

WAIFS AND STRAYS.

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

WHY MEN DON'T MARRY.

GRIFF counts the seconds, happiness forgets the hours.

Night conceals a world, but reveals a universe.—RUSKIN.
The man who declares that life is not worth living wants to kill someone else in preference to himself.

Life is made of compensations. By the time a man is old enough to realize what a lot he does not know he is too old to worry over it.

In 1016 an awful famine raged throughout all Europe and again from 1193 to 1195, when complete crop failures caused terrible suffering. In England and France the people ate the flesh of cats and dogs, and many cases of cannibalism were recorded. During the latter three years thousands upon thousands perished from starvation.

LEAP YEAR LYRIC.
Leap, girls, leap with care.
Leap, with a pop, at your partner.
No more need for trap and snare;
Pop, girls, pop, to the bacchante.

A Scotchman was riding a donkey one day across a sheep pasture, but when the animal came to a drain he would not go over, so the man rode back a short distance, turned, and applied the whip, thinking, of course, that the donkey, when at the top of his speed, would jump the drain. And when the donkey got to the drain he stopped sharply, and the man went over his head and cleared the drain. When he got up he looked the donkey in the face and said, 'Verra well pitched! But then, hoo are you goin' to get over yer sel?'

Let us not deceive ourselves, but bear in mind that what we desire our children to become we must endeavour to be before them. If we wish them to grow up kind, gentle, affectionate, upright and true, we must habitually exhibit the same qualities as regulating principles in our conduct, because the qualities act as so many stimuli to the respective faculties of the child. If we cannot restrain our passions, but at one time overwhelm the young with kindness, and at another surprise and confound them by our caprice and deceit, we may with as much reason expect to gather grapes from thistles or figs from thorns, as to develop moral purity and simplicity of character in them.

REPAID A THOUSANDFOLD.—Some years ago, a man of fine appearance frequented a celebrated cafe in Paris, and every morning called for a cup of coffee and a roll. One day he went out without paying, and this happened several times. The proprietor was notified, but he answered: 'Serve the gentleman as usual, and do not pay the least attention to the bill.' For one year this went on, when, suddenly, the customer disappeared. The proprietor had almost forgotten him when, to his surprise, he received, freight paid, twelve chests of these singular packages, stating that the man was the rich planter of Martinique, who for some time had been in difficulties, and thus begged to acknowledge the polite kindness of his host, who for one whole year had allowed him to run into debt at his cafe.

MY MARGUERITE.
I LOOK upon her brow and see
A radiant, crystal purity,
And find within her azure eyes
The loveliness of summer skies;
She is so sweet,
My Marguerite,
I fain would kneel and kiss her feet!
My life to her dear life has grown,
Till all my being is her own,
And ever thus I adore her due,
Though I am forty, she but two;
And O so sweet
Is Marguerite,
I kneel and kiss her dainty feet!

THE HONEST CELESTIAL.—Mr Moule, in his 'New China and Old,' written after thirty years' residence in that country as a missionary, gives the native merchants an enviable reputation for integrity. Indeed, what he has to say upon this point may very well set a New Zealand reader to thinking, if not to blushing. One general statement may be made as to the character of Chinese business men. It used to be a common dictum that the word of a Cantonese Hong merchant was worth as much as another man's bond. Two years ago, the manager of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (an English house) publicly avowed that in the course of a long experience he had never known, so far as his bank was concerned, a Chinese defaulter in money transactions. Not long ago a foreigner travelled about China, leaving with native traders quantities of his goods for sale, informing them at the same time of the name of the firm in Shanghai to whom remittances should be sent. Many of these traders were in out-of-the-way places; but so far they have regularly remitted the proceeds of their sales. One man at Tientsin had credit to the extent of a thousand dollars. He has since then retired from business; but he regularly sends money to the Shanghai agents in liquidation of his debt.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION.—A letter of introduction is usually supposed to be a sure passport for the bearer to the favour of the person to whom it is addressed. But according to the experience of Anton Rubinstein, the pianist and composer, it is sometimes well to investigate the contents of such a letter. When Rubinstein went to Vienna, in 1846, full of talent and hope, he took a dozen letters of introduction to prominent people in that city, from the Russian ambassador and his wife, in Berlin. Vienna was the residence of Liszt and one of the great musical centres of Europe, and young Rubinstein anticipated making many warm friends. He made his calls and left his letters at the houses of the people to whom they were addressed, and then waited for replies and invitations, but none came. After five or six letters had met this response of absolute silence, he was utterly at a loss to understand the meaning of such treatment. 'I will see,' he said at last, 'what is said about me in these letters.' Accordingly he opened one and this is what he read.—'My Dear Cousin: To the position which we (the ambassador and his wife) occupy, is attached the tedious duty of patronizing and recommending our various compatriots in order to satisfy their oftentimes clamorous requests. We, therefore, recommend to you the bearer of this, one Rubinstein.' The riddle was solved. The enraged pianist flung the remaining letters in the fire, and resolved to rely on his own unaided efforts to procure friends in the future.

FALSE HONEY.

A KIND of artificial honey, which has lately been produced, seems likely to become a formidable rival of natural honey. It is called 'sugar honey,' and consists of water, sugar, a small proportion of mineral salts and a free acid, and the taste and smell resemble those of the genuine article.

HOME MADE COUGH MIXTURE.

Here are some recipes for people who catch old-fashioned colds and develop coughs, which have no affinity whatsoever with the dreaded influenza. One very simple remedy is to boil half a cupful of treacle with a lump of butter about the size of a walnut, to which is afterwards added the juice of a large lemon. This mixture will be found soothing for an ordinary uncomplicated cough. For children the following is good.—Take half an ounce of syrup of tolu, and the same quantity of oxymel of squills, one ounce of mucilage, and three ounces ipecacuanha wine, and mix with two ounces of water. The dose for a child of about one year old is one teaspoonful, and a tablespoonful for one of five years, when the cough is troublesome. Another mixture for adults is equal parts of oxymel of squills, simple oxymel, and syrup of poppies, mixed. Of this simple remedy a teaspoonful may be taken when the cough is troublesome.

A MOVING SIDEWALK.

The moving sidewalk at the World's Fair grounds was opened to the public on November 25. About 300 representative men went by special train from Chicago to inspect this novelty. One of the criticisms made of this means of transportation was with reference to the danger to old men, ladies, and children, but experience from a week's use of the road shows that there is no trouble in this respect. The speed is so slow that there is no difficulty in getting on or off. This exhibit is on a wooden trestle 25ft. high, the sharpest curve having a radius of 75ft. The sidewalk is 300ft. long having 360 deg. of curvature in that length. When hauling about 350 passengers, which is about one-third of the capacity of this experimental line, the additional power expended is about 24-horse power over and above that necessary to move the walk. The *Railroad Gazette* says: 'Road is now in full operation and is carrying a large number of passengers. A full view of the World's Fair Grounds is obtained from the seats of the cars.'

A NEW REMEDY FOR DOG BITES.

A lady writes giving a novel remedy for the bites of dogs and other animals:—'I have been bitten by dogs repeatedly,' she says, 'once severely. A pet dog of a neighbour's was very sick, and I was attempting to relieve it. It bit me in the left thumb, just below the nail. The member became black as far down as the wrist. It remained so until the nail came off. The owner talked of hydrophobia, and said that the dog had not tasted water for two weeks. Had I been afraid I should, no doubt, have taken nervous fits and died. The verdict would have been "hydrophobia." But I simply applied a solution of salt and vinegar, a little more vinegar than salt, washed the wound with it, then tied a clean rag around the thumb, keeping it saturated well with the solution, and moved the rag so that a fresh part covered the wound at intervals. This remedy was one applied to my wrist by a coloured woman in the South for a snake bite. My arm was then black, hard, and painful. The remedy acted like a charm. In two hours the discolorations had disappeared, and with it the pain, and only the needle mark where the fang had entered was visible.'

THE RELATION OF HEIGHT TO DISEASE.

The doctors are always discovering something new to scare simple folk. The latest of these finds is that to be very tall is to be on the high road to a disease called Megalacria. In itself this sesquipedalian malady is sufficiently awe-inspiring. But Dr. Cunningham, the Dublin anatomist, has just published in the memoirs of the Royal Irish Academy a paper in which he concludes that nearly all the giants of whom any records have been kept came into this category of 'megalacriacs.' This stature is the result of a morbid growth, which may affect only the feet and hands and under jaw, or may include the entire body, soft parts as well as bones. Magrath, the Irish giant, was a victim of this hypertrophy, though Dr. Cunningham declares that instead of his being eight feet four inches in height, a study of his skeleton in Trinity College shows that he was in all likelihood not more than seven feet two and a half or three inches high, though there are records of people who have shot up to eight feet four and a half inches. It is, however, consolatory to find that though most Anaks have been megalacriacs it does not necessarily follow, even though they are notoriously short-lived, that they are afflicted with this malady—great feet and a huge lower jaw being its leading characteristics.

WATER.

The human body, says a writer in *Hall's Journal of Health*, is constantly undergoing tissue change. Water has the power of increasing these tissue changes, which multiply the waste products, but at the same time they are renewed by its agency, giving rise to increased appetite, which in turn provides fresh nutriment. Persons but little accustomed to drink water are liable to have the waste products formed faster than they are removed. Any obstruction to the free working of natural laws at once produces disease. People accustomed to rise in the morning weak and languid will find the cause in the imperfect secretion of wastes, which many times may be remedied by drinking a full tumbler of water before retiring. This very materially assists in the process during the night, and leaves the tissues fresh and strong, ready for the active work of the day. Hot water is one of our best remedial agents. A hot bath on going to bed, even in the hot nights of summer, is a better reliever of insomnia than many drugs. Inflated parts will subside under the continued poulticing of real hot water. Very hot water, as we all know, is a prompt checker of bleeding, and besides, if it is clean, as it should be, it aids in sterilizing our wound. A riotous stomach will nearly always gratefully receive a glass of hot water.

THE men who can marry, and who nowadays are usually thirty-three, are men of certain experience, and are by no means fools. They are attracted by good looks, whether in the foolish or the wise virgins, and are carried away by unusual beauty, as they were in the days of Helen, and will be when the world cools; but they are quite conscious of the advantage possessed by the sensible and the cultivated. They know what terrible bores ignorant girls can be, how utterly unreasonable they often are in the middle life to grow acrid, snappish or positively ill tempered.

There is no one so perverse as the woman without intellectual interests whose situation happens to be at variance with her ideas of comfort, or who, being comfortable is conscious of the faint contempt, or rather slight avoidance of those around her. Women are perfectly well aware when men listen from politeness alone, and those among them to whom that lot falls grow as bitter as some disappointed spinsters.

The men of thirty-three know perfectly well how great a part friendship plays in married life, how it deepens affection, and how difficult it is to feel friendship for a woman whose early charm has passed, who does not understand one word in six you say, and who can neither sympathise with failure nor understand why you have succeeded. Companionship, one of the most delightful of all the bonds of union, is impossible between the able and the silly.

The men, too, are aware that it is the clever girls, not the simpletons, who are free from the senseless extravagance which is, perhaps, of all the foibles which are not exactly vices, the most permanently irritating in wives. One thing, at least, culture has done for the majority of cultured women—it has taught them how to count. The immense majority of cultivated girls are economical. Frugality is the road to independence. They could not live their lives if they cost their fathers too much, and they learn to know the value of money, and to avoid debt with horror. They are not, perhaps, devoted to 'housekeeping' as some of the unlettered are, meaning, three times out of five, endless and harassing interference with their servants; but they can keep house, when they know their incomes, at an outlay well within them.

Men know what it is to be bored. There is no bore on earth equal to the woman who can neither talk nor listen, who has no mental interests in common with her husband, and who thinks his friends satirical because they attend to her with a faint sense of amused amazement. The men we are speaking of believe also that, of the two, the educated are the more affectionate.

But girls of culture are too frank of speech, contradict men, unless much and visibly their elders, too often and too bluntly, and are therefore condemned as 'formidable.'

This habit—for it is nothing worse—does not proceed in them, as it does in most men, from either arrogance, or temper, or want of self-control, for they do not display it towards women, even when intellectually their inferiors. It proceeds from delight in intellectual independence, from an unexpected sense of mental equality which must be made audible to be thoroughly enjoyed. You will see a son contradict his father, or a clever lad his tutor, from precisely the same motive; but men who are on an equality rather avoid it, striving rather to differ utterly under cover of some formula of assent, and disliking the Hazlitt way—he used to contradict everybody, even the watchman when calling the hour—and they dislike it in women most particularly. Even very sensible young men of experience will retreat before it with a sense of disappointment and choler, and never again, unless by accident, give the girl who has tried, as they think, to 'put them down' a chance of showing that she was attempting nothing of the kind.

The habit is a mere gesture in reality, a colt's kick of pleasure in the free field, and not, as it often is in old women, a sign of vicious temper; but it constantly ruins a bright girl's chances, and has done much to create in society an impression which is, on the evidence of facts, entirely unfounded. Cultivated girls have, in fact, a trick of thinking that argument is conversation, and that contradiction shows mental fearlessness—a trick which even tolerant men never quite like.

MY FATHER.

HE is old now,
And time and care have long ago
Covered his locks with winter's snow
And lined his brow.

His step is slow,
Oft in his walk he stands to rest
With folded arms upon his breast,
And head bent low.

His eyes are dim,
This world is fading from his sight,
But flower, and tree, and sun, and light
Are naught to him.

The past is his,
And all day long his thoughts will roam,
And weave again in fancy's loom
Old memories.

At night I hear
His tottering footsteps cross the hall;
Slowly and solemnly they fall
Upon mine ear.

Some night I know
That I shall list for them in vain,
That I shall never go again
To kiss his brow.

Perchance e'en now
The angel beckons him away,
And I, oh God! would have him stay
With me below.

I cannot weep,
I watch him slipping from my side,
Gliding upon life's ebbing tide
To dreamless sleep.