

VERA'S TRIAL.

"Where have you been?"
"To be lake, Aunt Esther." The questioning voice was harsh and cold; the answering one young and sweet.

The aunt, wrinkled and shrunken as a withered leaf of autumn, sat among the soft pillows that lifted her time-wrecked form in an invalid chair.

The niece, fresh and bright, with sunny touches on the brown of her hair, and a somewhat daring spirit shining from her dark eyes, stood near the fireplace, where ruddy light flashed up and swept across her and showed the slim, girlish figure clad in heavy cloth and fur.

"What were you doing at the lake?"
"Skating. The ice is like glass there, aunt, and I was practicing for tonight. You know we are to have a skating party on the lake tonight, and—"

"And you are not going to it?"
"Not going! Why?"
"Because you are under my care and control, and I forbid you to go!" cried Esther Claremont, sharply.

"But I have promised—I will be called for!" began Vera Claremont, piteously.

"Who is to call for you?"
The bent figure of the old woman straightened suddenly, her shrunken hand was put out and laid on the girl's arm.

"You need not tell me, I know!" cried Esther Claremont, with passionate anger in her sunken eyes, "I am lying here day after day helpless and crippled, and you would fain deceive me, but you cannot! I know who is playing at love with you, who is teaching you that love is sweet, and truth and honesty only words—idle words!"

That fair young face of yours has brought you what fairness and youth brought me at your age; but your life shall not be wrecked by it as mine has been. I will save you though I have to use bolts and bars to keep you safe!

One Claremont is enough to be blighted by a Damarel, and the lying lips of the son shall not bind you to him heart and soul, as the false lips of the father bound me when I was a credulous young thing like you.

She paused, panting. Vera had grown pale, but she could not remove her eyes from those burning ones below her.

"Speak!" cried her aunt. "Is not Lee Damarel trying to win your love?"
"Yes"—slowly and falteringly. "He has said he loves me."

"And you believe him? Tell me!"
"I believe him."

Esther Claremont laughed—a quick mirthless laugh—and suddenly loosing her hold of Vera, pushed the slight figure from her.

"No," she cried, jeeringly, "I am too late! You loved the son of Conrad Damarel! You have given me no confidence; I owe you no consideration—you, you, whom I took into my house when you were a homeless child; you, to whom I have been kind for ten long years!"

"Never kind, Aunt Esther," spoke out Vera, clearly. "You clothed and fed me, you allowed your roof to shelter me, but never in all these ten years have you even said one kind word to me."

"Ingrate!" hissed the woman.
"Not that," Aunt Esther, "for I am grateful to you for what I have received."

"Prove it! Prove your gratitude, then," cried Esther Claremont, fiercely. "Give up this lover of yours; never see his face again!"

Poor, pale little Vera! Where did she get the strength to stand straight and fearless before the woman whom she had always feared before?

"I would rather die!" she said, below her breath.

"Die? As if it would be hard to die!" her aunt exclaimed, harshly, "To live requires courage—to live loveless, friendless, unable to put faith in one human being. But let me tell you why the name of Damarel is hateful to me. You never heard the story?"

"I have heard it, but not from you," answered the girl, gently.

And she stood in an attitude of deep interest, as with the brief winter day dying, and the shadows gliding to her chair, Esther Claremont told her story.

"I loved Conrad Damarel," she said, her voice pulsing with feeling; "I loved him with my whole heart. And he—he played at love. He never truly loved me, or he would not have made a few impatient words of mine sufficient excuse for breaking with me. I did not mean them—God knows I did not! But they were spoken, and he made them his excuse. He left me standing in the sunlight out there."

She lifted one thin, tremulous hand, and pointed to where a vast sheet of white-covered lawn might have been seen through the window.

"That was the love of a Damarel! He went away and forgot the girl he had won, and married some stranger; and I, through all the years that have gone by since, have remembered—remembered till heart and soul grew sour and warped."

The girl went and knelt beside the invalid chair, and drew one of the thin hands to her cheek. On that soft, fair cheek tears were lying.

"Aunt Esther, let me tell you what Lee told me—let me tell you what his

father's dying lips told him," she said, brokenly. "You were so wrong—so wrong! Conrad Damarel loved you all his life."

"It is false! He left me because of a few angry words. He was glad to be set free!" cried the woman fiercely.

"He loved you; but when you bade him go—when you told him you could live without him—that you were tired of him and his affections—he left you. Do you remember his parting words to you, Aunt Esther? If you wanted to see his face again, you would recall him. You never did. He waited for five years, hoping. You sent neither word nor line. He then met a fair, sweet girl, whose heart went out to him without the asking, whose tender nature he knew could never wound him, and she outlived him."

"Aunt Esther, he has lain under the earth for seven years, and dying, he gave the story of his love for you to his son. That son has come to me, loving me as his father loved you, and I—I will not make his life a sorrow, will not break my own at the very root."

"Hear me out—be patient yet a moment. No human being should be allowed to sever loving hearts—no human power can part Lee's and mine! But, Aunt Esther, you will not try to—you will not—"

"Hush!" cried Esther Claremont, hoarsely; "hush! Go—leave me! If I have wrecked my own whole life—wrecked it by my own fierce temper, my own unholy pride! Oh, God above!"

Vera saw her lift her hands and cover her face.

Then in the winter twilight, the girl arose and left her there—left her to face remorse and regret as best she might in the very winter of her life.

An hour later the following note was put in Vera's hand by a servant:
"Child, do what you will with your life, with your love. When you return from skating bring Conrad's son to me."
—ESTHER.

And Vera went with the skating party, and was happier than ever before, although now and then, even as she sped like a swallow over the ice, a pitiful thought for the lonely, loveless woman she had left in the twilight was with her.

"We will be nearer after tonight," she told herself; "and when she has seen Lee, she will not wonder that I love him."

Returning in the starlit cold of the night, she led her lover to where that frail figure lay back among the pillows.

"Aunt, I have brought Lee, as you bade me," she said, softly.

No answer.
She bent over the still face, looked a moment into it, and shrank toward her lover with a cry of terror.

Aunt Esther was dead!

A Romance of Other Days.
See that red granite house over there? Well, the man who lives in it was a substitute in the army. He was not a purchased soldier, but went in for love. He and a man named Bent had been schoolfellows and friends in the east, and they came west together. Neither enlisted, but Bent was drafted. Just a few months before that affair he had married a beautiful young woman, and one whom his neighbor here had himself loved. Bent and his wife were about crazy with fright at the idea of his going into the army, when they received a letter from the draft commissioner saying Bent's substitute was accepted.

They didn't know who the substitute could be, and as the name my neighbor gave—for it was he who had volunteered—was an assumed one, they could not find out. My neighbor went to the front, was badly wounded at Petersburg, made a good soldier and was finally discharged. Then he let them know who the substitute was. Bent had made a heap of money in the meantime and he wanted to pay his friend something, but nothing would be accepted. Finally, however, my neighbor, who had turned board of trade man, got into a corner where he stood to lose all he had, including his credit. He went to Bent and told him all about it.

"Draw on me for all you need, up to the very limit of my bank account," said Bent, and my neighbor took him at his word. He put in \$50,000, and that went. Then another \$10,000, and yet the other fellows were squeezing him. If he could hold on a little while he could carpet the board of trade with bills, but the opposition seemed determined to ruin him. He drew for a whole \$25,000 in a lump, and said that if it bankrupted Bent and him too they would be no worse off, barring age, than when they quit school. His last haul saved him, though if the corner had not collapsed the very day it did both he and his friend would have gone down together.

As it was, the tumble made him a very rich man, and he could pay back all he had borrowed and still have a fortune. But he has never risked a dollar from that day to this, although he has done business constantly for other men.

He has built that house, and lives there in elegant style, although he has never married, and I wouldn't wonder if he were keeping the place in the hope that he may some day make mistress of it the woman whom he has loved since long before the war.—Interview in Chicago Herald.

A Novel Bear Hunt.

Ex-City Auditor Vernon Whitesides tells one of the most interesting of hunting experiences. Walden's Ridge, about twelve miles from Chattanooga, Tenn., is yet in a state of nature, and here can be found almost impenetrable forests and the wildest of glens and gorges. It is a favorite place for hunters, the woods being full of the larger game—bear, deer, catamounts, etc.

The city auditor thus relates his experience on one of his hunts:
"I started out with Bob Hagen and two or three others for a bear hunt. We had told a good many of our friends that we wouldn't come home without a bear. We all climbed into a farm wagon and started. It is a rough road up the ridge, and we did not get to the place where we expected to find the bear until night. Here we saw an empty cabin, and concluded to take possession. So we stretched ourselves out on the punchon floor, and were just falling to sleep when Bob Hagen jumped up, crying:

"Toys, Joe's caught something."
"He took off his boot to see what he had caught, and found that it was a house snake, which had crawled up his trousers to keep warm. We all adjourned to the wagon for the night and the next morning, bright and early we started to look for a bear. Meeting a native, we asked him if he knew where we would be apt to find such an animal.

"Why, I saw bear tracks a spell ago up on the shelvin' rock 'bout five mile down yer," he observed.

"So we went to the shelving rock, meanwhile beating the bush in every direction, so that it was 11 o'clock by the time we reached the rock. At first we could see no way to get upon the rock, but finally we noticed that a small tree stood close enough for us to climb up that way, so we were soon on the rocks.

"I don't see any bear," said Bob.
"I don't believe there is any bear," I replied. "Let's eat."

"We agreed to that proposition spread our lunch, placed our gun against a tree and started to supply the inner man.

"I wish we could at least see a bear," said Bob.
"Hello, look there!" said one of the party. We all looked and saw a bear that looked as big as a horse between us and the guns. I was nearest to the tree, and consequently first to the ground; but the others were not far behind me. When we reached terra firma we began to discuss the matter. We knew come after the bear, we had found; bear, and now it was clearly our duty to go back and kill the brute. I felt a though I hadn't lost any bear, and having nothing against brim I didn't want to kill it; so we drew straws as to which should go back first. I got the unluck; straw and started, but when the top of my head was even with the rock I grew faint hearted and slid back. Bob tried it then, and carefully looking over the rock he made a break and got the guns. Then we all went back and beat around the bushes for a while, but we did not find any bear. Then we started for home, and on the way we met the native.

"Did you find the bear?"
"No," we answered in chorus.
"Well, he war thar," replied the aforesaid native.

"I offered him \$10 to go and get the bear, and he started. Inside of half an hour he came back dragging brim by one of his hind legs. He got the \$10 and we got our bear."—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

How It Feels to Undergo an Operation.

A party of three gentlemen were seated at a table of a popular cafe the other evening discussing the case of a friend who had recently been through a terrible surgical operation, when one of the party, who had had a similar operation performed on him some years ago, observed: "A man who is about to undergo a difficult surgical operation experiences something of the same feeling that a man must experience who is about to be executed. I know it was so in my case.

I had nerve myself, I thought, for the terrible ordeal, and had the assurances of my family physician that the odds that I would come through all right were largely in my favor, and yet, when I entered the operating room and saw the table, the large bags used in administering the anesthetic and, most frightful of all, the surgeon and his assistants with their aprons tied under their chins—I have faced death in battle and I don't think there is a drop of our blood in me, but my heart quailed at the sight and it took all my fortitude to enable me to mount the table. I tried to be brave while the assistants arranged me for the anesthetic, but, do what I would, the feeling that I was about to part with my life could not be banished, and as I said before I then experienced a something akin to the pang of death."—New York World.

A Dead Give Away.

"Why don't the young men marry?" queried her young sister.
"I suppose they are not asked," absently replied the bride of 1889.—Puck

Skilful Canine Equestrianism.

There's an unrivaled exhibition of canine equestrianism to be seen on the streets of Chicago almost any day, which has fully as much or even more merit about it than one sees in similar displays that are made in any of the "greatest shows on earth."

The "greatest shows on earth." The performer is an exceptionally intelligent water spaniel, and he is a rider of skill. His act consists, in a word, of riding a delivery wagon horse whose driver usually enforces a pell mell gait.

The spaniel sits his mount with his hind feet on the horse's collar, or where the collar would come, and his front feet, one ahead of the other, on the narrow ridge of the horse's neck claws clutched in the mane. The faster the horse goes the better the dog seems to like it, judging from his many barks and lively way in which he wags his tail. The sudden rounding of a corner never catches the plucky little animal off his guard, but at such times he will "curry in" with apparently the intelligence of the most accomplished circus rider, and so never loses his balance.

He has fallen but once in the two years that his owner says he has been riding, and that was when the horse came near being killed by a cable car.

The horse never goes so well as when carrying the dog, and that of course means that horse and dog are warm friends. Woe to the person or animal who bothers either of them when the other is around, for between the kicking of the horse and the biting of the dog the two old chums make it exceedingly unpleasant for intruders.—Chicago Tribune.

The Clever Dog.

A large, healthy bulldog was sitting totally unaware of the dog catcher's wagon, which came rattling down the street at that moment. Suddenly the facial larriat shot out, but the dog dodged it and made a bee line for the man who handled it. Then ensued an exciting chase, which was much enjoyed by the populace in the vicinity.

The dog catcher is never very popular with people in general. In this instance he succeeded in clambering into his wagon minus his coat-tails.

A skirmish then ensued, which ended in the temporary triumph of the dog, who retired to repose on his laurels. The dog catcher came back from ignominious flight a few minutes later, however, and human ingenuity soon triumphed over brute courage. The dog was lassoed and taken to the pound with other unfortunates.

But here the innate sense of justice in man steps in to even up things. Several admiring citizens had viewed the actions of the dog, and when he was carted away they took up a subscription, sent out to the pound, ransomed the animal and provided him with a home.

It is a little comedy like this that makes life seem worth living even to the most dissatisfied individual.—Chicago Globe.

Underground Voyages Near Boston.

Many parties have voyaged in the tunnel, underground, from Newton to the reservoir at Chestnut Hill, a distance of four miles, and the journey is an exciting and novel one. The water is about two feet deep, and the current runs about two miles an hour. Twenty millions of gallons in twenty-four hours is the usual supply. Manholes are placed at intervals along the main and a descent into one of them was made by the writer. A ladder leads down to a temporary landing of boards placed across the tunnel, through which the water glides noiselessly. The place was like a dungheap, and the light which the manhole admitted from above was speedily lost in the pitchy darkness which pervades the conduit.

The boats which are used in the summer time to convey parties of explorers from point to point are provided with torches fixed in the stern and bow of the boat to light the way. The current carries the boat along, and poles are used to guide the progress. There is also a remarkable echo here, and a stamp of the foot upon the boards evokes thunderous explosions of sounds that boom and boom like distant cannon, as the sound rebounds from the manhole along the main. One of the party sang a few notes and the sound was multiplied into a choir of mysterious voices, the effect being indescribably weird.—Albany Express.

Ten ranks as the best wood for ship building. It contains an oil which prevents the rusting of nails driven into it.

On a small twig recently broken off from an apple tree near Gainesville, Ga., there were twenty-six apples each the size of a large hickory nut.

One of the attractions of the Chicago exhibition is to be a pram of 400 pianos connected by electricity and manipulated by one woman.

Above the length of nineteen or twenty feet, snakes in the Philippine islands increase greatly in bulk for every foot in length, so that a snake nineteen feet long looks small beside one twenty-two feet long.

Tiger-hunting in India, as now conducted, is perilous sport. Formerly the animals were shot from platforms erected in the forests. Now the daring sportsmen hunt them on foot.

FOR THE SAKE OF LOVE.

"Cowards!" hissed an old man as he ran to and fro in the crowd gathered on the seashore.

"Will no one go for her? Will no one try and save my child, my only child?" shrieked the old miser, wringing his hands and running back and forward like one demented.

But all turned away. There was scarcely one present who had not suffered at the hands of the hard-hearted Boston money-lender.

"Oh, for the love of heaven—you who are fathers, think of me! My daughter will perish if you do not go for her! Thompson, you will go. I will give you anything—anything in reason."

"Risk my life for your daughter? Not I!" said the man, with a mocking laugh, shaking off the miser; "all your gold would not tempt me out on that boiling sea. Besides, I am a father, too, and I must think of my own family."

"Oh, she will die, she will die, she will die, for whom I have toiled and saved, ay and stinned! Jones, you will go. I will give you a hundred dollars."

"Not for ten thousand!" gruffly said the man addressed.

"I will give a thousand dollars to any one," eagerly said the miser. "A thousand," only think, Daly!" and he seized one of the onlookers by the shoulder, "oh, go! and the blessings of a broken-hearted man will go with you."

"Not likely!" answered Daly, "for I'd never return to enjoy your money. No, old man, you will have to face it like the rest of us. Your daughter will die."

"Will die? Oh, no! she shan't die. Take all I have, but save my child."

"It's no use," said the old dockmaster, "all the world would not tempt any one to put out in a tempest like this. It's a hard lot for you, for Polle was a sweet angel. But the bark will go to pieces within half an hour. So there's no more hope."

The poor distracted old man heard the speaker in silence. Then he turned and looked out to sea, where a few minutes before the outlines of the stranded bark might have been seen through the twilight almost buried in the whirling foam that howled over the bar on which she lay, but now had shut her in from view and the only knowledge of her position was derived from the booming of her minute guns across the waves.

Old Snelling, the miser, who by usury had amassed immense wealth, was paled by all. He had sent his daughter abroad to get her out of the way of a young man who loved her with a life's devotion, but who was too poor for the misers favor. Before the bark had disappeared from sight a terrible tempest came on and she was stranded, a hopeless wreck.

Five minutes of dead silence passed. The only noise heard being the booming of guns. A young man burst through the crowd and laying his hand in the old man's shoulder said:

"Mr. Snelling, is it true your daughter is on that bark?"
"Yes! You will try and rescue her," and then recognizing the stranger, he said, "Oh! It's Harry Dane! Surely you're not in trouble in my distress?"
"Heaven forbid!" was Harry's fervent reply.

"I have come to aid you if I can. If I succeed will you give me your daughter? I love her so that if I cannot save her at least I can die near her."

Every bystander knew that old Snelling had frequently declared that he would rather see his daughter dead than the wife of Harry Dane. Now the miser answered with a gasp:
"Yes! Only save her and she shall be yours."

Harry paused no longer, but in a minute his little boat was afloat, and accompanied by a solitary companion but one fisherman, and he under—great obligation to young Dane, could be persuaded to risk his life—he set forth.

The boat rose gallantly on the waves, shaking like a duck the spray from her sides, and for a few minutes was seen momentarily cutting the out line of the gloomy sky as she attained the summit of the billows, and then she gradually passed into the darkness and was lost to sight. An hour, which seemed ten to the anxious watchers, passed and no sight of the young man.

"It was madness to attempt it," said one of the fishermen.
"Yes, but he was determined to die. Hark! What was that?"
"Hello!"

Every eye was turned seaward, in the direction from which the hailing came. Nothing could be seen but the white foam of the breakers and the lowering clouds forming in the background a chaotic mass of darkness.

"Hark!" at length said another fisherman, "there it is again."

Every one listened, and now a loud shout was heard through the thick gloom. A reply was quickly given and then a breathless suspense followed, in which every eye was strained to the utmost.

"See just it is!" at length cried one. "See that on yonder wave!"
"Harrab!"

A miracle! A miracle! the people, as they saw the boat and fall on the surge, showers of flying over her, but apparently no harm.

A few moments and the boat and crew were safe.

The miser had started from his seat and stood tremblingly gazing at the proaching boat as she buffeted waves; no sooner did she touch ground than he rushed frantically to the surf and clasped his daughter's heart.

He would not loose his hold and fishermen had to carry them both dry land.

There they would have separated the two for a moment, but when he spoke to the old man they found was lifeless. The two hours' anguish had been too much for his entrance frame and he had died in the revival from despair to sudden joy.

After a short period of mourning passed, Polle Snelling, the miser's daughter, gave her hand to Harry Dane, the brave youth who for her risked his life. The old miser had been worth over a million dollars, which came to the young couple, was, however, the least part of treasure, for they had the trust to bind them together and in his virtues and amiability Harry ample recompense for the long of opposition on the part of her parents.

It Was Napoleon.

It was dark, and down a narrow street in Paris a man rode along horseback. Suddenly the horse stopped as if frightened. Then a man from the pavement in the middle of the street and jumped to one side and a cry. The rider was angry and claimed: "Are you drunk, man? you lie about in the middle of a street to get yourself run over?"

"You might better lend a poor fellow a hand than scold in that way," claimed the other. "I had 300 francs in gold in this bag, carrying it to a bill for my master, and the bag broken and it is all lost over the street. If you have some matches they will be more good than your curse."

"It's no easy task to find lost money on a night like this," said the dismounting. "I have no matches, but perhaps I can help you. Have any of the pieces left?"

"Only one," replied the unfortunate fellow with a sob.

"Give it to me," said the other.

The poor man hesitated, but a stranger repeated the words in a tone of authority, and the last coin was handed to him.

The stranger whistled and a grey spanish mastiff stood beside him, held the coin to the dog's nose, leaning to the rough pavement and "Find them."

The dog sniffed the gold piece and began the search.

One, two, three, he began barking in the coins and dropping them in his master's hand, while the poor man stood by in silent wonder.

Thirteen times he returned with 20-franc piece. Then, after a search, he came back empty, disgruntled that seemed to say: "There no more."

"We are yet lacking one piece," the stranger. "Are you sure you were just 300 francs?"
"Sure as sure can be, sir," the man replied.

"Then look in the bag again. It must be one left there."

The man looked, and sure enough found the last gold piece there.

"Oh, sir," he exclaimed, "stranger sprang into his saddle and my deliverer. Tell me your name that my master may know you done him such a service."

"MABEL."
"I have done nothing," said the stranger. "Tell your master that he who helped you was a very good intelligent dog by the name of MABEL."

It was some years afterward that the royal family was no more, but the master was telling the incident to a party of friends, one of whom had employed in the palace.

"Joe! Joe!" he exclaimed, "never was but one dog of that kind and there never was a more noble and faithful dog than he, always accompanied his master, he went in disguise about the city."

"Who was his master?" they asked.

The reply was brief: "The Emperor Napoleon."—Youth's Companion.

What the Girls Want.

A Kentucky girl has written this essay on the kind of a man she would like to marry: "If I wished to marry, of course, I do not—I would like a man too noble to commit a crime, but generous enough to forgive a man gentle as a woman, a man one who does not talk, nor tell disagreeable truths whose name I would be proud to whom I could carry my perplexities, and joy."

Men of that kind who do not marry had better keep quiet, lucky.

The Music of Tears.

A Main woman at 95 plays like a girl. What years and sleepless nights and nervous means (to her neighbors).—Exchange.