A LITTLE WORLD OF MATRIMONY.

BY HOWARD FIELDING.

When Mr. Frost came to the portal of the Ann street bank building wherein his offices were located, he observed that some workmen were repairing the roof of the vestibule. It is a unique structure, unlike anything else in New York! Mr. Frost, being an architect, was peculiarly sensible of its absurdity. It looked to him as if the builders had tried to carry a classic marble tomb into the modern structure and had got stuck with it half way through the front door.

Considering the weight of the slabs which formed the main part of the vestibule's roof, Mr. Frost was of the opinion that they ought not to be disturbed while people were passing in and out beneath. This opinion, however, was entirely professional. Personally he did not care whether the laborers did or did not drop 500 pounds of marble on his head, whence we conclude that Mr. Frost was not happy.

Really he had stood it about as long as he could. The trouble did not seem to be that he had lost the girl, but that he could not stop thinking about her. When their engagement was broken, he was able to say to himself that the act was wise; that she would be happier as the wife of somebody else and he as the husband of nobody at all. Of course Miss Elton was a very attractive girl, with a face that simply wouldn't get out of a fellow's mind and a lot of the prettiest ways—Confound it! Why had he ever met her? Why couldn't he stop worrying and get back to work? Must he resort to travel in far lands, as lovers in novels usually do?

On this particular day the desire could be turned by force properly applied. His own position prevented him from putting much power into the effort, for in pushing upon the partition ahead of him he had nothing to brace against except the partition behind him, and such an attempt was like the old joke about the man who tried to lift himself by pulling on his boot straps.

Meanwhile the situation was inexpressibly embarrassing. Dozens of men who knew Mr. Frost and Miss Elton and the main facts of their unfortunate love story were among the bank's customers or held offices in the building. A veritable procession of them might be expected at that hour in the forenoon. Fancy being shut up in a little glass walled cell with the girl to whom you used to be engaged and thus exposed to public view and the ridicule of your friends! It was not to be borne.

In the few seconds that were required for the situation to reveal itself to Frost a crowd had collected. It was still possible to pass in and out of the building, for on each side of the "revolver" there was an ordinary door, but most people seemed to prefer to halt and view the spectacle. Frost saw the uniformed watchman of the building, a gigantic and impressive creature, push his way through the throng within and apply his strength to the door. It did not move the sixteenth part of an inch. Frost shouted to him to get help from the workmen who were clambering down from the vestibule's roof, and the watchman replied reassuringly that it would be all right in half a minute.

Evidently relief must come from without. It remained for those within to summon up their patience. Frost was a young man of remarkable self control.

"This must be very annoying to you," he said, "but of course it can't last long. I think we should make the best of it, and that suggests the idea that you would better sit down."

He turned his dress suit case over on end and placed it so that she could have the end wall of the cell for a back.

"Thank you," said she. "I shall not be so conspicuous if I sit down. But I'm afraid the door will begin to turn."

"And I'm afraid that it won't," he rejoined, laughing gently. "At any rate it will hit me first, and I will give you warning. Ah, here comes Paulsen!"

Paulsen was the chief machinist employed in the building. He went right to work as if he thought that two minutes' time would be enough to settle the affair. But the minutes passed, and the door was immovable.

In the segment opposite the one in which Mr. Frost and Miss Elton were immured an elderly gentleman of rather elegant appearance had been caught. His position was in all respects similar to theirs. He was taking matters very coolly, leaning against one of the partitions and smoking a cigar.

"Our neighbor is bearing it well," said Frost, with the amiable intention of diverting his companion's thoughts.

"He has the advantage of being alone," replied Miss Elton.

She had not meant to say anything disagreeable. Naturally she compared the man in the one compartment with the man in the other. But the remark was susceptible of being taken another way. It cut Frost's heart right in two.

"You are ungrateful to Providence," said he gently. "Think of the extreme brevity of our present association and of the much longer one that you have escaped."

Forgetting that she had been the original aggressor, Miss Elton proceeded to get even with Frost for reverting to an unpleasant topic.

"As you imply," said she, "this experience is comparable to matrimony. Here we are shut up together in a cage, each longing to get away and yet incapable of doing so."

"And Paulson, who typifies the divorce court, is so dreadfully slow," rejoined Frost.

"These glass walls," said the girl, continuing the allegory, "are like the publicity of marriage. Married people are forever in the sight of all the world, and each must in effect declare at all times, 'This is the best partner I could get.'"

"As to that," responded Frost, "the remedy is to make a choice of which one can never be ashamed. I did so."

"Upon my word," said she, "you said nothing so polite as that in the old days!"

"I thought you would like something of the kind," he replied, "and I tried very hard. People who are forced to be together should strive to be agreeable. That is, I fancy, the great and open secret of happiness in marriage."

"No one is so disagreeable," said she, "as the man who strains his naturally unamiable nature in the effort to be so and then immediately demands credit for it. That, I should suppose, would be the heaviest of a wife's burdens. Her husband is a bear—a polar bear, fierce and cold. Once in awhile he pulls in his claws and looks pleasant for about two minutes, and for the next hour, or week perhaps, he is always saying how hard he tried to please his wife."

"Would you like me to hurry Paulsen?" he asked.

"He represents the divorce court, doesn't he?" said she. "Yes; by all means appeal to him. There is an evident case here—of incompatibility of temper."

Frost called to Paulsen, and the machinist came close to the prison wall.

"The trouble is not with the door," he said; "it is on top. The whole thing is cramped."

The roof of the vestibule had settled, perhaps as the result of some mismanagement of the repairs, and one of the supports was pressing down upon the door in such a way as to hold its four flanges immovable. Possibly the jar of the door's striking Frost's heel might have furnished the last pound of power that precipitated the catastrophe, or it might have been fate that timed it so nicely.

"The court," said Frost, "decides that we have not been here long enough to gain a residence. Action on your petition is therefore postponed."

"And meanwhile," she replied, "all our friends know that we are anxious to part and cannot. There's Harry Windom grinning through the glass, and he'll tell everybody. And, oh, there's uncle! Poor fellow, how sorry he will be for me!"

"That our friends should be amused and our near relatives grieved," said Frost, "is the inevitable result of these entanglements. However, let us be consoled. Your uncle will spend large sums to get us out of this."

"It will get into the papers!" she exclaimed. "I see a man writing something in a notebook."

"There'll be an artist here presently," said Frost. "I wonder if they can photograph us through this glass."

They both laughed at the preposterous notion of their pictures being together in the afternoon papers. Their merriment was interrupted by an outburst from the other cell. The third prisoner was making a rumpus. His patience had given out. His cigar was smoked up, and, besides, he had gathered from Paulsen's statement that the situation was not without peril. He was threatening damage suits and personal violence.

Miss Elton caught some words of his which let her know the real cause of the trouble, and it frightened her. Singularly enough, she clasped Frost's hand with an impulsive grasp.

"Is it true," she cried, "that something is wrong with the roof over us?"

"It is," said he, "but there is no real danger. If there were, they would break down the doors and release us."

He did not let her hand get away while he was speaking, and, indeed, she made no effort to withdraw it. Suddenly there were tears in her eyes.

"I am glad you are here!" she cried. "Of course I would not wish you to be in danger, but I should be so frightened if I were alone."

"I think that we have been of some use to each other," he replied. "Even our quarrels have helped to pass away the time. Our friend in the other cage, who typifies the bachelor, began the ordeal more calmly than we did, but he has not held out as well. His interest is selfish, and that is the worst kind of unhappiness."

"Be careful, Jack," she whispered. "You are leading our little allegory to a strange conclusion."

"Let it lead where it will," he replied. "The fact is that all life is an ordeal which two can bear better than one."

She looked serious for a moment and then laughed happily, like a child.

"Tell Paulsen that I don't want to get out," said she. "The petition is withdrawn. You're a good fellow, Jack, and the harder the situation the better fellow you are. It is worth while to go through troubles for the sake of going through them with you."

Half an hour later, when the door decided to move, these two did not take advantage of their freedom. They went up to Grace's home and told her mother that they had made it all up. And while they told the story they were just as close together as in the narrow cell of wood and glass. But they had learned to like it.

"HERE WE ARE SHUT UP TOGETHER IN A CAGE."

overcame him. He wrote a few letters, seized his traveling bag and fled without much idea as to where he was going.

In the lower hall of the building he met Miss Elton. It was what he had long feared, for her uncle was cashier of the bank, and she had to come down to see him often on errands for her mother.

Of course he couldn't look at her. Neither could she look at him. And that is why they both tried to get out first and both came together with a jolt in one of the compartments of the rapidly revolving door.

Frost perceived the catastrophe the tenth of a second too late. He stopped suddenly in the wild hope that he could back out. The door bumped against his heels with tremendous force, and he lurched forward against Miss Elton in a most embarrassing way. Babbling the most abject apologies, he thrust out a hand ahead of Miss Elton and tried to push the door around. It did not move. He threw his weight against the leaf behind him, but it was as immovable as an iron wall.

"Why, what's the matter with the thing?" he exclaimed.

"It's stuck," replied the girl feebly.

That was the truth certainly. Frost could not move it either way. Their segment was completely closed by one of the curved walls between which the door revolved. They were imprisoned in a space just big enough to hold them.

Frost's first idea was that the shock of the door had disarranged its mechanism. He had never taken the trouble to find out just how these contrivances were built, but he knew that the revolving partitions could be folded together handily; so there was good prospect of immediate release.

Indeed it was probable that the door

LED INTO A TRAP.

Boers Capture Two British Regiments at Ladysmith.

SURROUND THEM IN HILLS.

Royal Irish Fusileers and Gloucestershire Regiments Surrender.

LOSSES REACH NEARLY 2,000.

Sixty-One Officers In the Detachment Captured by the Boers—News of the Disaster Casts the Whole Country Into Gloom. Worst Defeat for a Hundred Years.

LONDON, Nov. 1.—There was a continuous stream of callers at the war office until a late hour, everybody anxiously inquiring regarding Monday's casualties, but the war office declared nothing had been received since General White's dispatch conveying the information of the capitulation of the Royal Irish Fusileers and the Gloucester regiment. This delay in getting further intelligence is attributed in part to the breaking down of the east coast cable, but it stands to reason that the war office must be possessed of further news which it is not thought advisable to publish as yet. The disaster has caused a feeling akin to consternation, and in Gloucestershire and the north of Ireland, where the regiments were recruited, the blackest gloom prevails, families awaiting with beating hearts the news. Many homes are already in mourning in consequence of losses sustained by these regiments in previous engagements.

Public anxiety was caused by a special dispatch from Ladysmith, published in the late editions to the effect that before darkness last night the Boers occupied the position held by their heavy artillery which General White had silenced by the naval brigade and had opened fire again.

The dispatch further says: "The enemy are again closing in and the situation is one of grave anxiety. Beyond doubt the Boer retirement Monday was a ruse to draw General White into the hilly country and away from the British camp."

This last sentence is significant and confirms the opinion of military experts that General White is allowing himself to be outgeneraled by Commandant General Joubert.

No exact report of losses has yet been made public, but the best estimate is that 1,460 to 1,840 men have been captured or killed. The officers with the lost detachment numbered 61. White's report shows 42 of these prisoners. The inference drawn here is that the others have been killed.

From the scanty advices received it seems certain that the disaster was a simple repetition of the battle of Majuba hill, though on a larger scale. The two regiments were allowed to march into a trap set for them by the Boers. It is simply a case of the Boer spider and the guileless British fly. In fact, the whole engagement of Monday seems to have been brought on by Commandant General Joubert, who conceived a giant trap, out of which, as the official dispatch shows, Sir George only escaped with difficulty. General White had the idea of driving the Boers from the hill, seven miles out, which General Joubert made a show of fortifying on Sunday.

The Boer forces left a force sufficient to draw General White on, while, with the remainder of the Boers, he moved stealthily around the British right, to deliver a flank attack and to endeavor to cut off General White from Ladysmith. The British commander succeeded in beating off the attack, but only with great difficulty, and during the movement his troops suffered from a flanking fire.

Harsh things are said in military circles of the tactics which have made possible the ambush of the Eighteenth Hussars at Glencoe and now the loss of two fine regiments.

It is feared that Sir George White is no match for the Boers, insofar as cunning tactics are concerned, and it is pointed out that if the British commanders continue to lead their men into obvious traps, further disasters must be looked for.

About 6,000 fresh troops will arrive at Cape Town on Sunday next from England and be available to reinforce General White. Transports will arrive there daily after Sunday, until by the end of next week 28,000 troops will have been landed in South Africa. These troops are intended for General Buller's army, but they will undoubtedly be disptached to Natal if the situation there should become perilous. The British army will eventually reach the huge total of 89,634, of which 69,634 will be regulars and the other 20,000 miscellaneous, but excellent colonial troops.

Worst Defeat for a Hundred Years.

LONDON, Nov. 1.—An ominous curtain has again descended on affairs in Natal. No dispatch except the official telegrams of Sir George Stewart White has thus far been permitted to mention the disaster and no telegram from Ladysmith has been received in London since the advices of the British commander. This gives rise to the belief that communication has been cut, in which event some time must elapse before details regarding British losses are received.

If the war office officials have received information on this point they have refrained from publishing it. General White's estimate that the British losses were about 90 is evidently quite separate from the probable losses in killed and wounded among the captured battalions. On this point there is the greatest suspense among the relatives of the prisoners. It is supposed the stampeding mules carried away the reserves of ammunition and that the troops capitulated after firing the rounds each man carried. In the absence of news, the morning papers are reduced to speculation as to how the disaster occurred. The general opinion is that a mounted cavalry was the real reason of the fall into the trap. Apparently there was no cavalry to watch over the safety of the missing column.

The Morning Post pointing out how near the British were to a "still greater disaster," says: "In capturing the column the Boers also had the Devonshire regiment practically at their mercy and a little more daring would have made a bad business much worse, and seeing that a force strong enough to sweep up a couple of infantry battalions could have put itself practically between General White and his camp we may be very thankful that things today are not more serious than they are. The lesson has been severe. It is humiliating to find a nation of farmers beating soldiers at their own game, but the sooner a proper respect is had for Boer strategy and tactics the better for our fortunes in Natal."

This sobering note is struck by all the morning papers today, together with expressions of a determination to carry the matter through at whatever cost. The Daily Chronicle, referring editorially to the situation, says:

"In view of the patent failure of the campaign and the terrible humiliation of the British army we can only vaguely hope that Sir George White in the hard days that lay before him may be able to hold Ladysmith. Retreat would be an undertaking which the imagination fails to grasp. If this war is to be a war of vengeance we shall have to wipe out a disaster before which the memory of Majuba fades away. The empire is face to face with a repulse comparable only to the surrender of Burgoyne to the embattled farmers of our American colonies."

HEAVY LOSS ALONG COAST.

Much Property Destroyed at Resorts Near Wilmington, N. C.

WILMINGTON, N. C., Nov. 1.—Authoritative reports from Wrightsville and Carolina Beach says the northeaster reached the height of its fury in that vicinity at 4 a. m. Much property was destroyed but no loss of life has been reported. At Wrightsville there are 60 odd cottages and of this number 15 are a total loss and the others badly damaged. The loss is estimated at $25,000. The trestle of the Wilmington Sea Coast railroad and track aggregating in extent about three miles is a wreck and the damage is estimated at $50,000. At Wrightsville Sound considerable damage was done and this loss is estimated at several thousand.

Torpedo Boat Shubrick Launched.

RICHMOND, Va., Nov. 1.—The torpedo boat Shubrick was launched here yesterday in the presence of President McKinley, many members of his cabinet, Governor Tyler of Virginia and an immense outpouring of people. The demonstration was marred in some of its features by a heavy rainstorm. The civic carnival parade had to be abandoned owing to the weather and the decorations of the buildings presented a bedraggled and woe-begone appearance. But the people, residents as well as visitors from other Virginia cities and points outside the state, who came to witness the launching and see the president, were enthusiastic.

Colombian Rebels Defeated.

COLON, Colombia, Nov. 1.—A report has reached here that on Oct. 28 two armed government steamers destroyed seven insurgent vessels, one of the latter sinking, with, it is rumored, 200 soldiers. The government troops were victorious in a pitched battle with the insurgents near Bucaramanga. The insurgent leader Uribe was killed and the insurgent leader Ruiz taken prisoner. It is now believed that the revolution is ending.

Decides Against Labor Unions.

PITTSBURG, Nov. 1.—An important decision was handed down by Judge White of the county courts against labor unions. The case was one which caused a great deal of comment in labor circles all over the country. C. L. Flaccus, a glass manufacturer, brought suit against the Glass Workers' union to prevent them from inducing the apprentices of the plaintiff to join the union. The decision holds that the plaintiff has a right to operate his factory independent of the union and that the defendants have no right to persuade his apprentices to become members of their organization.

DRESS AND FASHION.

PRESENT MODES AND INTIMATIONS OF THINGS TO COME.

A Fancy For Plaits and Braid In Long Lines—Automobile Red and Gay Mixtures of Color to Be Used—A Rumor of Angles Skirts.

A novelty finding favor among some of the modistes is the use of small box plaits laid from top to edge of a tunic arrangement. This is not necessarily cut on princess in actual fact, though the general appearance leads to that suggestion. It is strikingly graceful and uncommon, however.

The fancy for straight lines is also well shown in the smart autumn suit of the first illustration. This is in the new shade of cloth, which will be

A SMART AUTUMN SUIT.

much adopted for autumn and winter wear, being a red shade of mulberry and called automobile. The braided design is of plain black plaited braid, having a rather satin effect in places. The stitched revers, dull metal buttons and general finishings give this suit a most charming effect, while the long lines tend to make it a becoming style to any figure inclined at all to embonpoint.

The jacket can be made smaller as a bodice for indoor wear and the collar lined with velvet in place of the fur which obtains on the outdoor coat.

The second cut presents a charming decolletage for a young lady. It would account for itself well in any light tint, but is especially successful in white, with shoulder strap and bow of sapphire blue velvet, a pale shade of blue satin ribbon threading the bouillonnees at the top beneath the frill. Either a sapphire or turquoise buckle should be worn at the waist.

While the chic black gown is still well liked and grays and browns are in high vogue the prospect of dull

THE NEWEST DECOLLETAGE.

days to come encourages toward gayness of toilet. The tailors are apparently dominated by the most cheerful of sentiments, for their tweeds combine startling and daring color contrasts. There are blues mixed with heliotropes and further confounded by splashes of red, green and brown flecked with orange, and curiously clever and quite delightful gray mixtures that if caught in one light reveal flecks of blue, in another of mauve and perhaps in yet a third a glimpse of yellow. The tailor world evidences no signs of erring on the side of dull monotony.

Spots, it is said, will be everywhere, and tunics or polonaises of pastel cloth spotted with black velvet will fall over plain cloth skirts that are to be decked with flounces cut bias, which are to replace the shaped flounce so long used. Velvet, it may be added in passing, is expected to be greatly employed.

It is authoritatively stated that one of the great Paris designers will encourage skirts for the coming season to be much less tight. The necessary graceful curve of the figure will be delineated by a well shaped skirt, but in many cases a wide box plait will appear down the back, giving the flat effect, yet a more graceful looseness, expanding as the figure walks.

A late thing is to have tailor made dresses of silk, the silk used being of the soft, dull kind or faille.