



## THE LATCH KEY.

"No!" It was a peremptory "no," such as mother seldom used, for she was gentle in disposition. "No, Freddy, don't think any more about it."

"Can't you make an exception just this once?" begged Fred, my brother, looking like a persecuted slinger.

"No! You might lose it; somebody might find it; we might be exposed to all sorts of calamities; someone might get into the house—"

"Stop, mother, you are picturing improbabilities to yourself."

"Secondly," continued our mother, "you are too young to carry a latch-key. I don't wish you to be out late at night; you are the only male protector we have, and I want you to be at home with us."

Under any other circumstances Fred might have been proud to be called our "only male protector," but this distinction made no impression upon him now. When mother had taken the latchkey from the keyboard and consigned it to her pocket, Fred wasn't in the kindest frame of mind.

Two months ago we had moved from the little town where we were born to a large city—mother, Fred and I. We were still upset and confused by the sudden radical change from country quiet to the bustle of a metropolis. Mother certainly came much against her inclination, but Freddy exhibited an unusual musical talent, and I, too, was modestly gifted with a propensity for drawing, and we felt the needs of instructive advantages which we could not obtain in our native town. Our maternal parent was unwilling that we should go forth into the world alone, and so the little home was sacrificed, and we set up an abode elsewhere.

Our mother, who had been the most condescending soul in the world, was suspicious of everything and everybody in her new surroundings and insisted that the house should be locked and bolted at 10 o'clock every night. At that time we bolted the door to our apartments. At half past 10 the front door was locked by the janitor, and everybody was supposed to be safely tucked away in bed.

"Ridiculous," growled Fred, after mother had left the room with the key in her pocket, "to expect a grown man to be at home every night at 10."

Fred was invited to a little supper after the concert at which his music teacher was to render the star numbers.

"She will let you stay out till 11 if I ask her, and I will sit up for you."

"You know mother goes to bed at 10, so if I should be a little behind time, don't mind, Milly, don't mind; that's a good girl."

"Very well, brother mine!"

"Or half an hour, or an hour! She'll be asleep, anyway, and I'll just cough gently under your window, and then you'll come down and let me in."

"See that you watch is not too far behind time, Freddy," I laughed, "and I'll see what can be done."

"I'll go down now and try it on! If you hear me cough, let me know."

Freddy went out. A moment afterward I heard him cough immediately under my window. I looked out and nodded to him. "All right, old fellow, I can hear the signal."

Mother finally was prevailed upon to give her permission for Fred to stay out until 11, and after supper made herself comfortable in the big arm chair with the evident intention to wait for the "male protector" of the family.

At 10 o'clock she looked pretty sleepy, and the strike of the next half hour awoke her from her first nap. She gathered up her knitting.

"He will soon be here now, Milly; it's really not worth while for both of us to sit up. I'm going to bed but not to sleep until he is safely at home."

I bade mother good-night. In less than five minutes, I knew, she would be sound asleep. An interesting book would help me over the next hour. Before I knew I was deeply involved in the love affair of a young couple, and when I turned the last page of the book it was twenty minutes past midnight. A sudden thought struck terror to my heart. Fred may have been here and, absorbed as I was in my story, I might not have heard the signal. I rushed to the window, but nobody was to be seen. The minutes dragged with leaden slowness. A quarter of 1! Where could he be? At 1 o'clock I began to divest myself of my dress and slipped into my gown. Then I arranged my hair for the night and had just finished putting one side of my head into curl papers, when the signal came.

I went to the window, opened it just a bit and said softly:

"Is that you, Freddy?"

"Yes."

"Here is the key!" I threw it down into the street.

"Yes!"

"Don't leave it in the keyhole; bring it up with you!"

"Quite right!"

"And take off your boots; don't let me hear you."

"Very good!"

I opened the lamp and hastened out on the stairs to light my belated brother on his way. The key was turned in the lock below. Then there was a

pause. Freddy was evidently taking off his shoes before coming up the stairs.

"You are a —" I was on the point of whispering, when I heard the bootless step quite near me, but I suddenly checked myself. From out of the shadow of the chairs emerged a shining helmet with waving plumes, and beneath it the strange face of a young man, with a dark brown mustache and black eyes, the whole figure arrayed in knightly armor—evidently in masquerade suit.

I had just presence of mind enough left not to cry out aloud. A few steps sufficed to bring me within the shelter of our hall, and as I closed the door I saw the tall stranger bow profoundly, then all was dark. I was terribly frightened at first, but when soon after



THE WHOLE FIGURE ARRAYED IN KNIGHTLY ARMOR.

I came to my senses I realized that the stranger had my key, perhaps he had left it in the lock. I rekindled the lamp, arranged my toilet and descended to the front door.

No; it was not there. In my excitement I had forgotten to note whether the knight had gone down or up the stairs, after admitting himself with my key. There was nothing left for me to do but to go from one floor to the other and find the culprit. I rang the bell of the lower flat timidly enough. It brought to the door an old man.

"Have you a young man lodger who has just come home? He has my —"

"No!" growled a voice, and the door was slammed in my face.

I went to the next floor and repeated the experiment. A young servant maid came to the door.

"No," she said, when I inquired after a young man in a masquerade suit; no young man lived on their premises.

Past our own door I now stumbled and went to the floor above. My knock brought to the door a rolly-polly little old woman in dressing sack and night cap.

"What is it, child?" she asked, anxiously, for she knew me. "Is your mother ill? Can we help you?"

"No," I whispered, "but I have just by mistake given our latchkey to a strange young man in a masquerade suit because I took him for my brother. Does he live with you?"

"No, my dear young lady."

Tears came to my eyes. I was at my wit's ends.

"But a young artist has just moved into the garret room. Perhaps he is the man you seek."

Yes, it must be he! But how could I, a young woman, go to a young man's quarters in the middle of the night to demand the return of my latch key?

My old friend came to my rescue, called her husband, and sent him upstairs to ask for my key. We could hear their voices, first unintelligible, and then the voice of the stranger rang out in the tone of injured innocence.

"What? not returned the key? I laid it at the feet of the young lady?"

And so it was. When we three came down to our door and held the lamp close to the floor, we found it lying where he had said. I thanked my neighbors for their kindly assistance and hastened to the window to look out for Fred.

There he stood, shivering in the cold, anxiously waiting for admittance. He had not much to say, but grabbed the lamp and disappeared in his room. I



MOTHER HANDED ME HIS CARD.

did not blame him, though he was woefully late in coming home.

Next morning we found that our mother was unaware of the adventure of the night. She had slept the sleep of the just, for which I was profoundly thankful.

Just as we were ready to sit down to dinner the bell rang. My mother opened the door and bowed a young man into the parlor.

"I came to beg your pardon for the disturbance I caused last night," I heard the voice of a young man say.

"Disturbance! I know nothing of it, Milly!"

I came in, red as a peony, and ready to sink into the floor. Mother handed me his card. "Mr. Charles Bowman, Artist," it said.

"You must tell me all about it, Mr. Bowman," continued my mother, "for I don't know what you mean, really."

And he told her just what had happened. Mother's face grew longer and longer as he proceeded with his narrative.

"Stupid men!" I thought. Just at the end he showed a grain of sense.

"When did all this happen?" asked my mother, excitedly. "I went to bed at 10 o'clock. I hope that Fred came home at the proper time, Milly."

The young man's dark eyes turned upon me.

"I don't know just to the minute, but it must have been about 11 o'clock or thereabout."

I blessed him for that answer.

Mr. Bowman's first unfortunate visit was followed by many more. He became my brother's friend, then my sweetheart, and now he is my betrothed. Late in the spring we are to be married.

**POPULATION OF IRELAND.**

**Emigration Decreasing—Report of the Registrar General.**

The report of the registrar general of Ireland for the year 1896 has been issued as a blue book. It states that the marriage rate for that part of the United Kingdom, although not high, in 1896 was considerably in excess of the decennial average, and was the highest for any year since 1871, says a London dispatch to the Paris Messenger. The birth rate was somewhat above the average and was the highest for any year since 1884, while on the other hand the death rate was much below the average, being only 16.6 per 1,000, and was the lowest for any year since 1871. The excess of births over deaths was 31,941.

As the loss by emigration amounted to 28,965, there was an apparent decrease of 7,054 in the population during the year. But against this decrease there is a set-off in immigration, of which no official record has been obtained. The estimated population in the middle of the year was 4,569,378. The rate of emigration last year per 1,000 of the estimated population was 8.6, the average rate for the previous ten years being 12.7. In 1894 the rate was as low as 7.8, whereas in 1887 it reached 17.1. The population of Ireland, including the military, naval and merchant service, amounted in 1822 to 6,892,708. From that period the number continued to increase until 1845, when it amounted to 8,295,061.

It then began to go through a continuous process of decline, falling below 7,000,000 in 1850, below 6,000,000 in 1856 and below 5,000,000 in 1884, the lowest point being reached last year. The emigration which took place in 1896 comprised 3,842 from the province of Leinster, 15,485 from Munster, 7,434 from Ulster and 12,234 from Connaught. Of the total emigrants from Ireland last year 6.9 per cent were under 15 years of age, 83.7 per cent between 15 and 35 years old, 9.4 per cent were 35 or upward, and in ten instances the ages were not specified. The great bulk, therefore, were in the prime of life.

**YOUNG PHIL SHERIDAN.**

Not Brilliant, but Studious and Industrious at West Point.

Up at West Point there is a slender, smooth-faced young man who is working day and night to emulate the glorious record of his father.

It is "young Phil Sheridan." He is already a soldier by instinct. In a few years he will be a soldier in reality.

So far he has taken but little interest in the athletic sports of his classmates. He is not a foot-ball player. He is a bad hand at base-ball. He plays tennis and enjoys it. Most of all, however, he is a thorough student.

While not exactly a brilliant youth, young Sheridan is persistent and industrious, and it would not be surprising if at the end of four years' study he should be graduate at the head of his class.

It was not only his own but his mother's desire that he should become a soldier, and by the time he receives his lieutenantcy it is possible that we may indulge in a war with a foreign power that will enable him to show his mettle.

Like poets, however, great soldiers seem to be a question of birth and instinct. In this connection a prominent West Point officer recently said:

"It is almost a certainty that if we were to go to war now the successes that we might achieve would depend upon the sons of our dead military heroes. I do not know of one who has been graduated at this college who has shown any especial brilliancy."

"Sheridan is as brilliant as any of them. Military genius does not shine in times of peace, however. It takes war to bring out a soldier's qualities, and it is likely that in case of an armed conflict new generals would spring up from humble lieutenants who have butly managed to scratch through their examination."—New York Journal.

**When It Happened.**

"What time was it," asked the judge of the rural witness, "when this affair occurred?"

"Well, sir," replied the witness, "of I don't disremember it wuz long er 'bout fodder-pullin' time."

"I mean," explained the judge, "what time of day?"

"It warn't no time of day, yer Honor, fer it wuz night time."

"And what time was that?"

"Well, sir, of it warn't bedtime it wuz mighty close to it."



For Cleaning and Polishing Stoves mix finely-powdered black-lead to a paste with water in which a small amount of glue has been dissolved.

The bulb of an electric lamp should never be inclosed in any fabric. If wrapped in tissue paper so that no air can pass between it and the glass, the paper will soon be on fire.

Paper tiles are said to have numerous advantages over the ordinary ones, being lighter, harder, and also impervious to damp. Furthermore, they are non-conductors of heat and sound, and look better than the old kind.

Glass library shelves have recently been introduced in France. The edges are rounded. The glass is nearly inflexible, which gives it great advantage over wood. Its strength has been proved. It is more easily kept clean than other shelving. The appearance of the library is greatly enhanced. The book people who have used it are enthusiastic.

Sudden and great fluctuations in the level of water in wells in stormy weather, closely corresponding to the fluctuations in wind velocity recorded by Prof. Langley, have been observed by Dr. Romel Martini. This explains the popular tradition that bad weather may be predicted from the sudden rise and fall of wells. Curiously, however, small and rapid changes of barometers are more certain to affect wells than large changes.

Recent observations on the differences of color in different races of men are described in a French journal of anthropology by Monsieur Breul. It appears that the color of the skin depends upon a pigment contained in the deeper layers of the epidermis. This pigment, in the form of minute grains, is distributed in the same manner in all races, the only difference being in the color of the grains, which varies from black, through many lighter shades, up to light yellow.

In Spain, where the telephone is largely used in place of the telegraph, says Monsieur Pierard, as reported in the Electrical World, an ingenious application of the phonograph to record the telephonic messages has been made. The receiving operator repeats the message into a phonograph, from which it can afterward be transcribed at leisure. This saves the delay caused by writing the message during its reception, and insures greater accuracy because the repetition of the message for the phonograph is heard, simultaneously, by the original sender at the other end of the line.

Many of the violent changes which occur under the surface of the sea, as Prof. John Milne has recently shown, produce effects that are distinctly and sometimes disastrously felt on the land. Wherever a profound cavity exists in the bed of the ocean near the land, and wherever the border of a continent slopes off into a deep sea, great slides are apt to occur, and these often cause earthquakes. In Japan, Mr. Milne says, a large number of earthquakes came from the deep sea off the mouth of the Tonegawa, the largest of the Japanese rivers. The river brings down alluvial detritus which is deposited on the brink of a deep hollow in the ocean, and from time to time the accumulated deposit slides into the depths, shaking not only the sea-bottom, but the adjacent land.

According to Nikola Tesla, as reported in Industries and Iron, "of all conceivable methods of generating electrical energy, nothing in the present nor in the future is likely to compare in facility and economy with the waterfall." Of all methods of generating power, the utilization of waterfall, he says, is the simplest and least wasteful. According to him, even if it were possible, by combining carbon in a battery, to convert the work of the chemical combination into electrical energy with very high economy, such mode of obtaining power, he thinks, would be no more than a mere makeshift, bound to be replaced sooner or later by a more perfect method which requires no consumption of any material whatever.

"With a view to rendering his operations really aseptic," says the Berlin correspondent of the Lancet, "Prof. Mikulicz of Breslau has taken to operating in gloves, and has published an account of the favorable results obtained after three months' experience. He uses fine thread gloves, which are made aseptic in steam in the same way as surgical bandages. Of course the hands are washed and disinfected in the usual manner before the gloves are put on. The gloves have to be changed several times during long operations; they are worn by the assistants as well. Prof. Mikulicz declares that none of the manipulations are rendered awkward or difficult by the gloves, and that, on the contrary, it is easier to take and keep hold of tissues in gloves than with the bare hand. He further recommends the use of a respirator of sterilized muslin, in order to avoid danger from mouth bacteria."

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pen which holds ink enough for about 10,000 words has made his appearance. His daily stint is the amount of ink in his pen, and when that is exhausted he stops; the author who has lost three months' work by the breaking of a phonograph, into which he had dictated a novel, has also come into publicity, and people feel as sorry for him as did the gay Frenchmen of a hundred and fifty years ago for the poet who lost a collection of blank rhymes. The author who keeps a phonograph by his bedside, in order not to lose the brilliant ideas that come to him in the silent watches of the night, and the magazine editor who, from his residence, dictates a lengthy and learned article through the telephone to a shorthand writer at his office are all with us, for the authors are evidently not the kind of people to lag behind the age in which they live.

**A PECULIAR EXPLOIT.**

**Towed a Large Turtle Twelve Miles Through the Water.**

Jim Westover, a youngster of 21, and a rider of the "bike," is the hero in the region about Mayport, Fla., just at present over the capture of a huge turtle the other night on the beach. Westover had been down on the beach taking a spin and also to see about some cows in a pasture at Six-Mile Point. He had a rope about fifty feet long that he took with him to do some measuring on some camp meeting lots. Knowing that this was the time for turtles to be laying their eggs, they affecting moonlight nights for such exercise, he kept a sharp lookout for them. Just after passing Pablo he saw the big outlines of something black up the beach.

"By Jimminy," said Jim under his breath, "that's a dog-gone big un, too."

Riding up slowly, he soon came near the big turtle, which was too busy laying eggs to notice Jim's noiseless approach. Jim cogitated over the matter for a few minutes and then, taking his rope, carefully fastened it to the turtle's front flipper and drew the rope tight. No sooner did the turtle feel this than it started up and wiggled toward the water. Jim mounted his wheel and tried to ride off the other way. Jim pedaled and pedaled, but could not move the old fellow. The turtle seemed to have the best of the bargain and pulled the unwilling wheelman to the water's edge. Jim was getting anxious. As the turtle entered the water he started up the beach alongside the water's edge, trying to get a new pull on his capture.

To his great surprise and delight he found that he had the turtle foul. The old fellow was at home in the water, but having his right flipper caught by the tow rope he was powerless to run away, and fight as hard as he could he could not escape. Jim started up the beach as near the water's edge as he could ride, and began to tow the turtle to Mayport. The turtle naturally objected and sheered out to sea. But the rope being attached to his landside flipper it kept him at just the right distance from the shore and he towed as easy as a log, as Jim said afterward. Once in a while he got obstreperous and twice Jim fell into the water, but by midnight he and his prize arrived off Commanche Point. His wild whoops aroused the neighbors, who came out to see what was up. They would not believe that Jim had towed the turtle for twelve miles in this way, until he showed them the rope and then to show off towed the big fellow up and in front of the town for a few turns. And the turtle had gotten used to it now and kept just far out enough to make towing easy. When he saw Jim turn to come back, after going up the bank a little ways, the turtle turned around and shifted the rope to his landside flipper again, as he knew that he could not be towed if the rope was on the outside. Jim has the turtle in a crawl near his house and every evening he takes him for a tow along the banks.—Chicago Chronicle.

**Authors Enjoying Mechanical Helps.**

The up-to-date stories about authors indicate that the brotherhood of the pen are as keenly alive to the advantages of a high state of civilization as any other class of people in the community. The author with a fountain

pen which holds ink enough for about 10,000 words has made his appearance. His daily stint is the amount of ink in his pen, and when that is exhausted he stops; the author who has lost three months' work by the breaking of a phonograph, into which he had dictated a novel, has also come into publicity, and people feel as sorry for him as did the gay Frenchmen of a hundred and fifty years ago for the poet who lost a collection of blank rhymes. The author who keeps a phonograph by his bedside, in order not to lose the brilliant ideas that come to him in the silent watches of the night, and the magazine editor who, from his residence, dictates a lengthy and learned article through the telephone to a shorthand writer at his office are all with us, for the authors are evidently not the kind of people to lag behind the age in which they live.

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**A GREAT GAME PARK.**

Twenty-six Thousand Acres for a Preserve.

G. T. Ferris contributes an article on "Wild Animals in a New England Game Park" to the October Century. Mr. Ferris says, in describing the late Austin Corbin's New Hampshire preserve:

Blue Mountain Forest Park, as the preserve is called, includes parts of four townships, and lies near the enterprising borough of Newport on the Concord and Claremont branch of the Boston and Maine Railroad. It is said to be the biggest game park in the world, except one owned by the Duke of Sutherland in Scotland, and one or two royal demesnes on the continent. Of course, in making comparisons, one must exclude those immense public preserves, as big as provinces, where the British Government of India seeks to save the elephant from extinction, and our own national parks in the West.

The name of Blue Mountain attaches to the entire spur of hills which bisects the park, while Crofton designates its highest shoulder rising to the height of nearly three thousand feet. The steep and densely wooded heights of Crofton, curving like a hump, break the sky-line in the shape of a camel's back; near by a skirting canyon opens a carriage route across the mountain. In characteristically it belongs rather to the Green Mountain than to the White Mountain range, though it seems disconnected from both. The verdure of an immense forest of spruce, fir, hemlock, pine, birch, beech and maple infolds it to the very crest, with here and there a brown patch of clearing. The greater part of the Corbin inclosure consists of abandoned farms, many of them already beginning to bristle with saplings; for the woods are on the march. Dismantled houses with windows and doors gaping like holes in a skull, ramshackle barns rotten and weather-stained, the wreck of stone fences thickset with brambles—these meet the eye at every turn.

The general outline of the park is that of an ellipse with respective diameters of about four and a half and eleven miles, and the surface is cut diagonally by a backbone of mountain running northeast. The lower slopes and the meadow levels are diversified with brooks and swamp land, while extensive groves of second growth profusely dot the surface. It is in these that the wild swine, the progenitors of which clashed their tusks against the bar-spears of mediaeval kings and boars, root and propagate their kind with a fecundity which is a marvel to the keepers.

One can scarcely grasp the bigness of the park by figures. But let the reader fancy a demense considerably more than double the size of Boston and all its suburbs; thirty times the area of Central Park, New York; almost ten times bigger than Fairmount Park, Philadelphia; or fourteen times the acreage of the whole park system of Chicago. Roads, many of them thoroughfares of days gone by, variously intersect the inclosure, and an excellent carriage track crosses the park from east to west through the picturesque notch. On the western side the declivity is more sloping and open, but has the same agreeable diversity of scene.

A wire fence, partly mesh, partly barbed, nearly eight feet in height and twenty-seven miles in circuit, confines the four-footed tenants within its steel barrier. The same posts which support the fence until the trees which have been set shall have grown to take their place, straggling a telephone connecting the nine sub-stations at the different gates with the central station, the home of the superintendent, the Corbin villa, and the town of Newport. The keepers and other employes of the park vary from twenty-five to fifty, according to the season of the year. It need scarcely be said that the needs of attendance compel a vigilance which never rests. Merely to watch the fence, lest it should have parted somewhere by accident or wanton malice, requires an inspection twice a week.

**Rare Packs of Cards.**

The oldest pack of cards found in the United States is a deck which was discovered in perfect condition in a closet in an ancient house in New Jersey. The date of the pack is of the time of Charles I., and the cards are of English make. Some very old playing cards have been found in the board bindings of early books. It looks as if illustrative art was used in the making of cards even before the pictures in books of religion, which shows that man thought more of his amusement than of the saving of his soul. At a recent sale in London some old playing cards were disposed of. A geographical pack, 1675, with the rare explanatory card describing other packs of the period, brought £3; a pack of old proverb cards, not in the British museum catalogue, £4 11s; Dutch satirical cards, first quarter of the eighteenth century, with the two supplemental cards, £3 18s; a pack of grotesque cards, the suits cleverly designed and colored, £2 10s; a pack illustrating the American Civil war, with portraits of the generals engaged therein, £2 2s; and the rare popish plot pack, published in 1679, one card missing, £2 18s.—Collector.

**Little China Tea in London.**

There seems to be no doubt that as far as the British market is concerned China teas are gradually becoming extinct.

**Germany's Many Suicides.**

Germany's proportion of suicides is larger than that of any other European country.

If a woman sincerely loves a man it never worries her conscience to steal tobacco for him.