

bars space in which to sit and wait for death.

'Do you know anything of them?' the stranger asked of the matron. 'That tall old woman, now? She has a strong, noble face. Who is she?'

'That is Ann Miller,' she said. 'I happen to know her story. Her husband died, leaving her penniless with three children. She opened a little school for small children. She did tailoring at night. The baby, a girl, was sickly. For years this woman sat stitching by the cradle until midnight or early morning.'

'She had great ambition for her children. She worked and starved herself to keep them at school, to make their lives happy and full. One is now a merchant; the other edits a newspaper. The girl married a wealthy farmer.'

'And their mother is—here?' said the stranger, amazed.

'Yes,' said the matron. 'Her children took her to live with them in turn. But she was not pleasant to look at, and her manners were out of date. The grandchildren, striving to be fashionable, found her in the way. Grandmother's seat at the table and her chamber were needed for more stylish guests.'

'Her sons and daughter tired of her old stories, of her love, and of her. They paid the sum necessary to place her here, and they never come near her.'

The visitor went to her and talked cheerfully for a few moments. He happened to mention his home.

Her withered face flushed and trembled. 'Are you from A——?' she cried. 'My son John lives there! I am expecting a visit from him. He has not been here for more than a year. But John is so busy, you know!'

'Did you ever see his little boys? I was so fond of them! I dream about them every night almost. They loved me so. They would climb on my knees and beg for stories, and hug and kiss me.'

'Their mother disapproved of it. She said an old person's breath was unhealthy. It may be so. But if I could only see them once!' she said, rising in her excitement.

'Tell her I will only look at them. I will not touch nor kiss them. My children have outgrown me. But the little boys loved me. Tell John it is near the end.

Oh, I'm comfortable enough! But I want my own! And I am so lonely! Beg him to come—to bring them once before I go!'

When they had left her the stranger said, 'Surely you have no other such case? The children who could so abandon a mother are monsters!'

'You are mistaken. Many ambitious men and women, pushing into society, find "mother" a weight. They put her out of sight in a home, and forget her.'

The stranger, looking back, saw Ann's hungry eyes following him. 'But God,' he said to himself, 'God does not forget the cruelty of the one and the loneliness of the other.'

BIRTH MONTH STONES.

THE very latest craze in many of the fashionable capitals is the wearing of birth month stones, and, strange to say, it emanated in remote Poland. Women there, according to an old legend, are saved all manner of ills by wearing the guardian charm of the month in which they were born; and men, too, if given such gems by a woman, are also saved and benefited. Here is the true list. There are varieties, but the one given is direct from Poland:—

- January—Garnet; constancy.
- February—Amethyst; sincerity.
- March—Bloodstone; courage, wisdom.
- April—Sapphire or diamond; free from enchantment, innocence.
- May—Emerald; success in love, discovers false friends.
- June—Agate; health and prosperity.
- July—Ruby; corrects evils of mistaken friendship, discovers poison.
- August—Sardonyx; meaning conjugal felicity.
- September—Chrysolite; antidote to madness, free from sadness and evil passions.
- October—Opal; hope.
- November—Topaz; fidelity, prevents bad dreams.
- December—Turquoise; prosperity.

Stone: I'll bet that young fellow yonder is wearing his first silk hat. Job Lett: How can you tell? Stone: Didn't you see how he ducked his head on entering the passage?'

THE PRINCE OF WALES AND KALAKAUA.

A GUEST of the Hawaiian Hotel has a good story to tell about King Kalakaua and the Prince of Wales, which was narrated to him (says the *Hawaiian Star*) by Colonel George W. Macfarlane, who, until Queen Liliuokalani's accession to the throne, was Lord High Chamberlain at the celebrated Honolulu court.

'Colonel Macfarlane,' said the California visitor, 'told me how, when King Kalakaua, together with members of the Hawaiian family and suite, visited England a few years back, to join the gathering of the crowned heads of the world, the Prince of Wales was placed in a peculiar position, but one that tended to fully set forth his kindness and genial nature. Inasmuch as the King came from a petty kingdom, it was thought that it might not be according to the code to have the Prince of Wales, as the heir apparent to the greatest kingdom and possessions of the world, be called on instead of calling upon. The master of ceremonies and court chamberlains and powers that have the matter of court dignity and etiquette that govern kings and rulers of nations on state occasions, wrestled with the momentous question for three days, until, finally, it was decided that rank was everything, and that the King of the Sandwich Islands was above Edward, Prince of Wales, and therefore the latter must be the first to call.'

'Colonel Macfarlane says that the occasion was one he will never forget. The Prince came, was presented, and then walked right up to his dusky visitor, and, holding out his right hand, gave the other an old-fashioned British grip, and quietly exclaimed: "Your Majesty, I see our old foggy court etiquette-makers have settled the question to their satisfaction, but my principal regret was that the delay prevented my paying my respects to you sooner, as I had intended coming as soon as possible after your arrival. Welcome to England."

'The amiable Prince was most gracious and soon a great friendship was established between the two. Colonel Macfarlane is sure that over in Albion they have a kindly feeling for the ex-Queen, and he thought that Liliuokalani would soon sail for Europe.'

BETTING ON THE RAIN.

ONE of the most curious forms of gambling in the world is 'rain gambling,' which at this season of the year is at its height in Calcutta. The principal rain gambling den is in Cotton-street, Barra Bazaar.

No one who has not visited the place can have any conception of the vast crowds which at every hour of the day and far into the night pass in and out.

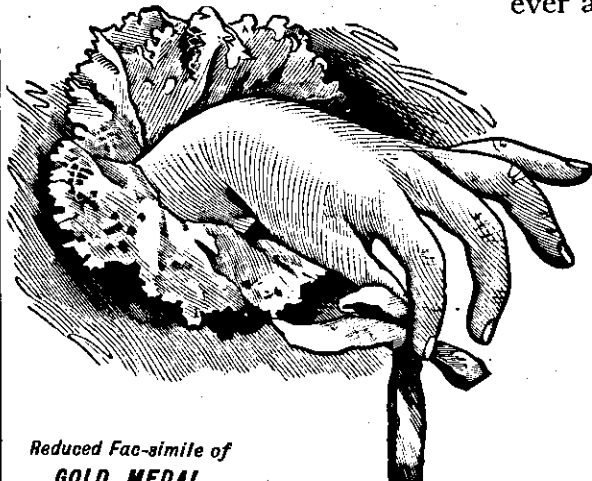
The great majority are Mawaris, who are born speculators, but there are as well plenty of well-to-do Europeans, Eurasians, Jews, Armenians and Greeks, and women, too. All swarm into the small courtyard where this strange form of gambling is carried on, through a narrow entrance barely three feet wide. The courtyard is about two hundred feet square. The far-famed tank with a spout falling into the courtyard is the one spot where all eyes are fixed. The tank stands at the edge of a second floor roof. It is about six feet broad by four feet wide, and nine inches deep, with the spout opening inward, some three or four inches from the bottom. From this it will be seen that it requires a pretty heavy downpour for at least ten minutes to cause the spout to flow. Intermittent drizzles, which partly fill this tank, do not count, as the shower to fill it must pour down uninterruptedly, and then the bets are down or lost.

Chances are taken either for or against the spout running. A gray-haired, wizened old man is the owner of the den, and there is another similar place across the road, only smaller. On the roof, over the fifth floor, there is a small, square watch tower, in which are stationed five or six men, whose duty it is to scan the horizon closely and report on the formation of rain clouds. On these reports the odds rise or fall.

A bet made and won one day is always paid the following morning. Everything seems to be 'on the square,' and, indeed, there is little chance for cheating. The odds range as high as 1 to 75 on some days, even in the rainy season. Many have made a fortune in a single day. One person recently won over £5,000 in the course of a few weeks. But he worked the system on scientific methods.

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