

SIGNS.

The melancholy days are here;
The signs are everywhere.
The woodland leaves are turning red,
And fluttering through the air;
The cricket chirps its mournful lay
Beneath the window sill;
The buckwheat field is turning gray
Upon the distant hill;
A dreamy silence seems to spread
O'er the country side;
The flowers that bloomed, alas! are
Dead,
Their petals scattered wide.
But 'tis without such signs as these—
The hills immersed in haze,
The turning leaves upon the trees—
We recognize the days;
For now the agile college "men,"
With hanks of hair to spare,
Are on the campuses again
And raising hedges there;
They're holding flags and rushing
Canes,
And also having some,
And elsewhere showing that their
Brains
Continue out of plumb.
—Cleveland Leader.

A PAIR OF SINNERS.

She was the only daughter of a draper who had once been eminent and was now retired, he was a young and prosperous barister. She was of a morbidly poetical temperament, and looked at life always through a prism of sentiment. He was unimaginative and practical. In a word, each was the complement of the other.

They had been two months married, and but just returned from the honeymoon, and were seated cozily by the fire one wild wintry evening, when Mabel in a languishing mood of sentimental melancholy, unburdened herself of a tardy confession.

"Are you sure, Clarence," she asked him, sighing, "that you really love me?"

"Absolutely, dearest."

"And you have never loved any one but me?"

"Never—never—never!"

"And you will love me always?"

"Forever."

He yawned and looked at his watch. They were half expecting a visitor. "Something might happen to change you," she persisted, dreamingly.

"What could?"

"Suppose I had a secret in my life which I had never revealed to you?"

"What sort of a secret?"

"I always used to say, dear, that I had told you all about myself—everything; that I was keeping nothing back from you. I am so sorry!" Her eyes grew misty with tears. "I did not intend to deceive you. There is one—only one—event of my life I have never mentioned to you. I had forgotten it until lately. It has been my one secret—the one page of my life I would rather no one would read."

"Well, and what is it?" he interrupted, a little irritably.

She sank down on the rug beside him in an attitude of supplication and clasped her arms about his knees.

"Don't look at me so coldly, Clarence," she pleaded. "Don't speak so harshly. Say you will forgive me, dearest. I know there should be no secrets between us, but it is such a little little secret, and I never meant to—"

"No—no. Well—let me know what it is."

"It overwhelmed me with shame. O words cannot tell how deeply it humiliated me."

"Don't mystify me with all this preamble, Mabel. Tell me the worst, at once."

"And you will forgive me, dear, for not confiding—"

"O, no doubt. It is nothing much. I'll be bound. You are scaring us both with a bogey of your own making. What is it?"

She dried her eyes, and, reaching up, laid a hand upon his shoulder caressingly.

"Did you know, dear, that I once used to write poetry?"

"Well, many persons do that. It may be foolish, but it is not wicked."

"I wrote a great deal of it. My sole ambition then was to be a poetess. Much of what I wrote was love poetry."

"Well, well! Yes?"

"And about six years ago, dear, I collected all my poems into a volume and published them."

"And the heartless man was the publisher?"

"No. The publisher was exceeding my mind. He thought very highly of my work."

"Never mind the publisher. I am anxious to get to that heartless man!"

"The book was published, and I saw only one review of it, and that—it was in a paper called The Writer—O, Clarence, it was cruel—cruel!"

"If that is all!"

"Ah! It humiliates me to think of it even now. I remember every line of it, but I cannot—cannot—bring myself to repeat them."

"Don't try to. My dear girl, why on earth should you upset yourself like this over a trivial matter that has happened and was forgotten six years ago by everybody but yourself?"

"But think how I suffered! The publicity—the disgrace! The poems, I wrote—O, do not ask me what he said!"

"And yet he may be quite a harmless, inoffensive sort of man, if we only knew him."

"I felt as if all the world was laughing at me."

"You little silly. I don't suppose even a millionth part of the world knew anything about it. Nobody reads reviews of books—except the me who write them."

"I could not regard it so stoically, she sighed. "I cannot even now. You do not altogether realize my utter degradation. These babblings of inept imbecility." That was one of his phrases.

"She shuddered at the recollection of it."

"By Jove! Of course the best of critics are not angels, but your mus have been a—"

"A heartless, heartless man!"

"It had been a man's book!"

"He may not have known I was a woman."

"You are too severe. No reviewer criticizes a book till he has read the title page."

"But I did not use—"

"I wanted to see if they would attack my work for that of a man. I called it 'Heart Longings,' by Harold Hanson; but all my friends know, so that really made no difference."

"He had grown suddenly thoughtful, and spoke absently."

"You will forgive me, darling—won't you—for deceiving you?"

"Deceiving me?" he asked.

"Well, for seeming not to—side in you unreservedly."

"Taking the childish, pretty face between his hands, he gazed down into her dreamy, blue eyes."

"Yes."

"Well, coming to think of it, I remember I have a secret which I have never disclosed to you. So after all we are each as bad as the other."

She started and scanned his features eagerly.

"You? A secret, Clarence?"

"Only a little one—like yours."

"Only mine was no secret. I had forgotten it," she protested. "Besides, mine was nothing for which you could blame me!"

"Now, I want you to make me a promise. If I forgive you, you will forgive me?"

She hesitated.

"Tell me, first, all about it."

"Do you promise?" he insisted.

"Yes, yes, dear. I promise!" she said, desperately. "Whatever it is, I love you and I must forgive you."

She pressed her handkerchief to her eyes.

"I won't keep you in suspense," said he. "We have both been sinners, and I was the worst of the two. I must tell you, then. Before I was a successful barister I was a good-for-nothing young scoundrel, with a very good opinion of myself and a very bad one of everybody else. I was a wicked young dog and did several scandalous things that I am ashamed of now."

She caught her breath and waited in an agony of expectation.

"They were all of the same description, but I am sorry on account of one in particular."

"And that?"

"Well, being hard up I used to earn odd guineas in all manner of odd ways. I was a flippant, self-satisfied brute and—"

he paused, and putting an arm about her drew her closer to him.

"I have a heart now; you know I have, sweetheart, don't you? But once upon a time you have promised to forgive me and not to hate me!—in the days when you published your book, I was—"

"You—you—were?"

"The heartless man who reviewed it!"—St. Paul's.

Jersey Has a New Wonder.

Jacob Gergen, a baker living in Arlington, N. J., has a feathered wonder in his barn-yard. It was hatched from a high priced nesting of Brahma eggs and is half rooster and half hen. It is looked at with awe by all the other fowls in the barnyard, and they stand on one leg and blink at it without making any remarks in the cackling dialect. The rooster half scratches for worms, and announces their discovery to its better half in the regulation way and then, the twain having but a single head between them, the worm is devoured, the rooster is proud and both members of the combination satisfy their appetite without any impoliteness or greediness having been shown.

In reality the chicken is a bird and a half, according to the computation of the New Jersey farmers of the neighborhood, who can't quite figure two distinct fowls out of four legs, three tails and only one head. The egg that hatched the freak was evidently intended for a rooster, and the hen appendage is annexed like the wing to a dwelling house.

The main body has two rooster tails and the general contour of the barnyard monarch. The head is without a comb. From below the left wing grows the body of a hen, with a fully developed pair of legs and a hen's tail feathers. Gergen doesn't know yet whether his strange fowl will be inclined to boss the barnyard or show a disposition to hatch out a brood of chickens next spring.

Railroad Mileage in the United States.

There are one hundred and eighty-two thousand miles of railroad in the United States, capitalized at ten billion five hundred and sixty-six million dollars. The operation of this mileage gave employment last year to an industrial army of eight hundred and twenty-six thousand people. The number of passengers carried was five hundred and eleven million; the number of tons of freight transported was seven hundred and sixty-five million; and the net earnings were over three hundred and seventy-seven million dollars. It is significant that out of the five hundred and eleven million passengers carried, only one hundred and eighty-one were killed; but there were eighteen hundred and sixty-one fatalities among employes.

Hot-house Grapes.

Hot-house grapes are the costliest of fruits in the New York market. They are never less than seventy-five cents a pound, and when they are most costly, in February and March, they sell for nine dollars a pound, sometimes going as high as ten dollars a pound. A prices ranging up to two dollars a pound there is a ready sale for them; at the higher prices they are sold almost exclusively for the use of invalids. The next most costly fruit is the hot-house peach. Hot-house peaches sell in February at two dollars and fifty cents each. They are used by invalids, but such peaches are also often sold for gifts. They are presented as flowers or as bouquets would be.

THE AMERICAN FLAG.

ITS ADOPTION BY THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS.

Betsy Ross of Philadelphia Made the First One—Had Fifteen Stripes at One Time—Afterwards Reduced to the Original Thirteen.

Sitting at Philadelphia 121 years ago, the Continental Congress adopted the recommendation of its committee and the flag was born, and to-day it is the oldest among the flags of the nations and is acknowledged everywhere to be the most beautiful flag that floats. In June, 1777, a committee of congress, with General Washington as chairman, was instructed to design a suitable flag for the united colonies. The design submitted by the committee, as designed by General Washington, was adopted by the Continental Congress June 14th, 1777, when it was resolved that the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation. Betsy Ross of Philadelphia is said to have made the first American flag, according to the design adopted by congress. The stars in the Union of the flag were placed in a circle. This flag continued in use for eighteen years. Early in the year 1794, in consequence of the admission of Vermont, March 4th, 1793, and Kentucky, June 1st, 1792, an act was passed by congress declaring that from and after the first day of May, 1795, the flag of the United States be fifteen stripes, alternate red and white, and the Union be fifteen stars, white in a blue field. The stars were arranged in three rows of five each. The first flag of fifteen stripes was placed upon the Constitution, the initial ship of the new navy. It was the flag of history of poetry, and of victory, and for twenty-three years it was triumphant in many hard fought battles on land and sea. It was this flag that the poet Key sang when he wrote "The Star Spangled Banner."

The admission of the States of Tennessee, June 1st, 1796; Ohio, November 29th, 1803; Louisiana, April 30th, 1812, 1803; December 11th, 1816, and Mississippi, December 10th, 1817, compelled a change in the flag, and congress appointed a committee to inquire into the expediency of again altering it. A bill was reported January 2d, 1817, but was not acted on. Some time afterwards Capt. Samuel Reid of Stonington, Conn., famous for the defense of the privateer, General Armstrong, at Fayal, suggested that the number of stripes be reduced to thirteen, and the stars increased to the number of States in the Union, the whole number of Stars to be formed in one large star in a union. The suggestion was acted upon and congress passed, April 4th, 1818, "An act to establish the flag of the United States." The first section provided that from and after the fourth day of July next, the flag of the United States be thirteen horizontal stripes, alternate red and white; that the union have twenty stars, white in a blue field, while the second section provided that on the admission of every new state in the Union one star be added to the union of the flag, and that such addition shall take effect on the fourth day of July next succeeding such admission. There are now forty-five stars in the union.

This is the last legislation on the subject. It was intended in 1850 to have fixed by law the arrangement of the stars in one large star, but it was overlooked. At that time the stars of the flag of the army were arranged in that manner, while those of the navy were arranged in lines. Under the act of 1818 the stars have been added under the direction of the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy. At present they are arranged in six rows. The first, third and fifth rows have eight stars each, and the second, fourth and sixth rows have seven. The standard flag for the army is the garland flag, and is thirty-six feet by twenty feet. The union is one-third the length of the flag and seven stripes wide. The corresponding flag of the navy is ensign No. 1. It is thirty-six feet by nineteen feet. The union is four-tenths the entire length and seven stripes wide. The first time the flag was unfurled aboard a foreign port was on January 28th, 1778, when the ship of war Providence took possession of one of the Bahamas Islands. The first United States flag to appear in England was carried by the good ship Bedford, Captain Moore from Massachusetts. She arrived in the Downs February 3d, 1783. The flag was called Old Glory for the first time in February, 1862, at Nashville, Tenn., by Capt. Stephen Driver, an old sea captain, who had received a beautiful American flag while abroad. On his return he took up his residence at Nashville. Opposed to secession, he was compelled to secede. He sewed it up in a quilt and slept every night beneath it to prevent its being found by the Confederates. When the Federal troops arrived in Nashville in February, 1862, he told them the story of Old Glory, brought it out and hung it to the breeze from the top of the State House. The same flag is supposed to float to-day from the top of our Capitol at Washington.

The Effect of Wind on Lakes.

Attention has been called to the very remarkable effect of the wind on various inland bodies of water. It is not unusual for the residents in towns on the shores of lakes to be greatly inconvenienced, provided a heavy wind blowing on shore continues for any length of time. In the Baltic sea the level has been altered for upward of eight feet. Sometimes the water is blown out of a channel leaving it almost dry. In one instance a depression of six feet occurred on one side of a body of water with a corresponding rise of six feet on the other. Lake Erie has been known to alter its level a distance of fifteen feet on account of heavy winds, and Lake Michigan was at one time the subject of considerable interest from the same cause. The wind was heavy and continuous and piled the water up on one side while the other was so low that people walked out upon rocks where in the memory of man no feet had ever trodden.—New York Ledger.

FAULT-FINDERS.

To fall into a habit of fault-finding is one of the easiest things in the world.

In no place are there so many opportunities for indulging in this sort of thing as in the home.

It is a disagreeable thing to find fault, yet there are some who seem to like to do it simply for the sake of finding fault.

These people do not mean to be chronic fault-finders, and it never occurs to them that they are.

They would not for the world be thought disagreeable, and but for this one trait would be generally very pleasant companions.

They did not acquire this habit at once; any of their friends will tell you that there was a time when they were not so.

They began by noticing very little faults, or supposed faults, among their acquaintances, and the habit grew with them until it appeared as part of their nature to notice and condemn every little fault, supposed or real.

They are very far from being perfect themselves; in fact, they think so much about the imperfections of others that they have very little time to attend to their own.

They would be grieved and hurt should their friends retaliate by noticing every little eccentricity of theirs, and perhaps had their friends the courage to do so it might open their eyes to the unpleasantness of fault-finding.

Everybody has faults of some kind, and most people fully realize how great or small they may be, but nobody cares to be reminded of them every little while. The fault-finders who make a practice of this will soon find themselves with very few friends.

FUNNYGRAPHS.

Ada—Why does Clara speak of George as her intended? Are they engaged? Alice—No; but she intends they shall be.—Tit-Bits.

Canibal Chief—The soup tastes scorched. Chef—Yes, your royal highness, the bigyell is scorched when we caught him.—Evening World.

Cholly (seaside and frightened)—Oh, Mr. Captain, are we far from land? Captain—No, no way. It's only about half a mile to the bottom here.—Chips.

Fond Mother—Yes, sir; I have a little fellow who is only ten, and yet he writes beautiful poetry. Old Editor—Well, there's some hope for 'em when you catch 'em young; you can whip it out of 'em easier then.—Boston Traveller.

Mr. Van Renssely—That man is becoming a fearful bore. He comes in here every day and makes a nuisance of himself. If he doesn't let up I will be forced to move. Caller—Who is he? Mr. Van Renssely—My landlord.—Puck.

"I suppose you've got rid of the girl in the next room who played the piano?" "Yes; but she's a woman in there now who keeps her husband awake half the night coaxing him for a new bicycle." "Do you know the woman?" "Yes, she's my wife."—Answers.

Got a Cold Bath.

"Please fix me up an ice water bath," said Dr. Fernandez of the City of Mexico to Clara Green of the Laclede Hotel yesterday afternoon.

"We don't have them," said Mr. Green sympathetically, as he noticed the great drops of perspiration streaming down the Mexican's face.

"Can I provide an ice water bath myself?" inquired the Doctor, as he proceeded to mop his face with a fresh handkerchief.

"Certainly."

The Mexican called three bell boys at once and in short order a huge chunk of ice was affixed in a bathtub full of cold water. Fernandez remained in the bath until the chunk of ice was melted.

"Well, did you enjoy your bath?" said Green, when Fernandez appeared at the counter looking as cool as a cucumber.

"It was good for a while, but the ice melted and then the water got so hot I had to come out," replied Dr. Fernandez.—St. Louis Republic.

Without a Light.

A small-boy cyclist was riding without a light and was stopped by a park officer, who asked him in gruff tones where his light was.

"Why, it's here," exclaimed the rider in surprise.

"Yes, but it's out," solemnly asserted the patrolman.

"Well it was lighted at that last turn."

"Sonny, it's cold; couldn't have been lighted this evening," triumphantly announced the officer.

"Huh! That thin metal cools in a minute. I'll light that lamp and wait until it gets red hot, put it out, then ride to the next corner and back, and when I return it'll be cold."

"All right, try it," assented the acute policeman.

The boy lighted the lantern, waited until it grew red hot, turned it out, and started, and that kid is going yet.—Philadelphia Press.

A Matter of Colors.

"Sister, I'll want to know if you won't let us take your big awning! She's going to give a party to-morrow night and wants to have it on the piazza."

"Wants my awning?"

"Yep. She would have borrowed the Joneses, but theirs is blue, you know, and Millie's hair is red."

Dejected.

Wearly Watkins—Don't Alabama mean here we rest?"

Hungry Higgins—That's what I says in the books, and I went down there to see about it, and them long-haired, gun-luggin' farmers kep' me or the keen jump from the time I struck the State till I got out."

YANKEE.

Yankee Dewey went to sea. Sailing on a cruiser.

He took along for company. Of men and guns, a few, ah!

Yankee Dewey, Ha! Ha! Ha! Dewey, you're a dandy!

With men and guns, and cruliers, too. You're certainly quite handy.

He sailed away to the Philippines. With orders for to snatch them.

And thrash the Spaniards right and left. Wherever he could catch them.

And Yankee Dewey did it, too. He did it so completely, sir.

That not a blooming ship is left. Of all that Spanish fleet, sir.

Oh, Yankee Dewey, you're a peach. A noble, gallant 'art, sir!

You're 'out of sight,' you're out of reach.

We hail you from afar, sir.

We greet you with three rousing cheers. For you and your brave crews, sir.

For the deeds you've done and the victory won.

For Yankee Doodle Doo, sir.

Yankee Dewey, keep it up. You certainly are handy.

With men and guns and cruliers; too. Oh, Dewey, you're a dandy.

—Brooklyn Eagle.

ALL A MISTAKE.

As Dr. Ashton came skipping jauntily down the steps of Miss Allison's residence up town, one would have supposed him to have suddenly fallen head to a rich legacy, he looked so proud and joyous; and good cause he had to exult. Sweet Edith Allison had within the hour given a smiling approval to his long and earnest wooing, and consented that the happy day should not be a distant one; and Edith Allison was a prize whom any man might be proud to win.

Edith, a beautiful, gentle, and winsome girl, Dr. Ashton should feel that the world in general had assumed a gay mood to celebrate his great good fortune.

But as he went smiling down the street, a little remembrance went flitting through his mind that sent a thrill of disappointment and pain to his heart. His precious Edith, his new-found treasure, intended going that night to the opera in company with some friends, and owing to an engagement previously made with some of his medical friends, an engagement which his duty prompted him to keep, he could not accompany her.

The thought that another would have the sweet privilege of lingering near his heart's idol all the evening, while he was banished, caused a sensation of peculiar bitterness. He cast about his mind to what he should do. Finally a bright idea struck him.

He would send her the loveliest bouquet that could be procured, and the sweet flowers should repeat to her over and over again the story that he had been whispering into her ear that morning, and with their bright faces pleading for him, she could not for a moment lose sight of his great and passionate love.

His round of visits over, he had just time to step into a car and be trotted off to where a bouquet of rare and costly flowers was procured. While the bouquet was being made, he managed to write on a slip of paper a few words:

"My Darling:—I cannot be with you this evening, but let these lovely flowers speak for me. Yours forever, H. A. Ashton." Carefully twisting the little message into the centre of the bouquet, where it should attract her eye, he was soon on his way back to the city.

As he rode along, he remembered with some compunctions that a new patient of his, and a warm personal friend, had requested him to call that day, as she thought she needed medical advice. This lady also rejoiced in the possession of a beautiful daughter, who might have captivated the doctor's fancy had he never met with the gentle Edith.

His watch told him that he could spare half an hour for this visit, and at the end of that time he would carry his flowers to Edith, and be favored with a few minutes of her company before starting.

Acting on this suggestion, he rang the bell and was ushered into the large, well-lighted parlor, where a bright coal fire was burning, rendering the air as soft and balmy as that of summer. It would never do to take his flowers into that warm room, so he carefully deposited them in the hall and sat down to await the coming of his patient. Presently the rustling of a lady's garments told him of her approach, and before he had time to rise and greet her she sprang forward and caught his hands in both of hers.

"Oh, you dear, kind, thoughtful fellow! How good of you to think of this being my birthday! What a lovely bouquet!"

Dr. Ashton's face expressed the vexation that his tongue could not speak, and indeed, the voluble lady gave him no opportunity to open his lips.

"How pleased my dear husband will be with this delicate compliment to his wife!" she continued, still holding his hands in both her own.

"The doctor found his tongue at last. 'If you mean this bouquet in the hall, madam, I must say to you that it is intended for a young lady, and I am ashamed to acknowledge that I was so aware that this was your birthday.'"

"Oh, well, it doesn't matter, my dear doctor," she replied, smiling sweetly upon him. "I knew you should have them, and sent them right up to her."

"Good heavens! madam, what can you mean? What have you done with my flowers?" cried the young man, dim perception of an impending calamity beginning to dawn on his mind.

"The lady put out both hands, and lovingly stroked his hot cheeks. 'How excited you are,' she said, 'but it is all right. Dear Edith burst out like a rose when I gave it to her, and if you could have seen her bewilderment, you would no longer be so doubtful as to her real feelings for you!'

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