasing agent. The agent calls upon them every morning, receives their written order and purchases at wholesale rates. It is an European idea that may prove popular in this country.

They Have Bath-Money.

Among the Turks bath-money forms an item in every marriage contract, the husband engaging to allow his wife a certain sum for bathing purposes. If it be withheld, she has only to go before the cadi, and turn her slipper upside down. If the complaint be not then redressed, it is a ground for divorce.

THE GUM HABIT.

It Depends On the Point of View in Deciding Upon Its Merits.

"It beats all how the gum habit is growing," the passenger in the snuff-colored suit was saying. "There are not less than half a dozen young women in this car chawing gum."

"I see," answered the passenger with the heavy gold watch-chain. "Well, I can say one thing; I never chew it."

"Neither do I. It's a detestable habit."

"It is indeed."

"And it doesn't do anybody any good. It's not only offensive but utterly profitless."

"Profitless? I'm not so sure of that. By the way, I am just starting with my family for a tour through Europe. We shall be gone about six months."

"What has that got to do with the gum-chewing habit?"

"Nothing, except that I'm the proprietor of a chewing gum factory."

A Metal Corpse.

A workman named Moriarity was engaged in casting metal for the manufacture of ordnance at Woolwich arsenal, when he lost his balance and fell into a huge ingot containing twelve tons of molten steel. The metal was at white heat, and, of course, the unfortunate man was utterly consumed in less time than it takes to tell it. The English respect for the dead is praiseworthy enough, but in this instance it was carried to a ridiculous extreme. The solemn old fogies of the war department held a conference and decided not to profane the dead by using the steel in the manufacture of ordnance, and that enormous chunk of metal was actually interred, and a Church of England clergyman read services for the dead over it.

Not a Depew.

It was a surly tramp, to whom the cook had given something to eat, and more than once while he was putting it away she felt like pouring a teakettleful of hot water down his neck, but the feeling of charity which had prompted her to feed him restrained her from getting even with him. He got through after awhile and was starting off without so much as a "thanks" or "good morning" or anything. "Here," she said sharply, "haven't you got anything to say after as good a dinner as that?" "Naw," he retorted, "d'yer think I'm Chauncy Depoo?" and what the cook said to him was much more appropriate in its application than it would be for the columns of a public print.

Yellow—A Curiosity Among Colors.

It is a curious fact that the color of yellow, whether it be vegetable or animal, is much more permanent than any other hue. The yellow of a flower's petals is the only color known to botanists that is not faded or entirely discharged upon being exposed to the fumes of the sulphurous acid. Take the viola tricolor (heart's ease), as an illustration. If exposed but a moment to these fumes the purple tint immediately takes its flight, and in the wall-flower the yellow shines as brightly as ever after all other colors have fled.

Wife Wanted.

Wife wanted—Age 35 to 55, with little means. I ask for acquaintance. Am a widower unincumbered, temperate, use notobac, but little means, good standing in church and society.

C. C. DAN, York, Neb.

The Farmers' Mutual Hail Insurance Association.

Correspondence Conducted by J. M. Sanford, General Manager of the Farmers' Mutual Hail Insurance Association of Fairfield, Nebraska.

The Farmer's Mutual Hail Insurance association of Fairfield, Nebraska, is the only incorporated hail insurance association doing business on the mutual plan in the state and has succeeded under the able management of its present corps of officers in paying all losses it has ever sustained in full without any prorating or scaling down and is the only mutual hail insurance association that has ever been successful in Nebraska.

It is doing business under the new mutual hail insurance law passed in '97 and paid nearly $6,000 of losses during its first year under said law besides rebating back to its members as their share of the profits of the business over $2,000 in cash. It is at present under the control of the same officers it worked under last year to-wit: S. N. Seeley, president; J. M. Sanford, general manager; J. J. Whittier, secretary. Its officers are all under bonds in a good, reliable surety bond company. It has its home offices in Fairfield, Nebraska, and has no branch office any where, its branch office in Lincoln last year having proven unsatisfactory and been discontinued. It has no connection whatever with any other hail insurance association. This company wrote about $400,000 of hail insurance during the summer of 1897 and now looks for a very much larger business during the summer of 1898.

This association is safe, cheap and reliable. It promises you full protection against that great scourge of our state—hail, and always fulfills its every promise. Don't allow any other pretended hail insurance association to hoodwink you but insure with one that promises protection and keeps its promises.

A NEW PAIR OF EARS.

Remarkable Feat in Surgery Performed by a French Physician.

At the Bicetre hospital, in Paris, the well known surgeon, M. Landry, has performed a curious operation on a workman of Belgium nationality. The Belgian, it appears, got drunk a short time ago, and was taken to the police station at Gentilly when in a state of utter helplessness. While he was in the cells another drunkard, a mechanical engineer named Machant, was brought in in a state bordering on delirium tremens. Machant was in a terribly excited state, and he attacked his fellow prisoner with extraordinary ferocity, striking him and, horrible to relate, biting off both his ears.

When he came to himself Machant became very penitent, and asked to be taken to the bedside of his victim, who was now in the Bicetre hospital, in order to ask his forgiveness. Dr. Landry, who was there, said: "Should you like to give him back his ears?" "Certainly," said the man. "Then," said the doctor, "let me cut a couple of small slips of flesh from your arm, and it can be done." The man consented and the doctor did as he had suggested. The pieces of flesh he shaped as well as he could to the likeness of a pair of ears, and joined them to the wounded places. According to the latest accounts the operation has been a complete success.

A GOLD FISH.

A Beautiful Specimen of the Japanese Papraka Recently Caught.

G. A. Guinand, of the Nadeau hotel, San Francisco, was fishing at Santa Monica when he caught what at first sight appeared to be a solid lump of gold. When the prize was safely landed it proved to be a specimen of the Japanese fish known as the papraka, and by experts it is said to be the first of its kind ever caught on that coast.

The fish is a beautiful creature, being exactly the color of burnished gold and of graceful contour. It is about nine inches in length, five inches in width and about one and a half inches thick. The head is short and the mouth small, but full of rows of sharp frontal teeth. The dorsal fin is of short length, but is sharply serrated, and continues along the back, ending in a larger fin which, in connection with a corresponding one underneath the body and the tail, gives it the appearance of a three-tailed fish.

A remarkable feature of this beautiful fish is that it is furnished with two distinct sets of gills. The eyes are prominent and bright yellow in color.