

### BRIDGET'S DECISION.



IM, the postman, there is coming with some word, I hope, for me. That Pat Reilly is returning from his trip across the sea.

Where he went to visit Erin—Emerald Isle beyond the blue? Ere he went he pledged his honor That to me he would be true.

Not a word has Reilly sent me. Months have passed, and I'm so sad;

A tiny message by the cable, Sure would make my heart so glad.

Tim, the postman, wants to wed me, Says he loves me more than life, Any time that I would say so, He would take me for his wife.

Nothing but a note from mother; Indade, I'll no longer wait; I'll accept the faithful postman, And Pat Reilly'll be too late.

Texas Siftings.

### GROPPING IN DARKNESS.

BY JESSIE ETHEL.

A BEAUTIFUL girl of eighteen sat writing a delicately scented note at a table near the open window of the tower room of an antiquated but pretentious mansion, located on the lake shore a few miles from the city of Chicago, and hidden by heavy vines in the garden below a dark-eyed man of sinister face was watching her.

His surveillance was apparently unsuspected, for the maiden seemed absorbed in her task, and her rich color came and went as she read the few lines she had written in a low, shy tone, sweet and mellow as golden beads dropped into a crystal dish.

"My love," it read simply, "our dream is ended! For the last time, meet me at the trysting place—Raven Cliff."

It was directed "Victor," and it was signed "Adrienne." She folded the note over and over, until it was small and compact as a lozenge. Then she took up a piece of narrow silk ribbon, secured it round and round the missive, leaving the long ends free, and went to a wicker cage in which, peering at the bars as if pining and fretting for liberty, was a snow-white dove of perfect plumage.

It fluttered, yet lingered in her grasp as she gently drew it from the cage and attached the note to its neck by securing the ribbon about it. Then she caressed it and set it free, with the sighing words:

"Take a kiss to my own, swift messenger—the last mission of a hopeless love!"

She saw the carrier dove pierce the ether, straight winging its flight into the face of the dazzling sun, watched it a speck beyond thicket and dale, and then, leaning her fair head on the table, wept as if her heart would break.

"Confusion!" A fierce, hissing anathema, ground out by the lurking spy in the shrubbery below. The word seemed to express the pent-up hatred and rage of a baffled, chagrined plotter.

"So this is her means of communicating with the man I hate!" went on the harsh, grinding voice. "Locks and bribed servants do not avail—love laughs at obstacles! Shall I tell her father of this? No, no! I will wait! I will watch! I will learn all! Tonight ends all. With another day, doves, lover, and mansion will be many leagues from Adrienne—and he—revenge ere my plans are consummated."

An hour went by. The girl had not changed her position. Suddenly there was a rustling sound at the window, a soft, cooing note, and a second dove, steel-blue in color, fluttered to her bosom, and her trembling hands unloosed the return message secured at its wing.

With swimming eyes the girl kissed the few brief words that told her that her lover would meet her as desired. Then she placed the dove in its cage and left the room.

The man in the garden smiled a sinister, cruel smile, as he lit a cigar, wandered from the house, crossed a lawn, threaded a narrow, daisy-studded path that led to a bluff overlooking the lake, and, secreting himself amid some bushes, waited, and waited, as might a fowler, sure of his prey and his snare alike.

Dusk came down with slow, trailing garments of gray, sweeping the red from the sky and the gold from the forest aisles. A second form, that of a man graceful as an Apollo, reached the summit of Raven Cliff and lingered there.

Then a quivering form, in light, pretty muslin, came to meet him. The soft caresses were fearful, the tones that spoke tremulous. The cruel eyes of the watcher glowed like lurid flame, as he heard the bold, cheering words of the lover, the desponding accents of the girl.

"No, no, Victor!" she quavered; "better let love die in sadness, grief, hopelessness, than add to it some dreaded token of revenge, that will break my heart. It is useless to appeal to my father; this man Despard has him completely under his influence. He has promised him that I shall wed him, and Despard has induced him

to leave here. Should they go to-night?"

"To-night!" echoed Victor, with a gasp of dismay. "I must know if they do. They shall not bear you away, and I never know to what misery they have condemned you. Promise, if they seek to leave, you will send a message—the carrier-dove?"

"I promise, but of what avail? Would you follow us? Then Despard will do you some deadly injury. As it is, he thirsts for revenge on the man I can never cease to love. Victor! Victor! my heart will break!"

Sighs, kisses, tears, a last "Promise! you will send me the message?" and then the lovers parted, and Despard clenched his teeth venomously.

"Torture!" he groaned out. "Ah, my lady, you shall leave to-night, and you, Victor Dane—look your last on the love you stole from me, for my revenge is very near!"

One hour later, a broken, helpless creature, Adrienne Dane, stole to the tower room. Her face was a pall of despair. She knew the worst.

By specious promises, baneful influence, Despard had induced her father to leave at midnight for his own home in the far West, where troublesome rivals would no longer annoy, and Adrienne would, amid new scenes, forget the "romantic folly" that seemed a bar to a favorable union.

Adrienne appealed to her father vainly. He seemed completely in Despard's power, and carelessly averred that time would bring her to consider a wealthy lover far more preferable than one who had a fortune and a name yet to earn.

Outside, a revolver in his clasp, just beyond the garden wall, stood Despard, his basilisk glance fixed on the startled tower-room.

"If she seeks to send a message to Dane I will prevent it!" he hissed. "It would bring him here, and Dane's whim to remain or treat with him would be fatal to my plans. Ha! she daren't."

Yes, the casement opened. A dove, love-winged, missive-freighted, flew out into the night.

The cruel marksman steadied his wrist. A quick report mingled in echo with a despairing wail at the window; the dove circled, reared, and, limp and disabled, disappeared amid the foliage of a great tree.

"I am revenged!"

The speaker was Despard, and his dark face was aglow with brutal triumph, as he glared down on his second helpless victim of the night.

Two miles across the country he had gone straight from the Dane mansion to the small villa where Victor Dane made his summer home.

Dane was a chemist, high in esteem among scientists, and he had filled up a room, a kind of laboratory, where he worked and experimented with retort, acid and poisons. Here he had received his messages from Adrienne, two small windows looking north just showing the turrets of the Dane mansion.

Lost in a reverie, he had not heard stealthy footsteps on the stairs. The door had opened, and his rival Despard, dealing him a heavy blow, had forced him senseless to the floor. When he awoke to consciousness, Victor found himself in an arm chair, tied to it with strong cords, hand and foot, and Despard glowering wickedly down upon him.

"I said look your last on your love!" he hissed, venomously. "Victor Dane, this night I carry away wife and fortune and you. Ah! I have a slow, pleasant death for you! Gagged, bound, count the minutes as they tick away, and close your eyes to waken no more. I am revenged!"

In mute horror Victor saw the preparations made for his murder. Near by was a large retort that held a deadly, noxious gas. His rival knew of its death-dealing qualities, for he had shut the two windows closely, turned on the nozzle, and the air of the room began to grow dense.

"Half an hour—an hour!" hissed Despard, his face like that of a demon, "and I return to find you dead. I release you, remove your bonds, and when you are discovered people will say that you fell a victim—ha! ha!—to your love for science!"

He left the room as he spoke. Victor Dane, pale as death, tried to force his bonds. They loosened, but, alas! the insidious gas robbed mind and frame of strength. His senses reeled, his brain seemed bursting.

Tap! tap! tap!

At the window a fluttering sound greeted his dull hearing. Oh! would help not come!—the base assassin relented! "Adrienne, my love!" and then—

Tap! tap! tap! Crash!—but the limp, palsied form was motionless.

"Saved!"

With a gasp Victor Dane opened his eyes. That horrible throbbing and choking was gone. The air was still rank and dense, but mingled with it was a current of cool air, pure as crystal, as it fought the vapor with which it mingled.

With a prodigious effort Victor loosened his hands. He was free an instant later. He stared at a shattered pane of glass. He picked up a warm, soft object lying beneath the window. He staggered, it in his hand, to the stairway, to the lighted study, below.

The dove—wounded, it had faltered from the shot of the cruel Despard. Then, winging its flight painfully homeward, it had tapped at its accustomed window, shattered the glass in its frantic efforts to enter, and had saved the life of its master.

"Faithful dove! the message brought at the cost of love!" murmured Victor, brokenly. "Despard, would-be assassin

to leave here. Should they go to-night?"

He ran halef from the place. He stopped at the first house. The sheriff of the county resided there. When Victor Dane again came forth it was with a companion, commissioned to arrest Despard for attempted murder.

At the Dane mansion they found its owner, cross, whimsical, impatient; Adrienne, veiled and in tears; the trunks packed, the carriage waiting for Despard.

But no Despard! Dane stared incredulously at the story of the sheriff. He believed that Despard, affrighted at his crime, had fled, and looked as if he was glad of it. He only scowled when Victor, leaving with the sheriff, said to Adrienne in fervent tones:

"Courage! Do not be prevailed on to leave here under any circumstances. Despard's plans shall fail, believe me!"

They sought Despard everywhere. At morn, wearied and unsuccessful, Victor and the sheriff returned to his home. They entered the laboratory.

"Look!" cried the sheriff in a startled tone, pointing to the floor. "Despard!"

"Yes, and dead!"

Dead, and horribly disfigured! Beside him lay an overturned jar, recognized by Victor as having contained a deadly acid.

Despard had evidently returned the preceding night to remove all traces of murder from his victim. He had stumbled in the darkness. The fall had probably stunned him, and, his face falling in the liquid, he had inhaled its noxious poison and been suffocated.

Dane confessed that he had been duped and deluded, and did not withhold his consent to the happy marriage that took place a month later.

And, treasured among relics, love tokens and bijouterie more than aught else by happy Adrienne and Victor, is the dove, rendered almost lifelike by an art preservative—the beautiful carrier dove that saved Victor Dane's life.

### Sugar-Making a Chinese Invention.

The Chinese, who invented almost everything before anybody else heard of it, claim to be the original discoverers of the process of sugar-making, and it is said that sugar was used in China as long ago as 3,000 years. This is misty, but the fact is well established that it was manufactured in China under the Tsin dynasty, 200 years at least before the Christian era began. India has put forward a claim for priority of invention, but the probability is that the Hindoos learned the art of sugar-making from the Chinese, and that through them the knowledge finally spread to the Western nations.

Ylang Ylang, our faithful valet, who has made his name a household word because of his search after Schwatka and "One Night" Stanley, said that according to the books on African exploration it was now time to bed down the elephants. After doing this he returned and proceeded with the cuisine.

We had hardly swallowed our supper, and Mr. Riley Haggard was about

to climb a date palm to secure a few luscious lecture-dates, when our ears were saluted by a most unearthly and ear-piercing roar from the heart of the jungle. At this moment our faithful Ylang Ylang came in, with eyes stick-

### Never Tired.

When this country was first settled, there was an impression among the colonists that the Indians had no intelligence or craft in their relations with the white men. The latter soon found, however, that this was not the case.

Some of the farmers attempted to make farm servants of the Indians, but found that they had a propensity to "get tired" so soon after they began work that their services were of little value. One day a farmer was visited by a stalwart Indian, who said: "Me want work."

"No," said the farmer, "you will get tired."

"No, no," said the Indian, "me never get tired!"

The farmer, taking his word for it, set the Indian at work and went away about some other business. Toward noon he returned to the place and found the Indian sound asleep under a tree. "Look here, look here," shouted the farmer, shaking the Indian violently, "you told me that you never got tired, and yet here you are stretched out on the ground!"

"Ugh!" said the Indian, rubbing his eyes and slowly clambering to his feet, "if me not lie down, me get tired like the rest!"—Exchange.

### Ungainly Man.

Man is an ungainly creature at the best. His head is an irregular spheroid; his eyes are not alike or of equal efficiency; his whiskers won't grow uniformly. One shoulder is higher than the other, one hand or foot larger than the other—and this on opposite sides—his hips (if he has any) are unequal in shape. The calves of his legs are not twins in anything but age, and without his tailor, hatter, and bootmaker he is a very sorry-looking animal. As for women—well, this article is not written to discuss their physical crookedness. If it was it would not be half the length that it is.—*San Francisco Chronicle.*

As soon as I could regain my courage by a small nip of spooju I looked back at the sickening spectacle. All was still save the distant song of the red-breasted blim-blam in the Koojoo bushes.

### A MIGHTY HUNTER IS HE

BILL NYE'S ADVENTURES IN THE MINNESOTA JUNGLES.

He penetrates the Tropical Depths of the Great Northwest on the Back of an Elephant, and Meets with Several Thrilling Adventures.

In the exhilarating Northwest, 1889: The cold of Minnesota has been greatly exaggerated by rival States, and though at times the thermometer lowers itself in the estimation of society, the cold is of such a bracing character as to seem almost oppressively hot to those who are not accustomed to it.

The eye sparkles, the step is elastic, and the rich blood mantles to the nose as the gayly caparisoned droshka speeds blithely through the palmetto groves of the thrifty Occident.

Many Southern people come to St. Paul and Minneapolis, it is said, in order to escape the rigors of their own winter. The banana belt extending from Duluth to Winnipeg reminds one of tropical Africa. Last week Mr. Riley Haggard and I started out for a little quiet elephant shooting in the country. Bidding farewell to the concierge at the hotel, we packed our heavy express rifles and smooth-bore elephant guns, penetrated as far as the sleeping-car could convey us, and bidding farewell to our faithful Wan Wenga, who caressed us both with a whisk broom to the value of 20 scudi, we hired an elephant apiece and began to penetrate the jungle, preceded by our trusty bird-dog.

At the kraal or livery stable, where we engaged our elephants, we were told that game was plenty about thirty miles across the dingelaw, and that in a small forest of jingsnag trees and hooa bushes quite a colony of quigga and elephants had been scared up by a boor who had penetrated the jungle accompanied by his broke or dog.

The first night we camped beneath the shade of a Vienna breadfruit tree on the borders of the Karroo, and preventing the escape of our trusty elephants by attaching their trunks, we began to prepare our evening meal. I read the directions from a book of African travel, and my faithful comrade, Mr. Riley Haggard, did the cooking.

First refreshing ourselves with a long draught from a gourd of spoonju from Peoria, marked 1842 so-called because it is placed on the market eighteen hours and forty-two minutes after it is made, our faithful gun-bearer, Ylang Ylang, began to carve the bultong, Meiboss, and jerked muskrat for the evening meal. Making a bright fire of karroo bushes and fresh train figs, a wad of mealies was soon simmering on the coals, while the odor of Cincinnati bultong pervaded the tropical forest.

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ing out like a sore thumb, to announce that our bird dog had flushed a large Abyssinian lion.

Hurriedly putting a little Mayonnaise dressing on our faithful Ylang Ylang, we sent him out to parley with the lion while we put on our telegraph climbers, and filling our pockets with bultong, we ascended a Duluth palm tree.

We had not long to wait! The wang wanga bushes parted and a low, heavy-set performing lion crept softly into the open Karroo, preceded at a distance of about three-quarters of an inch by our faithful Ylang Ylang. As the poor fellow jumped a low Kirdish bush I heard a crunching sound such as I hope never to hear again, and turned away my head rather than see our trusty gun-bearer in the act of backing into a lair.

As soon as I could regain my courage by a small nip of spooju I looked back at the sickening spectacle. All was still save the distant song of the red-breasted blim-blam in the Koojoo bushes.

No, I am not superstitious, no one

can accuse me of that weakness; but it would take more money than most men have to buy that pin. I don't believe in luck. I know that losing the pin had nothing to do with my disasters, but I won't part with it all the same."—*Jeweler's Weekly.*

Suddenly remembering how I had once seen a lion-tamer make a lion

quail, I descended from the tree