

MODERN MARRIAGES.

Love! Love! Love! what times were those
Long ere the age of belles and beaux,
And Brussels lace and silken hose,
When in the green Arcadian close,
You married Fayes under the trees,
With roses as the bedding!
How to sit, and hand to hand,
You followed Nature's sweet demand—
Roaming loving through the land—
Nor sighed for a diamond wedding.

So have we read, in classic Ovid,
How Hero watched for her beloved,
Impass'd ned youth, Leander;
She was the fairest of the fair;
And wrap him round in his golden hair,
When the last load'd golden and rare,
With nothing to eat and nothing to wear.
And wot' r than any gander:
For Love was Love, and better than money—
The sly thief, the sweater the hon y—
And kissing was close, all the world over,
Wherever Cupid might wander!

So thousands of years have come and gone,
And still the moon is shifting on.
See! Hymn's in this land of the West.
And little is in this land of the West.
Most couples in love have thought it best
To follow the ancient way of the re't,
And quietly get united.

But now, True Love, you're growing old—
Brought and sold with silver and gold.
Like a house, or a horse and carriage!
Midnight talks,
Moonlight walks.

The glimmering eye and the sweethearts sigh,
The shadowy hand with no one by,
I do not wish to disparage;
But every kiss

Has a price for its bliss,
In the mod. rate of the place.
And the world is not complete
Till the high contracting parties meet
Before the altar of Mammon.

And the bride must be led to a silver bower,
Where pearls and rubies fall in a shower
That would frig. Jup. Ter Ammon.

—E. C. Stedman.

A WITLESS THING.

"A document in madness; thoughts and remembrances fitted." —Hamlet, act iv., scene 5.

"Now remember, Lord Grayton," said the Doctor, solemnly, "all I told you.

You are very welcome to come to our ball, though, as a rule, we only ask a certain set of wise men and maidens who know our ways and their ways.

Still, you are good-looking, humorous, and cheery, and if you are sensible you can enjoy yourself, and, maybe, do them a world of good. I believe in electricity as a curative agent—not the quack nonsense of belts and chains and music boxes, that only shake the nerve centers, but the real electricity of animal spirits, the tonic of good health."

"I shall do exactly as I am bid," said Lord Grayton, a handsome, florid, muscular young man, strong as a horse, buoyant as a balloon, just back after a self-imposed exile of five years in India with the big game; "but tell me of all these confounded cautions again. I did a lot of dancing of various kinds years ago, before I went after the tigers!" and he laughed as mingled memories of Mayfair and the Lotus club swam back to him—"and I've tried both the Corroboree and the Salonga; but pon honor I never danced with a lunatic girl yet."

"Are you quite sure of that?" said the Doctor, grimly; "they are to be met with outside Copswood, I can tell you. However, listen; the rule is simple. Be civil and don't contradict. If old Crackton asks you to play chess, play. He's a good player, and will beat you fairly if he can; if he can't he'll make a false move and call 'checkmate,' and then you must resign. If poor Snobby thinks you are the Prince, and 'Sirs' you all over the place, and throws out hints about being asked to Sandringham; if you are asked to listen to the chiming clock in Baker's interiors, or to avoid some one else, because he's glass and might break, you must do your best to be courteous to them all, and on no account laugh at their fanacies."

"Sounds rather jumpy. And the ladies?"

"I'll see to that, and introduce you to the nicest, and tell you what to avoid speaking about; and men will make the talking for themselves, the women don't talk much."

"Sign of insanity, I suppose. And what am I to talk about?"

"Everything save some one thing—the Empress of Austria, or the stage, or white roses, or Mr. Mullock, or black stockings. I'll give you the cue—never fear; only it may happen that one of them will ask you to dance, and then you must steer as best you can—talk society or art on chance. My own girls and their friends get on famously with the male patients, and you must do your best. Come, you are going to be our best tonic to-night, and you must be off and dress; 9 sharp, mind, as they all go to bed at midnight."

"Queer thing this," soliloquized Grayton, as he completed an elaborate dressing, "beginning my first season after five years by dancing with a lot of lunatics. Hope they won't wear straw in their hair; if they do I shall bolt to the Congletons' dance."

He had many strange adventures that evening as he strolled about the pretty ball-room at the Copswood private asylum. He was duly defeated at chess by the venerable Crackton, who deliberately slid back a captured queen on the board, and performed prodigies of valor with her. He sympathized with the gentleman who had swallowed a crocodile, and he noticed the pale, cadaverous man who amused himself by counting the lights on each side of the room and singing softly to himself, "Sorry I can't admit it, sorry I can't admit it!" He had been an acrostic editor once upon a time. He noticed the fussy little man with the pale blue-shaven face, who wanted to stage-manage the sixteen lancers, and who piteously entreated the dancers "to go that all over again, please, and try to get it crispier;" and the erratic journalist, who wrote paragraphs on his shirt-cuffs, and many other folks that passed by in the most pageant of unsettled reasons.

"These's King Lear," whispered the Doctor, as "a very foolish, fond old man, four score and upward," passed them, muttering of "Brighton A's," "you know who he was?" and he whispered a name in Grayton's ear that made the nobleman whistle softly.

"And are there any Ophelias, 'whose young maid's wits should be as mortal as an old man's life?'" asked Grayton, showing that he knew his Shakespeare as well as the Doctor.

"Yes, but we keep their secret. Now go and dance," and the Doctor took King Lear off for a cup of coffee.

It was a sad, weird sight altogether, and, as Grayton watched it, it reminded him of Kahlbach's "Dance of

Death," and he felt oddly morbid as he thought of his own lonely life. He had once loved and given his heart to a woman whom he had both idealized and idolized; he had youth, brains, and with her he felt he could conquer the world. It was an old story; she turned out to be as loveless as she was lovely, and so he took to the tigers. He had got over it all now, but he shuddered as he remembered the fret of it all, and thought how near madness he had been driven when he heard of her ultimate fate and where her life had drifted to. So there where Ophelia's here! More like Audreys, he thought, as he watched some rather uncouth gamboling in a corner. His eyes wandered round the room and rested on a face.

It was an exquisite oval face, somewhat sad and wistful in expression, of that rare, delicate olive color one sees in the South, with the skin of so fine a texture that the red flush springs up through the vein-tracery at a moment's excitement; the large brown eyes were soft and dreamy, the chiseled mouth was half parted, and the dark-brown hair, looking black as night, was worn Greek fashion close to the head, sweeping in undulating lines past the tiny rose-tipped ears. She was seated on a low sofa, carelessly clasping one knee with both hands. She wore a simple white frock, just mysteriously frilled around the little white column of a throat, and a great black-red rose nestled in her breast. One little high-arched foot, in peach-colored netted silk, kept swinging to the music. No one seemed to talk to her except the Doctor, who smiled pleasantly as she passed, and said something to which she answered with a nod.

"Ophelia at last," said Grayton to himself; and in melancholy vein he wished he were Hamlet, and could lie at her feet and watch the play.

"Poor Ophelia! divided from herself and her fair judgment!" (the quotation was irresistible). "I wonder what sent her here—some brute of a man, or a soldier-lover killed at Kassassin. Gracious! I hope this terrible Meg Merriiles is not going to ask me to dance!" and he moved away as he saw a wild-eyed woman bearing down upon him, to a seat somewhere near the pale girl with the black-red rose.

For a time he watched her; then he tried to magnetize her. At last their eyes met; he stared her full in the face. She never shrank from his look, only a sort of pitying light seemed to glow in the sorrowful eyes. A moment passed, and then she arose quietly and with perfectly self-possessed grace walked over to him—to his intense astonishment sat down quietly by his side, and said, in a soft, musical voice:

"You seem sad to-night; I am sorry."

For a moment he was tongue-tied; then he recollected his instructions and pulled himself together.

"Well, I think I was sad because you were looking sad."

"Was I? I suppose I always do, then. Of course being here naturally makes one feel sad. But we won't talk of that," she added, quickly. "Do you care for dancing? I'll dance with you, if you like."

"Dance! with you?"

"Oh, yes, if you like; many of the others dance, you know."

"How calmly she seems to recognize her sad state!" thought Grayton, as he stood up and passed his arm around poor Ophelia's slender waist, wondering how she would "jig and amble."

They were playing the "Dream Faces," and as they swung in undulated rhythm to the pretty song he felt that few slips of 17 would come up to her.

"That's right," said the Doctor, encouragingly; "set a good example." "Means I'm to be a tonic, I suppose," thought Grayton; so he carried off Ophelia for an ice.

"You dance beautifully," she said. "No, you sit down and I'll get you the ice; there, now, there's a spoon and a wafer; now you feel comfortable, don't you? Isn't that a lovely place?"

"Yes, I'm fond of 'Dream Faces'; the people one meets in dreams are generally vastly nicer than the real folk. I have many dream friends."

"Have you?" she said, looking amused; "tell me of them."

"Well, you know, I think I'm married to a dream-wife—just like Gilbert's Princess Toto, you know, with her dream husband. And she comes to me sometimes and scolds me if I've done anything wrong in the day; and sometimes she's very loving, and sometimes she's cross and doesn't come near me for weeks."

He felt as if he were telling a fairy tale to a child.

"How charming! Do tell me more of her. Is she beautiful? What is she like?"

The fanciful conceit seemed to amuse her; so he went on drawing pretty pictures of an ideal woman; then growing unconsciously eloquent, he burst out, "Ain if one could only meet her alive, what a wife she would make! A very second self, aiding, sympathizing, helping, loving—at once the cheeriest of chums and the most idolized of idols."

She had flushed a little as he spoke, but she went on, "What a pretty picture! Where did you get your beautiful thoughts about marriage?"

"I suppose my dream girl taught me."

"Is she pretty?"

Grayton wondered if deliberate bare-faced compliment would be a good tonic for a lunatic. "Yes, beautiful. She has large brown eyes, wonderful hair, a low voice, an olive oval face, she dances superbly, and she wears a black-red rose in her dress."

Ophelia looked a little frightened.

"Forgive me, I didn't mean to be rude, but she is—really, you are not angry with me?" and he laid his hand gently on hers.

"Oh, no;" then there was a pause.

"Come, and let me show you some pictures; I'm something of an artist myself," and she led him into a long gallery, and talked art so sensibly and sympathetically that here, at all events, he felt there was a very pleasant method in her madness.

"Talking art" is a recognized method of interchanging sympathies.

He was no bad judge of a picture; but he preferred to affect ignorance,

and asked the stupidest questions simply for the pleasure of hearing her talk. There was a kind of innocent dignity about her that fascinated him. She was more like a vestal virgin than a bacchante. So the evening passed all too quickly, till he suddenly bethought himself that there was an important division in the Lords that night, and that he was bound to be a "not content" before the clock struck 11, and after that he was due at Lady Congleton's dance.

"Must you go away?" she said; "why?"

"Well, you see, I'm one of those much-abused people that the Radicals call hereditary legislators, and I am not abolished yet; I must be in our House at 11."

Of course she could not have understood a word he said, for she murmured to herself, "Poor fellow! so young too!"

He rose and held his hand out. "Good night; thank you for a very charming evening."

"Good night," said Ophelia, tenderly.

"I should like a little memory of this meeting; will you give me that rose? I've been longing for it all the evening."

"Of course I will; why didn't you ask for it before?" and she took it from her dress and fastened it in his coat. "I shall see you again; there will be another dance here soon. How is it that I never saw you before at one?"

"This is my first dance here," he said, grinning.

Why it was that Ophelia's eyes suddenly filled with tears he couldn't understand, but she left him with a quiet bow and went back to the dancing room.

"You've been enjoying yourself, I see," said the Doctor, as Grayton came to say good-by; "though I must say it was very selfish of both of you."

"Selfish? why, I did all I could for her, poor, dear girl."

"Poor! why, my dear Lord Grayton, she has six thousand a year of her own!"

"Dear me! and what is done with it?"

"She does what she likes with it; she helps me and Copswood in particular, and she generally does a lot of good to our poor people—picks up some one she takes a fancy to, and cheers him up a bit. She's one of my best tonics, and this is the first time I have noticed that she never danced once with a patient; that was your fault, you know."

"Good gracious! Then she—isn't—a patient herself?"

The Doctor laughed till the tears rolled down his jolly face. Bless my heart, no! That's Lady Mary Pettigrew, daughter of old Lord Polonius, and she's just one of the cleverest and sweetest girls in the world. I thought you knew her."

"Not I! She came over and spoke to me, and—"

"I see it all—took you for a patient! O, this is too lovely!" and the Doctor was positively boisterous in his merriment.

Grayton bolted to the House, and having duly recorded his vote against the bill sent up from the Commons for chloroforming grouse instead of shooting them, betook himself in a strange state of bewilderment to Lady Congleton's. His hostess welcomed him warmly, like the returned prodigal that was, and insisted upon introducing him to some one in whom she seemed to have a special interest.

"Really a delightful girl Lord Grayton, quite after your own heart—devoted to art and philanthropy, you know."

Grayton was too full of thought to protest, so submitted meekly. What were girls to him just then? He was thinking over Copswood as his hostess was off, leaving Grayton staring vaguely at his fascinating lunatic.

"Yes, I'm fond of 'Dream Faces'; the people one meets in dreams are generally vastly nicer than the real folk. I have many dream friends."

"How—how did you get out?" she asked, awkwardly.

"I never was in, Lady Mary; the fact is, I'm afraid there has been a little mistake on both sides. I only found out from the Doctor as I left that you weren't a—"

She put her feathered fan up with a warning "Hush!" then said, "What brought you there?"

"Curiosity; and you?"

"I often go there and try to do some good. I cheer them sometimes; but to-night! O, how wrong and stupid of me!"

There was a little pause as he looked at her with his frank, kindly eyes.

"Let us forget and forgive, Lady Mary; after all, you were very good to poor Hamlet."

"And you were very nice and kind to foolish Ophelia. Listen! there's the 'Dream Faces' again; let us see if we can dance it in our right minds," she said, as she rose with a nervous smile quivering in the corners of her lips.

And it so happened that in a month they both came to their right minds, and the Doctor was at the wedding.—*London World.*

One of the Family.

"Say pard," said an Austin man to a stranger who was shuffling so slowly along the street that his shadow seemed to stick fast to the sidewalk, "don't you come from the West?"

"I reckon you're about right in your calkerations," he drawled.

"I thought so."

"What made you think I hailed from that region?"

"Because I hear that there has been a shower of snails there lately, and I was sure that you must be one of the family."—*Tea: Sittings.*

Spirit.

Spirit is now a very fashionable word. To act with spirit, to speak with spirit, means only to act rashly, and to talk indiscreetly. An able man shows his spirit by gentle words and resolute actions; he is neither hot nor timid.—*Chesterfield.*

He was no bad judge of a picture; but he preferred to affect ignorance,

THE BAD BOY.

"Say, come in here while I give you a piece of advice," said the grocery man to the bad boy, as the youth entered the grocery one cold morning, with an old veteran from the Soldiers' Home, who went up to the coal stove and rubbed his hands, and turning to the old veteran, the grocery man added, "No, sir, you can't have any ping tobacco, unless you have got the money to plank right down on the counter, and I would rather you wouldn't come here to trade any way, because you look hard, and smell frowsy, and my customers don't like to mix up with you." The old veteran warmed his hands and went out, with a tear in his eye, and the grocery man took the bad boy to the back end of the store and said: "You want to let the old soldiers alone. Your pa was in here last night, and he said he was ashamed of you. He said he and your ma were out riding, and he saw you walking up towards the Home with soldiers on each side of you, holding on your arms, and your pa thinks they were drunk. Now, you ought to be ashamed. Let those old soldiers alone. They are a bad lot," and the grocery man acted as though he had been the means of saving the boy from a terrible fate. The boy was so mad