AN INCORRIGIBLE.

"Cousin Percy has returned from his wanderings," announced Mrs. Brandenberg, laying down her paper. "I do wish, Mortimer, that he would marry and settle down. But I fear he's incorrigible."

Mr. Brandenberg laughed. "I suppose you've already picked out the girl, and Percy will have her for dinner and tea, for ball and luncheon, at charming little tete-a-tete meetings, etc., until he'll have to give in from sheer helplessness and marry her."

"I fail to understand you, Mortimer," said his wife crossly.

"Come, now, don't get angry, Floss; but you know you love nothing half so well as making a match for people who are too stupid to arrange one for themselves. But you must confess there are just two people you cannot do anything with, Percy and Virginia Tarelton."

"Go away, Mortimer, and don't be so silly. I tell you they were made for each other, and I am only doing my duty in bringing them together," said Mrs. Brandenberg, tossing her head defiantly.

"Gang yer own gait, missus," replied her husband smilingly, "and meet with defeat. But I'll wager that is all you'll meet."

"What'll you wager?" queried the little woman briskly.

"The price of your portrait painted by Chatran," he responded, confident that he would never have to pay it.

"Done! And I intend to win," Mrs. Brandenberg cried gleefully just as, by a strange coincidence, the door was thrown open and Virginia Tarelton was announced. Mr. Brandenberg cast a quizzical glance at his wife as he escaped from the room, but she was already embracing her dearest Virginia and did not notice him. Miss Virginia was a rather stately young woman of eight or nine and twenty, handsome, accomplished and very wealthy; but, having been raised by a maiden aunt who had met with a disappointment in love in early life and had in consequence turned into a veritable man hater, Miss Virginia had been led to believe that men at best were untrustworthy creatures. Besides, she was constantly haunted by a fear of fortune hunters and was almost unapproachable to all unmarried men.

Flossy Brandenberg, who was very fond of her, had made several unsuccessful attempts to make her happy for life by marrying her to some venturesome suitor, but Virginia fought shy of all such well meant aid.

When, therefore, her friend began to recount the many attractions and virtues of her cousin Percy, Virginia listened but coldly. Finally, being rather hard pushed, she turned at bay.

"Look here, Flossy," she said, energetically, "please say nothing more about men and marrying to me. I'll have none of it!"

"Marrying!" exclaimed Mrs. Brandenberg tartly. "Why, Virginia, pardon me if I say what seems uncomplimentary, but Percy Pentacoast would not marry you nor any other woman under any consideration."

"And why not, pray?" demanded Virginia, quite huffed.

"Because," her hostess replied solemnly, "Percy has just as intense a loathing for matrimony as you have. I never knew a man so insanely opposed to anything as he is to marriage. And it's a shame, too, for Percy is so companionable, enormously wealthy, has traveled the world over, paints, plays divinely; in short, I know of nothing that he is not master of."

"And nothing could induce him to marry? Are you sure, Floss?" Virginia inquired cautiously.

"Quite sure," was the decided response.

"Then," said Virginia, drawing a breath of relief, "you may introduce him, Floss."

Mrs. Brandenberg seemed suddenly to lose all interest in Cousin Percy. She stifled a yawn before replying carelessly: "I will if I ever get a chance, but Percy so seldom goes out But perhaps I could arrange it," doubtfully.

Miss Virginia's feathers were ruffled. She colored up angrily. "Pray don't put yourself out on my account. It's of not the slightest interest to me," she said stiffly, and then plunged animatedly into a discussion of the new play. But when she had taken her departure Mrs. Brandenberg laughed aloud as she said to herself:

"Point one scored."

The day was an eventful one for Mrs. Mortimer Brandenberg, for Miss Tarelton had hardly left the house when Percy Pentacoast ran in to pay his respects.

"You came just too late to meet one of my most interesting friends," his cousin said as she greeted him warmly, after which she broke into praises of Virginia and kept it up until Percy interrupted her sarcastically.

"In fact, she's a perfect female paragon, I suppose," he said.

"No," returned Mrs. Brandenberg, looking sad, "far from it, Percy. She would be if it were not for the unnatural antipathy she has for marriage. I wish it were possible for you to meet her, Percy, for you have so many congenial tastes and pursuits, and you would be perfectly safe in her society and could enjoy it freely, knowing that even if you wished she could not be induced to marry you."

"You wish it were possible. What do you mean by that?" demanded Mr. Pentacoast, stung into interest at last.

"Oh, Virginia has built such a Chinese wall about herself that she's almost inaccessible," she replied.

"I've scaled some pretty high walls and broken through many others," Mr. Pentacoast said rather sulkily, "and if I wanted to make myself agreeable to any woman I would do so, whether she willed it or not."

"You're game, Percy, my boy, but you'll not likely be tempted in Virginia's case, as you'll probably not meet her." And then, having accomplished her end, the wise woman changed the subject. When her cousin left her, he was pledged to attend a small dinner the next week, which she gave in his honor, and, singularly enough, he took Miss Tarelton in to dinner.

"Mortimer," said Mrs. Brandenberg to her husband two months after her dinner party, "you'd better arrange with Chatran for my portrait."

"What?" cried Mortimer, jumping up in surprise.

"I was sure I could do it," said his wife, dimpling with delight. "There are more ways than one to gain an end, my dear. Virginia writes to announce her engagement to Percy. 'She fears I will be shocked and surprised.' I am, dreadfully!" And the fair plotter broke into such an irresistible peal of laughter that her husband, defeated as he was, had to join in.—Chicago Herald.

One of Moody's Jokes.

D. L. Moody was always full of fun. He saw the comic side of things, and as a boy enjoyed putting practical jokes upon any one whom he well knew. In the rear of his Uncle Samuel's retail shoe store in Boston was a cobbler's repair kit—seat, tools, awls, etc., and the seat was, as usual, a piece of leather concavely shaped downward at its center.

One day the workman on this saucer shaped seat felt it becoming uncomfortably damp, then really moist. He rose and saw a damp spot on the seat. Supposing that a few drops of water had been accidentally dropped upon the seat before he sat down to his work, he folded an old newspaper and placed it and sat comfortably down to resume his work. But the moisture seemed strangely persistent. Rising again, he found the paper becoming soaked with water, and he stood perplexed, his hammer in one hand and the soft, wet paper in the other.

Looking this way and that in his perplexity, he soon heard a half chuckle, half snicker, which could no longer be repressed, and there behind the door was the country boy, learning how to be useful in a city shoe store, as he really and rapidly did, but taking his fun as he went along. He had placed a shallow dish of water close up to the underside of the center of the leather seat, which only touched the water when the weight of the occupant was upon it, so three or four small awl holes served his purpose for that time.—Congregationalist.

Our Endurance.

During life each member of the human body produces poison to itself. When this poison accumulates faster than it can be eliminated, which always occurs unless the muscle has an interval of rest, then will come fatigue, which is only another expression for toxic infection.

If the muscle is given an interval of rest, so that the cell can give off its waste product to keep pace with the new productions, the muscle will then liberate energy for a long time. This latter condition is what we call endurance.

Like any other ponderous and intricate machine, the body requires time to get in harmonious working order. The brain, nerves, heart and skeletal muscles must be given some warning of the work they are expected to perform. Ignorance of this fact has broken down many a young man who aspired to honors on the cinder path.

The necessity of getting all the parts of the body slowly in working order is well understood by trainers and jockeys on the race track, as is evinced by the preliminary "warming up" they give their horses, although it is doubtful if the trainers could give any physiologic reason for their custom.—Popular Science.

Witchcraft.

"The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," said John Fiske, "were the flourishing ages of the witchcraft delusion. Witchcraft, in the early ages, was considered one of the greatest of crimes, as much so as murder, robbery or any other serious offense against the law, and the belief in it was shared by the whole human race until the latter part of the seventeenth century.

"In England, in 1664, two women were tried before Sir Matthew Hale, charged with bewitching several girls and a baby, and they were put to death, for at that time the evidence seemed perfectly rational. In 1615, in Genoa, 500 people were burned to death on the charge of witchcraft. It was the proud boast of a noted executioner in northern Italy, at this time, that in 15 years he had assisted in burning 900 persons charged with sorcery. In Scotland, between 1560 and 1600, 8,000 people were put to death, an average of 200 a year. The last execution for witchcraft in England took place in 1712, in Scotland in 1722, in Germany in 1749 and in Spain in 1781."

What He Waited For.

An inspector of Irish schools tells a good story, says the Newcastle (England) Chronicle. At a school where he made a surprise visit a little boy happened to come in for the first time and stepped up to the inspector at once.

"Sit there for the present," said the inspector, indicating the desired spot.

The boy obeyed readily, and when the inspector had finished his multitudinous inquiries into the knowledge of geography, grammar and arithmetic possessed by the children he found that the boy still sat in the same spot.

"What are you waiting for, my boy?"

"Please, sir, I am waiting for the present."

His Gin Rickey.

The Irishman who had never tasted a gin rickey ordered one so as to impress his friends. The bartender never had heard of a rickey, but he was ashamed to admit his ignorance, so he put a mixing glass under the bar and made a guess at it.

Then he leaned back to await results.

The Irishman sipped at the beverage and shook his head approvingly.

"By gorry, 'tis a fine rickey," he said.

"It ought to be," said the bartender. "I put in everything except the license."—Chicago Record.

Brakes.

Hand brakes, to assist in the stopping of trains, were introduced as early as 1849. Twenty years later the air-brake was patented, which enabled power from the locomotive to be transmitted through hose simultaneously to the brakes of all the cars in a train—a wonderful invention. In 1863 the coaches were connected by patent couplers, another measure of strength and safety.

Metallic Terms.

Speech is silvern, silence is golden, giggling is brazen, and laughing is often ironical.—Columbian.

JOHN SMITH, MILLIONAIRE.

It was a typical autumn London night, the streets flowing with greasy mud, the air yellow with smoky fog and a cold, sleety drizzle falling as Hilda Smith arrived at Paddington station.

It was her first experience of the great metropolis, but she had received her instructions, and, selecting her portmanteau, she had it removed to a cab and, jumping in, ordered the man to drive to the Ballarat mansions in Victoria street, Westminster.

Hilda was not a little anxious, because she had arrived in town a day ahead of her invitation, and she was not certain whether her bachelor brother, with whom she was going to stay for a month or six weeks, would be ready to receive her.

The door was opened by a hard faced looking woman of the charwoman type, who stood gazing at her without moving away from the entrance.

"Is this Mr. Smith's?" asked Hilda.

"Yes, miss," replied the woman, without offering to let her in, however.

"Is he at home?"

"No, he ain't, and I don't know when he will be."

"But did he not expect me? He is my brother, and I have come to stay with him."

"Oh, indeed, miss. Well, he didn't say nothing to me about it," answered the woman. "But suppose you'd better have the spare room," and she stepped aside with a grudging air as she allowed the fair girl to enter.

Turning on the electric light, she showed Hilda into a handsomely furnished bedroom, whose white and gold paint and blue satin furniture caused her to open her eyes in wonder, for her brother was not supposed at home to be in luxurious circumstances, and by the time she had washed her face and hands the housekeeper brought her a cup of tea and some bread and butter, after which she retired to rest and did not wake until late the following morning.

"Mr. Smith came home late last night, miss," said the housekeeper when she aroused her with the hot water, "and told me to say that he would join you at breakfast."

The breakfast table was a picture to the eyes of the frugally brought up country girl, for it was covered with every delicacy in or out of season, and Hilda was admiring the priceless china when she heard footsteps approaching and turned around to welcome her brother.

"Oh, Jack," she exclaimed, dancing toward the door with her arms outstretched, "I'm so glad"—

Then she stopped suddenly, as though she had been shot, for a tall, dark, handsome man, quite the opposite of her brother in appearance, entered the room.

"I am afraid that somebody has made a mistake," he said in a soft, kind, reassuring voice. "But I cannot be sufficiently grateful to whoever is to blame for sending me such a charming guest to breakfast."

"I expected to meet my brother—Mr. Smith," observed Hilda, nearly choking with confusion. "Mr. John Smith."

"My name is John Smith," said the stranger, with an amused smile.

"Of 8 Ballarat mansions?" continued Hilda.

"Ah, now I see how the mistake occurred!" exclaimed Mr. Smith. "This is No. 6, but there is another John Smith at No. 8, and our letters frequently get mixed up. I can only say that I am sorry it is the other John Smith who is the lucky man on this occasion. And now, my dear young lady, let us go to breakfast."

At first Hilda could neither eat nor speak, but her host in a short time had succeeded in putting her so much at her ease that she was chattering away to him about her family, her home and all her little domestic affairs.

That breakfast must have lasted an unconscionably long period, but Mr. Smith did not appear to be desirous of hurrying it, and everything was so delightfully strange and novel to Hilda that she did not notice the lapse of time until her companion suggested that if they went around now they would likely find "the other Mr. Smith" at home to lunch.

Hilda hurried away to put her hat on, and the more she looked at the exquisitely furnished room, with its cut glass perfume bottles, chased silver powder boxes and all the hundred and one little additions that go toward making a woman happy, the more she wondered for whom it had been prepared.

Fortunately, when they arrived at 8 Ballarat mansions they found "the other Mr. Smith" at home on the top floor, and Hilda could not help noticing how wonderfully civil he was to her host and how eagerly he accepted his offer to dinner on the following evening for himself and sister.

After he had gone, however, the matter was explained.

"That is John Smith, the millionaire," said her brother impressively, "and he is the managing director of the company I work for."

The dinner was followed by a theater visit and a supper, and so it went on until the night before she should have gone home, when Mr. Smith asked her if she would change her appellation from Miss to Mrs. Smith.

Hilda had always had an overwhelming desire to penetrate the mystery of the spare room, but all the information she could obtain from her husband was that he kept it fitted up in that manner in order that he might be able to entertain an angel if one called upon him unawares, and he always added:

"And if it had not been for that precaution, my dear, I should not have had the dearest and sweetest little wife in the world." — Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph.

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The Future of Our Legs.

Professor Yung of the University of Guef, Switzerland, entertains great fears concerning the future of our lower limbs. This sage is of the opinion that within the next thousand years human beings will have forgotten how to use their legs, and that these limbs, if evolution will not do away with them, will serve as mere ornaments to the rest of the body.

Professor Yung states that at the present age human beings show a decided aversion to personal or physical locomotion, and this is more manifest every time a new automatic traveling instrument is invented and rendered practical. Steam, electricity, cable power and the different velocipede machines all bear an influence over us and create a dislike for walking, and the future generations will likely have the convenience of steerable airships at their windows and electric automobiles at their doors, and these conveyances will be so cheap that almost every one can own them, and this means the doom of our legs.

The latter will be regarded as superfluous appendages, no use will be made of them, and who knows but that they may disappear altogether? But so much more will our arms develop in length and strength. These are the cruel laws of evolution, and it will be due to their pranks that future generations will again resemble the apes. There will come another epoch of short legs and long arms.

Complied With the Law.

"A certain well known Mobile lawyer, who was lame and had something of a reputation as a fighter," said a southern gentleman, "was at one time attorney in a suit that caused much ill feeling. He won the suit for his client, and the loser vowed vengeance. 'In pursuance of that same,' in the language of Truthful James, he one day went into the lawyer's office and subjected him to a tirade of abuse that would have caused a salt water captain to die from pure envy, such was his talent in vituperation.

"The lawyer answered him nothing, to the surprise of two or three men who were present, but, getting out of his chair, began to hobble backward. His enemy, thinking he was retreating, followed him up, with more abuse and threatening gestures.

"The lawyer's foot finally struck against the wall, when he suddenly straightened up and saying, 'Gentlemen, I call on you to witness that, on account of this wall, I have retreated as far as possible' (the general law of homicide), drew out a derringer and shot his opponent.

"At the trial he was acquitted, his witnesses being the men present at the time of the killing, who testified to the lawyer's having retreated as far as possible."—New York Tribune.

A Cold Night In Canada.

The sky at night is a deep dark blue, and the stars are like dropping balls of fire, so close they seem to be almost within reach. The northern lights look as if a titanic paint brush had been dipped in phosphorescent flame and drawn in great, bold strokes across the heavens.

As you pass the electric lamps you see very fine particles of snow caught up by the wind and glittering high in the air like diamonds. But it is a cold night, and you are not sorry to get into your room. First of all, you take a blanket or so from the bed, for there are people in Canada who sleep all the year round with only a sheet over them, to such a pitch of perfection have they brought the heating of their rooms.

After you have tucked yourself in the stillness of the night is broken occasionally by a report like a cannon. Have you ever been inside a bathing machine when a mischievous boy threw a stone at it? And, if so, do you remember how you jumped? When the walls of a wooden house crack in the bitter cold, the effect is similar, only magnified. But you know what it means here, so you only draw the clothes closer round you, thankful that you are snug and warm. And so good night.—Blackwood's.

Always Face the Engine.

In his prime the late Mr. John Cook, the great tourist agent, was a man of iron frame. But when years of railway traveling, which averaged annually some 40,000 miles, produced certain alarming symptoms, he made a discovery that may be worth giving to the public. He found that the threatened trouble, something spinal, disappeared when he no longer sat with his back to the engine. He always thereafter faced it, and that the principle is sound will be borne out by others whom he advised to do the same. All who are called upon to do much railway traveling will be wise to sit "facing the horses."

Reason For Hate.

Mr. Verirash Talker (who did not catch the name of his partner)—You see that man behind me. Well, if there's one man in this world that I hate, he's the one.

His Partner (in surprise) — Why, that's my husband!

Mr. Verirash Talker (quickly)—Yes, of course—that's why I hate him, lucky dog!—London Fun.

No Encouragement.

Mrs. Short—Oh, dear, I do wish we were rich! Just think of the good we could do if we only had lots of money!

Mr. Short—True, my dear, but we can do a great deal of good in a quiet way now.

Mrs. Short—Yes, of course, but no one will ever hear of it.—Chicago News.

The Butter She Wanted.

New Wife—I wish to get some butter, please.

Dealer—Roll butter, ma'am?

New Wife—No; we wish to eat it on biscuits.—Chicago News.

The Fire at Simms'.

It was late in December and 100 degrees below zero. The frozen footed fowls crowded together in the old henhouse, and if a glint of sunlight shot across the pen the old hens fought to stand in it. The rooster sank into himself until his hackles looked like an Elizabethan ruff; when he crowed, it sounded raucous and cold, and the hens shook their heads at each crow, as hens have done since time began. They stood on alternate feet and seemed to envy Mrs. Sims her coarse shoes.

She, poor woman, was on her way out to the barn to milk 40 cows before sunlight should fail. The dull, flat, hopeless, dreary, dismal, bitter, sour, doleful, hard, inevitable, disheartening condition of life on a Garland county farm was imaged in the bleak landscape and in her weary, haggard face.

She walked as if she had several cobblestones in the toes of each shoe, and she wished that she had a millstone about her neck. Jim, her husband, was drunk again, which meant that until he returned from town she must sack 1,000 bushels of buckwheat a day, feed and water 700 stupid fowls and provide meals for seven pairs of vicious, quarrelsome twins of her own raising.

She entered the low doorway of the hideous barn and seated herself on her haunches beside the first of the 40 scraggly, half frozen cows. She was an experienced milker, but the deftest fingers in the world cannot guard against a sudden bovine flank movement, and she saw 33 pails of steaming milk overturned by 33 suffering and fractious beasts.

Something like an oath issued from between her thin, bloodless lips, and she audibly wished that the day that saw her birth might be blotted from the calendar.

In the house she could hear the seven pairs of twins shooting at each other and throwing kerosene lamps about and slaughtering the cat; but she did not care a bit. Time had been when pretty Eliza Simms would have cared a good deal, but that was a score of years ago, before the twins began to come so frequently.

"If the house burns up I won't have no more meals to get."

Poor woman, she did not realize that another house would take its place and the eternal round of ill cooked, greasy, uninteresting, indigestible meals would continue as before. She had lost the faculty of thinking, like all farmers' wives in Garland county.

A couple of odd twins came out to her —Buck, one of the oldest pair, and Jen, next to the youngest.

"Jake has set the house afire again," said Buck.

He would have kissed her if he had been some sons and she some mothers, but the very name was unknown in the Simms family. A kick and a cuss they knew too well, but the union of the two sounds meant nothing.

"Belle has killed the cat again, and Luce has torn your weddin stifkit to smithereens," said Jen, with a malicious grin.

A grim smile sank into the tough, leathery face of the despondent toiler, and she milked two vicious streams into the girl's eye. Jen did not know whether to laugh or cry, but the crackling of the flames turned the thoughts of all three into another direction.

"Ain't yeh go'n ter put out the fierrr? The insurance ran out last week. I heered pap say so."

Mrs. Simms rose to her feet. It was true. She must save the house if it took the rest of the milk.

"It's a wonder your pa can't stay to hum when the house is liable to burn down any day with them youngest twins."

It was the third time in two weeks that they had set the place afire, and milk was high that year. Of course the pumps were frozen hard.

"You bring a couple of pails apiece," said she, taking a pail in each hand and balancing another on her head, but the children only jeered at her and began to fight in the hay.

She toiled toward the house, overweighted and cold. The flames were pouring out of every window, and the sun was just setting, a red ball that looked as if the dwellers beyond the patch of pines on the horizon could warm their hands on its glowing surface.

The squawks and squeaks of the fowls, fighting for the warmest place on the roost, broke the frosty stillness of the air, and the dull, black smoke of the burning house floated in long, trailing streamers to where the upland was crowned with an orchard of young peach trees. It was all beautiful if she had but known, but this sordid woman was bent only on putting out the miserable fire that had attacked the house.

What do farmers in Garland county know of beauty? From their birth onward the grindstone whets their noses down to the bone, and, look as they may, there is nothing but a whirring grind before their eyes.

A creaking farm wagon toiled along the road, the wheels making a crankling music in the frozen ruts. Jim was coming home from his seven day jag, singing in a raucous voice that jarred harshly on the winter quiet of the night. He saw the flames of the burning building, but he did not hasten his pace.

"I never saw the thing that Liz couldn't down from me to a spread oak. The twins has be'n at it again."

And they were still at it. The flames had driven them out of the house, but they had all gone into the barn to quarrel, leaving their mother to fight the fire single handed. As Jim drove into the barnyard the flames succumbed to her efforts and the watery milk. She came out to the side door and looked at him under singed eyebrows.

"What yeh got fer supper?" he asked.

"Smoked beef an b'iled milk," said she. "I wish I'd 'a' burnt up," she added in a harsh voice.

"Gad, I wisht yeh had. Your life insurance ain't lapsed."

It was a brutal jest, but she did not perceive its brutality any more than she would have admired a nocturne of Chopin's or an etching by Whistler or a statue by Phidias.—Criterion.

Cheap Water In Glasgow.

In Glasgow a £15 householder obtains for 71d. per annum a continuous, never failing, unrestricted stream of the purest water in the world, delivered right into his kitchen, washhouse and bathroom. It is calculated that 380 gallons of pure water are delivered to the citizens of Glasgow for every penny paid. And it is water of such peculiar softness that the householders of Glasgow can pay their water rate out of what they save on soap.—Engineering Magazine.