

THE THREATENED FAD.

The good old lady in Farm Ballads who did not like the new church organ speaks again: "There'll come an awful judgment, Sue. Upon this land, I tell you. Half the doleful things is true. That rankles in my ear. The women think there's no escape. From till their mothers bore, An' hoofs of different sizes an' shape. Is comin' round once more. Oh, if this world, as some avow, Grows smaller each day through, Why should folks try to take up, now. Three times the room they do?"

I recollect when first it came, Some thirty years ago, That who or what was then to blame. But spite of all the men folks said, An' called their sister fool, The hoop-dance seemed to spread Like measles in a school: An' gals that vowed, an' stamped their foot,

They wouldn't be drawn or won By such a style, went straight an' put The queer contraptions on!

Miss Polly Get-there stood ahead, An' braved the village wrath: But goodness mercy! didn't she spread Disaster all in her path? What fortune she chanced to strike, Disaster sure would greet,

An' children learned to dodge her like A cyclone in the street!

An' while the people frowned and laughed, 'Twas good part of a year

Before she learned her pirate craft Appropriate to steer!

"Then six young sisters, blithe an' gay, The banners spread in view: Their father went to church that day An' said an extra pew.

Their sister gals, we couldn't condemn—

Felt fashion's widow's touch,

An' people also laughed at them,

But didn't laugh as much,

An' soon, in spite of all the flings,

The han'ful grew a host,

An' them that didn't wear the things Got hooted at the most!

An' long I thought that I would take My path unhooped an' free,

An' meant that style should never make A barrel out o' me;

But bitterness was in the cup From which I quaffed the right,

An' juveniles that would chase me up,

An' show me for a sight;

An' finally the deed was done;

My pride was heading east;

I wasted to a skeleton—

Then put one on at last!

But I am all untrammelled now,

No longer bein' young;

An' thought is throned upon my brow,

An' candor trims my tongue.

I know frivility is just

A steppin'-stone to sin.

I'll fight 'em both, an' beat I must,

For right is bound to win.

But, sue when next in town, if such

A step isn't labor lost,

Drop in the store, an' learn how much

Hoop-kirts is goin' to cost!

—Will Carleton, in Harper's Bazar.



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III.—CONTINUED.

"Isn't her mother with her, and, being in mourning, doesn't she have to stay in her latticed loge instead of promenading in the foyer and drinking that two-heads-for-a-picayune punch?" queried Ferry, eager for a diversion.

"Suppose she is," answered Pierce, stoutly. "I'm a crank—straight-laced, if you like. It's the fault of my bringing up. But I know, and you know, that that little woman, in her loneliness and in her natural longing for some congenial spirit to commune with, is simply falling madly in love with Sam Waring, and there will be tragedy here before we can stop it."

"See here Pierce," asked Ferry, "do you suppose Mrs. Cram would be so loyal a friend to Waring if she thought there was anything wrong in his attentions to Mine. Lascelles? Do you suppose Cram himself wouldn't speak?"

"He has spoken."

"He has? To whom?"

"To me, three days ago; said I had known Waring longest and best, perhaps was his most intimate friend, and he though I ought to warn him of what people were saying."

"What have you done?"

"Nothing yet; simply because I know Sam Waring so well that I know just what he'd do—go and pull the nose of the man who gossiped about him and her. Then we'd have a fight on our hands."

"Well, we can fight, I suppose, can't we?"

"Not without involving a woman's name."

"Oh, good Lord, Pierce, was there ever a row without a woman au fond?"

"That's a worm-eaten witticism, Ferry, and you're too decent a fellow, as a rule, to be cynical. I've got to speak to Waring, and I don't know how to do it. I want your advice."

"Well, my advice is Punch's: 'Don't. Hello! here's Dryden. Thought you were on court duty up at headquarters to-day, old man. Come in and have a wet!' " Mr. Ferry had seen some happy days at Fortress Monroe when the ships of her majesty's navy lay off the Hygeia and the gallants of England lay to at the bar, and Ferry rejoiced in the vernacular of the united service, so far as he could learn it, as practiced abroad.

"Thanks. Just had one over at Merton's. Hear you've been having review and all that sort of thing down here," said the infantryman, as he loled back in an easy-chair and planted his boot-heels on the gallery rail. "Glad I got out of it. Court met and adjourned at ten, so I came home. How'd Waring get off?"

"Huh!—Cram's wagon," laughed Ferry, rather uncomfortably, however.

"Oh, Lord, yes, I know that. Didn't I see him driving Mme. Lascelles up Rampart street as I came down in the mud car?"

And then Pierce and Ferry looked at each other, started.

That evening, therefore, it was a comfort to both when Sam came tooling the stylish turnout through the sally-port and his battery chums caught sight of the Allertons. Pierce was just returning from stables and Ferry was

smoking a pipe of perique on the broad gallery, and both hastened to don their best jackets and don their best caps to these interesting and interested callers. Cram himself had gone out for a ride and a think. He always declared his ideas were clearer after a gallop. The band played charmingly. The ladies came out and made a picturesque croquet party on the green carpet of the parade. The officers clustered about and offered laughing wagers on the game. A dozen romping children were playing joyously around the tall flagstaff. The air was rich with the fragrance of the magnolias and Cape jasmine, and glad with music and soft and merry voices.

Then the stirring bugles rang out their lively summons to the batterymen beyond the wall. The drums of the infantry rolled and rattled their echoing clamor. The guard sprang to rank, and their muskets, glinting in the slanting beams of the setting sun, clashed in simultaneous 'present' to the red-sashed officer of the day, and that official raised his plumed hat to the lieutenant with the lovely girl by his side and the smiling elders on the back seat as the team once more made the circuit of the post on the back trip to town, and Miss Flora Allerton clasped her hands and looked enthusiastically up into her escort's face.

"Chevvers, you will rebort at vost to Cram."

"Who says I will?" said Jeffers, cheerfully, though bent on mischief, but was awed into instant silence at seeing that veteran step quickly back, stand attention, and raise his hand in salute, for there came Cram himself, Pierced with it.

"Did Mr. Waring take any arms with him?" queried the captain.

"Any whut, suh?" responded Ananias, rubbing his eyes and still only half awake.

"Any pistol or knife?"

"Lord, suh, no. Mr. Waring don't never carry anything o' dat sort."

A student lamp was burning low on the center table. There lay among the books and papers a couple of letters, evidently received that day and still unopened. There lay Waring's cigar case, a pretty trifle given him by some far-away friend, with three or four fragrant Havanas temptingly visible. There lay a late magazine, its pages still uncut. Cram looked at the dainty wall clock, ticking merrily away over the mantel. Eleven-thirty-five! Well, he was too anxious to sleep, anyhow, why not wait a few minutes? Waring might come, probably would come. If no cab could make its way down by the levee road, there were the late cars from town. They had to make the effort anyhow. Cram stepped to the sideboard, mixed a mild toddy, sipped it reflectively, then lighted a cigar and threw himself into the easy-chair. Ananias, meantime, was up and astir. Seeing that Cram was looking about in search of a paper-cutter, the boy stepped forward and bent over the table.

"What detained him? Did he send no word?"

"E said nothink, and sent nothink but the basket, sir. 'E said a couple of hours, now I think of it, sir. 'E was going back to the 'otel to dine with a lady and gent."

For a moment Cram was silent. He glanced at Pierce, as much as to say: Have you no question to ask? but the youngster held his peace. The senior officer hated to inquire of his servant into the details of the day's doings. He was more than half indignant at Waring for having taken such advantage of even an implied permission as to drive off with his equipage and groom in so summary a way. Of course Nell had said: "Take it and go;" but Nell could have had no idea of the use to which the wagon was to be put. If

When Jeffers came driving into barracks on his return from town, his first care, as became the trained groom, was for his horses, and he was rubbing them down and bedding their stalls for the night when the sergeant of the battery guard, lantern in hand, appeared at the door. It was not yet tattoo, but by this time the darkness was intense, the heavens were hid, and the wind was moaning about the stables and gun-shed and whistling away over the dismal expanse of flat, wet, ditch-tangled fields towards the

"Here they come now," said Jeffers, promptly pocketing the money and springing forward to knuckle his hat-brim and stand at the horses' heads. All grace and animation, Mr. Waring had assisted his friends to alight, had promised to join them in the ladies' parlor in ten minutes, had sprung to the seat again, signaling Jeffers to tumble up behind, and then had driven rapidly away through Carondelet street to the broad avenue beyond. Here he tossed the reins to Jeffers, disappeared a moment, and came back with a little Indian-made basket filled to overflowing with exquisite double violets rich with fragrance.

"Give this to Mrs. Cram for me, and tell the captain I'll drop in to thank him in a couple of hours, and—Here, Jeffers," he said, and Jeffers had pocketed another greenback, and had driven briskly homeward, well content with the result of his day's labors, and without having mentioned to Mr. Waring the fact that Lascelles had been at the hotel making inquiries for him. A day so profitable and so pleasant Jeffers had not enjoyed since his arrival at the barracks, and he was humming away in high good humor, all reckless of the rising storm, when the gruff voice of Sergt. Schwartz disturbed him.

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