

LOSS.

The pathway of my life since thou art gone,
Seems like a dusty and exposed high road
Whose upward-stretching, weary length
is sowed
With rough, uneven places. The bright
sun
Streams pitilessly down; shade there is
none.
Bewildered, dazed, instinctively I turn
Thy help to claim: Ah! have I yet to learn
What all men know—that I must walk
alone?

And though I am a woman in my years,
Whom others turn to for the help I seek,
Still is my troubled heart full of vague
fears
And desolate distress; sobs from me break
As from some child, with sense of drear de-
feat.
Left wandering in an unknown public
street.

—The Spectator.

HIS WEDDED WIFE.



SHAKESPEARE says something about worms, or it may be giants, or beetles, turning if you tread on them too severely. The safest plan is never to tread on a

worm—not even to the last new subaltern from home, with his buttons hardly out of tissue paper, and the red of sappy English beef in his cheeks. This is the story of the worm that turned. For the sake of brevity we will call Henry Augustus Ramsay Faizanne "The Worm," although he was an exceedingly pretty boy, without a hair on his face and with a waist like a girl's, when he came out to the Second "Shikarris" and was made unhappy in several ways. The "Shikarris" are a high-caste regiment, and you must be able to do things well—play a banjo, or ride more than little, or sing, or act—to get on with them.

The Worm did nothing except fall off his pony and knock chips out of the gate posts with his trap. Even that became monotonous after a time. He objected to whist, cut the cloth at billiards, sang out of tune, kept very much to himself, and wrote to his mamma and sisters at home. Four of these five things were vices which the "Shikarris" objected to and set themselves to eradicate. Every one knows how subalterns are by brother subalterns softened and not permitted to be ferocious. It is good and wholesome and does no one any harm unless tempers are lost, and then there is trouble. There was a man once—but that is another story.

The "Shikarris" shikarred The Worm very much, and he bore everything without winking. He was so good and so anxious to learn, and flushed so pink, that his education was cut short, and he was left to his own devices by every one except the senior subaltern, who continued to make life a burden to The Worm. The senior subaltern meant no harm, but his chaff was coarse, and he didn't quite understand where to stop. He had been waiting too long for his company, and that always sours a man. Also, he was in love, which made him worse.

One day, after he had borrowed The Worm's trap for a lady who never existed, had used it himself all the afternoon, had sent a note to The Worm, purporting to come from the lady, and was telling the mess all about it. The Worm rose in his place and said, in his quite, lady-like voice: "That was a very pretty sell; but I'll lay you a month's pay when you get your step that I work a sell on you that you'll remember for the rest of your days, and the regiment after you when you're dead or broke." The Worm wasn't angry in the least, and the rest of the mess shouted. Then the senior subaltern looked at The Worm from the boots upward and down again, and said, "Done, Baby." The Worm took the rest of the mess to witness that the bet had been taken, and retired into a book with a sweet smile.

Two months passed and the senior subaltern still educated The Worm, who began to move about a little more as the hot weather came on. I have said that the senior subaltern was in love. The curious thing is, that a girl was in love with the senior subaltern. Though the colonel said awful things, and the majors snorted, and married captains looked unutterable wisdom, and the juniors scoffed, those two were engaged.

The senior subaltern was so pleased with getting his company and his acceptance at the same time that he forgot to bother The Worm. The girl was a pretty girl and had money of her own. She does not come into this story at all.

One night at the beginning of the hot weather all the mess except The Worm, who had gone to his own room to write home letters, were sitting on the platform outside the mess-house. The band had finished playing but no one wanted to go in. And the captains' wives were there also. The tolly of a man in love is unlimited. The senior subaltern had been holding forth on the merits of the girl he was engaged to and the ladies were purring approval, while the men yawned, when there was a rustle of skirts in the dark and a tired, faint voice lifted itself:

"Where's my husband?"

I do not wish in the least to reflect on the morality of the "Shikarris," but it is on record that four men jumped up as if they had been shot. Three of them were married men. Perhaps they were afraid that their wives had come from home unbeknownst. The fourth said that he had acted on the impulse of the moment. He explained this afterward.

The voice cried "Oh, Lionel!" Lionel was the senior subaltern's name. A woman came into the little circle of light by the candles on the peg tables, stretching out her hands to the dark where the senior subaltern was, and sobbing. We rose to our feet feeling that things were going to happen, and ready to believe the worst. In this bad, small world of ours one knows so little of the life of the next man, which after all is entirely his own concern, that one is not surprised when a crash comes.

Anything might turn up any day for any one. Perhaps the senior subaltern had been trapped in his youth. Men are crippled that way occasionally. We didn't know—we wanted to hear; and the captains' wives were as anxious as we. If he had been trapped he was to be excused, for the woman from no where, in the dusty shoes and gray traveling dress, was very lovely, with black hair and great eyes full of tears. She was tall, with a fine figure, and her voice had a running sob in it pitiful to hear. As soon as the senior subaltern stood up she threw her arms round his neck and called him "my darling," and said she could not bear waiting alone in England, and his letters were so short and cold, and she was his to the end of the world, and would he forgive her? This did not sound quite like a lady's way of speaking. It was too demonstrative.

Things seemed black indeed, and the captains' wives peered under their eyebrows at the senior subaltern, and the colonel's face set like the day of judgement framed in gray bristles, and no one spoke for a while.

Next the colonel said very shortly, "Well, sir?" and the woman sobbed afresh. The senior subaltern was half choked with the arms round his neck, but he gasped out, "It's a d— he I never had a wife in my life!" "Don't swear," said the colonel. "Come into the mess. We must sift this clear somehow." And he sighed to himself, for he believed in his "Shikarris," did the colonel.

We trooped into the ante-room under the full lights, and there we saw how beautiful the woman was. She stood up in the middle of us all, sometimes choking with crying, then hard and proud, and then holding out her arms to the senior subaltern. It was like the fourth act of a tragedy. She told us how the senior subaltern had married her when he was home on leave eighteen months before, and she

seemed to know all that we knew, and more, too, of his people and his past life. He was white and ashy gray, trying now and again to break into the torrent of her words; and we noted how lovely she was and what a criminal he looked, esteemed him a beast of the worst kind. We felt sorry for him though.

I shall never forget the indictment of the senior subaltern by his wife. Nor will he. It was so sudden, rushing out of the dark unannounced into our dull lives. The captains' wives stood back, but their eyes were alight, and you could see that they had already convicted and sentenced the senior subaltern. The colonel seemed five years older. One major was shading his eyes with his hand and watching the woman from underneath it. Another was chewing his mustache and smiling quietly as if he were witnessing a play. Full in the open space in the center by the whist tables the senior subaltern's terrier was hunting for fleas. I remember all this as clearly as though a photograph were in my hand. I remember the look of horror on the senior subaltern's face. It was rather like seeing a man hanged, but much more interesting. Finally the woman wound up by saying that the senior subaltern carried a double F. M. in tattoo on his left shoulder. We all knew that, and to our innocent minds it seemed to clinch the matter. But one of the bachelor majors said very politely, "I presume that your marriage certificate would be more to the purpose?"

That roused the woman. She stood up and sneered at the senior subaltern for a cur, and abused the major and the colonel and all the rest. Then she wept, and then she pulled a paper from her breast, saying imperiously, "Take that! And let my husband—my lawfully wedded husband—read it aloud if he dare!"

There was a hush, and the men looked into each other's eyes as the senior subaltern came forward in a dazed and dizzy way and took the paper. We were wondering, as we stared, whether there was anything against any one of us that might turn up later on. The senior subaltern's throat was dry; but as he ran his eye over the paper, he broke out into a hoarse cackle of relief and said to the woman, "You young blackguard!"

But the woman had fled through a door, and on the paper was written: "This is to certify that I, the Worm, have paid in full my debts to the senior subaltern; and, further, that the senior subaltern is my debtor, by agreement on the 23d of February, as by the mess attested, to the extent of one month's captain's pay, in the lawful currency of the Indian empire."

Then a deputation set off for The Worm's quarters, and found him, betwixt and between, unlacing his stays, with the hat, wig, serge dress, etc., on the bed. He came over as he was, and the "Shikarris" shouted till the gunners' mess sent over to know if they might have a share of the fun. I think we were all, except the colonel and the senior subaltern, a little disappointed that the scandal had come to nothing. But this is human nature. There could be no two words about The Worm's acting. It leaned as near to a nasty tragedy as anything this side of a joke can.

When most of the subalterns sat upon him with sofa cushions to find out why he had not said that acting was his strong point he answered very quickly: "I don't think you ever asked me. I used to act at home with my sisters." But no acting with girls could account for The Worm's display that night. Personally I think it was in bad taste, besides being dangerous. There is no sort of use in playing with fire even for fun.

The "Shikarris" made him president of the regimental dramatic club, and when the senior subaltern paid up his debt, which he did at once, The Worm sank the money in scenery and dresses. He was a good Worm and the "Shikarris" are proud of him. The only drawback is that he has been christened "Mrs. Senior Subalterns," and, as there are now two Mrs. Senior Subalterns in the station, this is some-

times confusing to strangers.—Rudyard Kipling.

A Sunday on Monday.

The creation of the earth in globular form has caused many problems which would never have arisen had the Rev. Mr. Jasper's plan been followed. One of the oddest of these, the St. Louis Republic shows, is that which has thrown the people one day ahead—an error they refuse to correct.

Manilla is one of the most important ports in the Philippine Islands, but strange to say, is one day behind all other places of its size in the world. This curious fact is accounted for in this way: Although the Philippine Islands lie near the Asiatic coast they were discovered by Spaniards who sailed from America.

When they crossed the magic line where Sunday suddenly changes into Monday, these fiery dons of proud Castilian ancestors did not revise their calendar. When told of this years later, when told that their mode of reckoning time was not up to modern notions, they only said that was so much the worse for modern notions.

Anyhow, the fact remains that these Philippine Islanders keep plodding along one day behind all the rest of the world, which reckons time by new style.

Monkeys as Money Testers.

It is said that the great apes of Siam are in great request among the Siamese merchants as cashiers in their counting-houses. Vast quantities of base coin are known to be in circulation in Siam, and, according to advices from that scorched-up little Oriental kingdom, no human being can discriminate between the good and bad coinage with as much accuracy as these apes. The monkey cashiers possess the faculty of distinguishing the rude Siamese counterfeit in such an extraordinary degree that no trained banker can compete with them in their unique avocation.

In plying his trade the ape cashier meditatively puts each coin presented to him in his mouth and tests it with grave deliberation. From two to five seconds is all the time this intelligent animal requires in making up his decision. If the coin is all right it is carefully deposited in the proper receptacle; if base it is thrown violently to the floor, while the coin tester makes known his displeasure at being presented with the counterfeit by giving vent to much angry chattering.

THE HOGFISH.

How It Looks and the Manner of Catching it.

The hogfish, usually found in comparatively deep water, was caught by the sportsmen off the great reef at low tide, says an article in the Century. The dead coral heads, which had been beaten into a wall and formed the hiding-places of innumerable living forms, were partly bare, the water deepening suddenly to the blue depths of the gulf. Standing on this vantage ground, bearing the crawfish bait and extra tackle, with the dinghy hauled up in smooth water on the inner side, the fishermen easily threw beyond the gentle breakers into deep water, tenanted with a score of eager fishes whose savage attack upon the luscious bait only served to draw the greater game. The bite of the hogfish was a steady strain; but the moment the hook was felt it became a game-fish worthy of the best efforts of the fisherman. Often were our sportsmen forced amid the breakers in their attempts to drag the highly colored and harlequin-like creature from its home into the still waters of the inner reef. With its enormous mouth the fish has a peculiarly swine-like appearance, fully redeemed, however, by its rich coloring and the long and richly cut dorsal fins and tail. It ranks next to the snapper as a table-fish.

Harrigan's play, "Reilly and the 490," ran for 302 nights in New York.