

TWILIGHT ON THE FARM.

The dews come down, and shadows gather in field and lane,
Low in the west a band of black gives promise unto rain.
It is the twilight hour—and given o'er to calm and rest,
It brings to home a benediction and is blest.

The boys come and bathe their faces at the cooling well,
Afar and faint, then near and sweet, tinkles the lead cow's bell.
It is the twilight hour—and stars are starting from the deep,
High heaven's herald sent to watch that men may sleep.

The father comes, a man of many years of toil and care,
Who smiles to see the candle in the self-same window there;
It is the twilight hour—and with the farm work amply done
He feels a poor man's joy to think the food is won.

Then all sit down to eat the evening meal, and far away
A wagon rumbles out the neighbor's name who loves delay;
It is the twilight hour—and free from day's unending quest
It brings to home a benediction and is blest.
—Boston Journal.

Miss Fairfax's Husband

JAMES TADDMAN, sub-editor of the Dendene Gazette, was busily correcting proofs when the door of his room was opened rather suddenly, and a gentleman of some six-and-twenty winters entered.

"I say, Taddman—"
"Well?"
The sub-editor just grunted this out, and didn't turn his head.

"I'm in an awful fix. I—I don't know what to do."
"What's up?" murmured Mr. Taddman, still keeping his eyes fixed on his proofs.

"I've got to interview Miss Fairfax, the great singer. The governor left word that I was to see her to-night at eleven after the concert, and that the interview was to go into to-morrow's paper."

"Better look sharp, then," growled the sub-editor; "it's 10:45 now, and I shall want all your copy by 12:30 at the latest."

"But—but—I can't do it!" exclaimed the new-comer, desperately.

"Why not?" replied the sub-editor. "You've interviewed heaps of people before—in a fashion."

Mr. Taddman didn't think much of Charles Danvers, the one and only reporter of the Dendene Gazette and boast of. Danvers was far too amateurish in his work, and hadn't the "cut" of a newspaper man about him. Besides, the governor had only engaged him because he was willing to work for a low salary.

"Well, it's just like this, Taddman," explained Danvers, coming up and standing at his superior officer's elbow, "Miss Fairfax is my wife!"

Taddman dropped his pen, and turned round in one and the same moment. "Your wife?"

"Yes, my wife—I swear it. I don't care to talk about it," the young man went on, hurriedly. "But I'll tell you all now I've told you some. We were married when we were only boy and girl. I was nineteen, she a year younger. Three months after our marriage we had a frightful quarrel—chiefly because I had deceived her about money matters—and we parted by mutual consent. She was at one of the musical academies, and I had just left Rugby. My father disowned me for getting married without his consent, and so, instead of going to Oxford, I had to earn a living how and where I could. After trying various things I drifted into journalism, and that's why I'm here, working all I know for twenty-five shillings a week. And she—I have followed her career, although she has quite lost sight of me—she is famous, rich, courted by the great, written about and talked about, while I, her husband, am only a miserable hack of a reporter. And now I have to go and interview her!"

He sank into a chair and buried his face in his hands. For some moment Taddman gazed at him in blank amazement. This man the great Fairfax's lawful husband! And told off to interview her! Taddman was tongue-tied.

He looked at his watch. It was five minutes to eleven.

"Look here, young 'un, you must go," he said at length, touching Danvers on the shoulder and speaking more gently; "I'll mean the sack if you don't. You know what the governor is. You'd find it rather hard to get another crib, you know. I'd do it for you myself, but I can't stir from here until the paper goes to bed. So put a good face on it, man, and go. Bless you! she won't recognize you. Her husband was a smooth-faced boy, and you've got a long mustache—and—and he had never noticed them before) quite a sprinkling of gray hairs. Besides, you look a good deal older than you really are. Here, rouse up and get along! We must have the interview."

Danvers got up.

"Thanks, old chap," he said, "I'll be off. I didn't think of the situation in my looks. Of course she won't know me."

And without more ado he put on his coat and hat and hurried away to the town hall, where Miss Fairfax had consented to be interviewed, the rendezvous being her dressing-room behind the stage.

Miss Fairfax was rolling up her music when her maid, Jones, was good enough to inform her that "a reporter" was anxious to see her.

"From the Dendene Gazette?" she inquired.

"Yes, miss—I think it was some name like that."

Miss Jones' experience of press representatives was a very wide one. She didn't think much of the one who was here to-night. He wasn't so free-spoken as them London gents, with their shiny 'ats and long frock-coats—no, nor so free with his money—at any rate he didn't look as if he was. Yes, Miss Jones liked the London gentlemen, especially when they attributed to her mistress a host of clever things which she never said.

"Ask him to come in," said Miss Fairfax. "Good evening," she murmured pleasantly, as Danvers entered; "will you sit down? And now what can I do for you?"

Poor Danvers was quite dazzled by his wife's wondrous beauty. She was certainly a very pretty girl when he married her, but he never imagined for a moment that she would develop into the lovely woman he now beheld. She was in excellent health. Her eyes were bright and sparkling, and she looked a very queen as she moved to and fro in her costly white satin dress, while diamonds shone out from between the coils of her dark hair and burnt fiercely on her breast.

Danvers pulled himself together with a great effort, and put the usual round of questions to her. She answered them with astonishing readiness, and told him the tale of her career with striking accuracy. Then, seeing that her visitor did not appear to be quite at his ease, the singer began to talk about the songs she loved—talked in a low, sweet voice which rose and fell in glorious cadences, that fell upon the ear like the purling of a stream. At any other time Danvers would have hailed such a speech with glee, for it was eminently printable and interesting; but now he only wrote mechanically, for his thoughts were not in his work—only his pencil-point.

During the latter part of the interview Jones had been assisting her young mistress in putting on her "things." Jones, as has been said, was quite used to interviewers, and she sniffed impatiently several times during Miss Fairfax's discourse, for her mistress was more communicative than usual—far more communicative indeed than she was to the London gentlemen, who, in consequence, had to draw upon their imaginations in order to fill up their columns. It was quite immaterial to Miss Fairfax how the interviewers who came to see her were dressed. Her business manager (a most discreet gentleman) had directed her to grant interviews whenever she could, and so, in giving the representative of the Dendene Gazette all this information, she was only transacting part of her day's work.

It was not likely that Miss Fairfax bestowed two thoughts on the appearance of this very quiet member of the reporting tribe, who seldom lifted his eyes from his note-book—it was not likely that she noticed, as Jones did, that his coat was very old, and a trifle thin for the season; that his collars and cuffs, though quite clean, possessed frayed edges; that his boots wanted repairing, and that he would have been the better for a new hat. Not that you could find much fault with Danvers' clothes at first glance—it was only when you came to look into them that you saw some serious defects. After much consideration, Miss Jones came to the conclusion that the "reporter" had been good-looking. She put him down as five-and-thirty now, and married, with perhaps half a dozen children and a scolding wife. This was because her quick eyes ferreted out the gray hairs, and the lines along the forehead and certain weary shadows on his face. Of course, Miss Jones had no idea that the "interviewer's" life was a wearying one indeed, for many a time and oft he had to stand for hours ankle deep in the mud that is present at every stock sale; had to rush about over half the county at all times, and in all weathers; had to do two and sometimes three men's work; had to tout for advertisements; soft-soap good Dendene citizens who agreed with his paper's "opinions"; had to chronicle a host of silly little-tattle, and cover reams of paper with the common names of nobodies.

So it was no wonder that Danvers had turned a little bit gray, and did not look peculiarly cheerful. And it did not improve his looks to go home—after handing in his "copy"—and lie awake all night thinking of his beautiful wife, in the heyday of her career, belauded wherever she went, rich, and without a ripple in the calm sea of her existence to trouble her, while he—

But he was glad she did not recognize him.

It was about half-past eight on the following morning. Danvers was making a miserable attempt to eat some breakfast, when no less a person than Jones was suddenly shown into his room by his landlady, who never put herself out of the way to announce a visitor.

"Oh," began Miss Jones, "Miss Fairfax would be glad if you could see her some time this morning. She wants something altered in the interview, and hopes you can publish the correction next Wednesday."

The Dendene Gazette, we should have mentioned, was a bi-weekly.

"Very well," said Danvers, "I will wait upon Miss Fairfax immediately."

"Crown Hotel," said Jones, laconically, and went.

The quality of the breakfast had lowered the interview another twenty-five per cent in her estimation.

There was a big fire in the "Crown Hotel's" best sitting-room when Danvers was shown into it. The table was also laid for breakfast. Danvers sat down with a sigh. The ordeal wasn't over then, yet.

There was a frou-frou of skirts, and Danvers, standing up, bowed politely to Miss Fairfax, whose beauty, he observed, bore the test of sunlight undiminishedly.

"Pray sit down," she said; "I merely wanted to ask you—"

She stopped speaking. Involuntarily he looked up at her, and the blood surged giddily to his brain when he saw that she was surveying him with a world of tenderness in her eyes. She recognized him, and she still loved him!

Without more ado she dropped on her knees beside him, and laid one of her white hands caressingly on his forehead.

"Oh, Charlie!" she cried, with a little sob in her voice, "won't you make it up?"

He gazed at her wildly. He could not believe it. But yet there was that look in her face.

"Oh, no, no!" he exclaimed, turning away, "it would not do. You are so famous and rich, while I—I am what you see. I—I had better go. What will people say when they hear—?"

His failure of a career, his shabbiness, his wretchedness—the thought of them overwhelmed him. He would not take advantage of her generosity. So he rose to his feet and walked unsteadily toward the door. But before he had gone half a dozen paces, she was by his side.

"Charlie," she said, "I love you. I have always loved you. I loved you when we parted. I have tried to find out where you were. Charlie—let us make it up!"

He stopped and looked down at her. Her eyes were suffused with tears.

"My darling!" he exclaimed, and, clasping her in his arms, imprinted on her fair brow a kiss of reconciliation, which dispersed the gray shadows of the past, with all its black clouds of misery and hopelessness.

And so, hand in hand, they started anew on life's long journey.—Rural Home.

WITHOUT A STAIRWAY.

Curious House that Used to Stand in Washington City.

Years ago a story was told to a naval officer who wanted a house built to please his own taste in every detail. He drew the plans himself, placed them in the hands of a builder and instructed him to see that they were carried out in every detail. Then he went to sea for a year's cruise. When he returned home the house had been completed with the utmost regard for the plans and specifications left by the officer. He was taken through the first floor, and expressed the utmost pleasure in everything he saw.

"Now," he said, "we will go upstairs and see the second floor."

"Come right out this way, where we have a ladder," replied the builder.

The seafaring man was astonished. He had planned the house with the greatest care, but forgot to provide for a stairway.

The story of the naval officer was never had a certificate of genuineness attached to it. But an actual case in which a house has been built without a stairway is on record in this city. It finally became the home of the late John Boyle, who was for many years chief clerk of the Navy Department, and died in 1854, leaving a very large estate. The house in question stood until ten years ago on the site now occupied by a brewery below the naval observatory. It was a preposterous old mansion, located in what was a very stately section during the days of the elder John Boyle, who came to this country in the early days of the nineteenth century. The record is not as clear as to why the house was constructed without a stairway, but there is no doubt about the fact. Eventually, and before it was purchased by Mr. Boyle, a stairway was added to it by a side construction in such form that to the casual observer there was nothing to indicate that the entire structure had not been put up at the same time. Mr. Boyle had many descendants in this city, and they often refer to the house built without any means for ascending to the upper floors except by the use of a ladder.—Washington Star.

Foolish as Well as Criminal.

"In America," said the traveler, "it is considered wrong to have more than one wife."

"It is not merely wrong," answered the Sultan, as he glanced apprehensively at the harem, "it's foolish!"—Washington Star.

Sunshine has no terrors for the girl with a \$25 parasol.



Opinions of Great Papers on Important Subjects.

Age of Retirement.
We live rapidly in the telephonic age. It has been truthfully said that we can crowd much more work into the day than our most industrious forbears did. Invention has given us many hands. Time and space have been conquered, so that the modern man of 60 has accomplished infinitely more than the man who lived to the patriarchal age, and, from this point of view, has earned the rest which his grandfather would not have dreamed of enjoying at threescore. Whether this be so or not, many of the finest achievements in business, statesmanship, literature, in all activities, have been wrought by men long past 60. No strong man will accept 60 as the arbitrary limit of his ambition and working ability.

Writers who have discoursed most knowingly on the obligation of the aged to leave the active scene have not undertaken to fix the year for retirement. The youth who is anxious to push his way into the working world thinks that a man is old at 40 and should be preparing to go on the retired list. In the fierce competitions of modern life it is probable that the age of retirement is gradually falling. The theory is worth the investigation of the curious statistician. Asked when he considered a man to be in the prime of life, Palmerston replied: "Seventy-nine, but as I have entered my eighty-third year, perhaps I am myself a little past it." Such is the view of old men on this delicate subject.

Many men retire too early, and, like the old war horse, yearn for the march and the battle. The habit of work holds us to the accustomed cares and tasks. This explains why the great lawyer or the multi-millionaire merchant remains at his post long after his prime. The powers of men whose lives have been very active are likely to decline rapidly in retirement, the result of idleness and ennui.

"Nothing is so injurious as unoccupied time. The human heart is like a millstone; if you put wheat under it, it grinds the wheat into flour; if you put no wheat it grinds on, but then 'tis itself it wears away."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Mistakes in Life.

ONE of the most unprofitable ways of spending time is the practice, to which many persons are addicted, of brooding over the mistakes one has made in life, and thinking what he might have been or achieved if he had not done, at certain times, just what he did do. Almost every unsuccessful man, in looking over his past career, is inclined to think that it would have been wholly different but for certain slips and blunders—certain hasty, ill-considered acts into which he was betrayed almost unconsciously and without a suspicion of their consequences.

As he thinks of all the good things of this world—honor, position, power and influence—of which he has been deprived in some mysterious, inexplicable way, he has no patience with himself, and, as it is painful and humiliating to dwell long upon one's own follies, it is fortunate if he does not implicate others—friends and relatives.—In his disappointments. Perhaps, as education has never been free from mistakes—mistakes, indeed, of every kind—he imputes the blame to his early training, in which habits of thoroughness and accuracy, or, again, of self-reliance and independence of thought, may not have been implanted. Perhaps a calling was chosen for him by his parents, without regard to his peculiar talents or tastes and preferences; or, if he was allowed to choose for himself, it was when his judgment was immature and unfit for the responsibility. The result was that the square man got into the round hole, or the triangular man into the square hole, or the round man squeezed himself into the triangular hole.

Now, the fact is that, in all these mishaps, there is nothing exceptional. They are just what befall—all, or in part—every man who is born in a civilized country. No circumstances under which any man has been born and fitted for a career have been entirely happy. . . . In view of these considerations, it has been justly said that to see a man, pookily on hand, on a wet day, dashing at the coals, and moodily counting the world's mistakes against him, is neither a dignified nor engaging spectacle; and our sympathy flags with the growing conviction that people are

EXPLORING THE NIGER.

In connection with certain French military maneuvers in the Sudan the question was raised not long ago of the practicability of revictualing an army in the region south of the Sahara by means of the Niger. Theorists disagreed. Lieutenant Hourst, who had come down the river, said it could not be done. Captain Toutee, who had gone up, said it could. There was but one way to settle the dispute. Captain Lenfant was ordered to take ten thousand boxes of provisions and two thousand of equipment to the mouth of the Niger, load the material into bateaux, deliver seventy tons of supplies on the bank at Niame, whence it would be borne overland to Colonel Peroz at Lake Tchad, and with the remainder to revictual all posts along the river from Say to Assongo, the latter about two thousand miles up and above the last important rapid.

For this tremendous task Captain Lenfant was assigned two lieutenants and about forty negroes, but was able to hire natives at necessary points en route. He was required to fortify a base of operations at Arenberg.

What the intrepid soldier undertook when, with twenty bateaux, he began the ascent of the river, can best be understood when one realizes that the Niger for a thousand miles falls over rapid after rapid. Its waters are torn to seas of foam by innumerable rocks, and the channel is often lost among dividing islands. Many of these rapids are in deep gorges, and in some of them the river falls one hundred times as rapidly as the Mississippi in its usual flow.

Starting up stream at low water, when the rapids are at their worst, Captain Lenfant urged his boats forward with oars and sails and setting poles. Guided by negroes who proved themselves trustworthy, competent, and at times even heroic, and aided

constantly apt to attribute a state of things to one particular condition or mischance, which, sooner or later, must have happened from some inherent weakness and openness to attack. It may be noted that where men themselves attribute ill success or mischance to separate distinct mistakes—as, for instance, to the choice of a certain adviser, or the engaging in some special speculation—those who have to observe them trace all to character. They see that if failure had not come at such a juncture, it must have come at some other from certain flaws in the man's nature—that mistakes simply mark occasions when he was tested. We see in a career a hundred chances thrown away and wasted, not all from accident, though the actor looking back, does not know why he chose the wrong—he being the last to remember that a crisis is the occasion for hidden faults and predominating influences to declare themselves, so that his mistakes were, in a manner, inevitable.—William Mathews, in Success.

On the Use of the Imagination.

IN a practical age the imagination is apt to get less than its due. We want naked facts, or we think we do, and imaginative people insist upon clothing them in gay apparel; consequently whenever we lose sight of a fact we suspect the imagination of having run off with it, and raise the hue and cry with a fine indignation against the deceiver. Yet to the art of living, as to every subordinate art, imagination is the one indispensable quality. For lack of it we fall not merely in sympathy and courtesy, in toleration, in all the minor graces, but even in actual truthfulness of thought and demeanor. So far is it from reality to consider imagination as the enemy of fact, that without it no fact can be properly apprehended, much less shared with our neighbors. The greatest fact of social life is the fact that we are all different, and it follows from this that without the power to picture a different mind from our own we are incapable of communicating the simplest feeling. . . . If you define imagination as the faculty of seeing what is not there, you may take away its character without contradiction; but this is the perverse description of statisticians; the poet that lives in each of us knows better. . . . And if we come down to the amenities, the small change of life, the imagination calls to us ceaselessly for employment. Formal courtesies are base money, passed about among stupid people only until they are found out; the courtesies that will stand every test, and pass current in all emergencies, must be the fruits of a genuine traffic between mind and mind, in which every interest is active and every want is taken into account. And this can only be got by sending the imagination on its travels for us.—London Guardian.

The Chief Language.

WITH the increasing intercourse of the nations the old question of a universal language comes up—at least in the German mind—affording a topic of discussion. The tendency toward a common tongue is and has been for years most strongly marked by the spread of the English language. Mullhall's statistics of a dozen years old (being the latest available) show the spread of languages for the first ninety years of the last century. At the beginning of the century the languages of Europe were spoken by 161,000,000 people. In 1890 they were spoken by 401,000,000, an increase of nearly 150 per cent. The four principal languages in 1891 were French, Russian, German and Spanish. The French amounted to 18.4 per cent and the Spanish to 16.2. English-speaking peoples amounted to only 12.7. But in 1890 the standing was:

English, 27.7 per cent; Russian and German, each 18.7 per cent; French, 12.7 per cent; Spanish, 10.7 per cent, and the remainder divided between Italian and Portuguese. The number of English-speaking people had grown from 20,520,000 to 111,100,000, German and Russian-speaking people from about 30,000,000 to 75,000,000 each, and French-speaking people from 31,450,000 to 51,200,000.

The English language had risen from fifth to first place, and was spoken by at least 50 per cent more people than any other European tongue. Of the increase of about 91,000,000 English-speaking people, about 70,000,000 were in the United States.—Indianapolis News.

turesque half-timbered house, and many a noted highwayman has paraded its hospitality. The grand father of the present proprietor was quite a noted character, having vanquished several notorious highwaymen on Finchley Common. It is on record that he once had an encounter with Dick Turpin.

Round and about London and its ever extending suburbs there may still be seen inns and taverns of great age and interesting associations.

The Angel Inn, Highgate hill, dates back to the time of the Reformation. Originally it was called the Salvation Inn. It is built entirely of wood.

Another famous inn is the Bald-faced Stag, at Edgeware. Nobody knows when it was originally built, and it would seem as though each successive proprietor has endeavored to place his mark on its architectural aspect, for many parts of it have evidently at different times been rebuilt. In the stables, it is alleged, Dick Turpin had his horse's shoes turned, so as to make his pursuers imagine he had gone in an opposite direction.

Among the very oldest of suburban London inns are the Plough, at Kingsbury Green, and the King James and Tinker Inn, at Enfield. The first is said to be 850 years old, and the latter was reputed to have been first built as an inn and under another name 902 years ago.

Its present name is derived from an encounter which King James I. is said to have had with a tinker at the door of the inn. The tinker's conversation so pleased the king that he made the mender of kettles "a knight, with five hundred a year," the records of Enfield inform us.—London Daily Mail.

Made No Big Renée.

"I suppose Lizzie Oletimer is glad it is leap year," said the soft-spoken Heloise.

"I don't suppose it makes much difference to her," replied the mellow-toned Irene. "She has been jumping at every chance she saw for fifteen years."—Judge.

ANCIENT ENGLISH INNS.

Some Have Been in Existence for Nearly a Thousand Years.

Somehow one always hears with regard to one of England's famous old inns—grown, ivy-clad inns is about to be demolished. The Old King of Prussia hostelry is the latest to pass into the housebreaker's hands. This old inn is in Finchley, and from 1757, when the place was built, until the present day the license has been in the keeping of one family—perhaps a record in the licensing annals of England.

The Old King of Prussia is a pic-