

His Wife and His Friend.
By Elizabeth Arren.

"They were just like twin brothers, and nothing but death or women could part them, and of the two, I sometimes think women is the best."

"This is a bit of wisdom uttered by a rural sage, but he has nothing to do with the story and will not appear again. His wise saw is quoted simply to serve as an introduction."

There is sometimes a friendship between man and man that binds them as firmly as the marriage tie binds men and women together. There were two men once between whom such a friendship existed. One of them was a confirmed bachelor. He had assisted many of his acquaintances to the altar, but he had no inclination himself to play leading man to the star of a wedding. The other did not yearn for the collar, and presently he began to think it was not good for man to live alone. The one whose influence served to bring him to this decision was a good and lovely girl who looked upon him with favor. The name of the one who will be a benedict was Charlie. The one who elected to be a bachelor was John, the sober, dignified, and firm in his stable character of perfection, though Charlie, out of his affection, often dwarfed it to the diminutive Johnny, which was not a fit. They advised with each other concerning their plans, and endeavors, and spent long hours together in the silent communion that can only come with perfect understanding.

It was at the end of one of these silent hours that, from behind a



He missed John's friendship into a cloud of smoke, pulled from a meerschaum pipe, the twin to John's Charlie had spoken of the new interest which had arisen.

"It won't make a bit of difference, Johnny, old boy," he said, with a burst of deep feeling. "You shall be one of the family. There's a place for you at our fireside and a seat for you at our table—always. Bless them."

John had seen the way of the wind, but he was not one to force a confidence and had quietly awaited developments. Meanwhile, he had been schooling himself to resign all claims on his friend and to live without the undivided companionship that had grown to be a part of his existence. John was something of an onlooker in life, and he had listened before he had accepted her bestowal upon his comrades left behind in the race premises of undying friendship and future intimacy. He knew there was another factor to be reckoned with, a factor whose claim was greater, and whose influence was stronger. To all appearances he had accepted the information of Charlie's approaching marriage and his assurance of unimpaired friendship as a matter of course. He said a few words only, but the manner of their saying was satisfactory.

After every great decision there frequently comes an upheaval of doubt. A shadow of doubt was glooming the horizon of Charlie's happiness.

"It won't make a bit of difference, Johnny, old boy," he declared again, looking at his friend with a wistful question in his eyes.

"Difference? Why, of course not," John answered readily. "Every man should be married. Go on, my boy, God bless you. I'll be following your example some day myself."

He spoke with an air of truth that was convincing. He who had always been the soul of honor, glories in his fall, and told an unblushing falsehood with the brazen face of a veteran of war.

John was "best man" at the eventual pleasant "round up" in church. All the amenities of a wedding, that came to his hand in the accomplished with the skill of one long practiced. He was the first to speak words of good fellowship and to speed the newly wedded pair on their journey. Then he turned away wondering what he would do next. He suffered from the weariness of spirit that comes to one left alone and unoccupied after a period filled with the reckless joy of living. He was singularly isolated. He had no relatives of home ties, and for years he had acted as a gentle father to the one he called "friend." Charlie was younger and of a lighter nature than John, and the boyish, warm-hearted, unselfishness was like a tonic to the old and earnestly earnest man.

BRITISH RANGE FINDER.

Demonstrations Have Proved Its Effectiveness in War.

The British Naval Department has adopted a new type of range finder, which is stated to be of great value, says the Scientific American. It is the invention of Lieutenant Arthur Vyvyan, the details of the mechanism having been carried out by Mr. Newitt, R. N., an electrical engineer. The utility of this instrument is for transmitting the range observations from the fighting control top to all the various gun positions on board the vessel simultaneously and automatically. There are a series of electric motors, one stationed in the fighting control top, and one at each gun position. These motors all run at a uniform speed, and when there is any movement in the one at the fighting top, the others are similarly affected automatically. For instance, when the officer in the fighting top describes a vessel or object to be brought under fire, he estimates the range and instructs the officer in charge of the motor appliance. A trial shot is then fired some distance short of the estimated distance, say 400 yards. The instrument is set running for this distance, and by means of an indicator and pointer the range is transmitted immediately to the various gun positions. Should the range prove too short another shot is fired, the distance being increased say one-half the under-estimate, viz., 200 yards. The result of this second shot will bring the instrument's pointer to about the correct range. If not, then another shot is fired, the range being again proportionately increased. These trial shots only occupy a few minutes and directly the correct range has been obtained by the recording officer in the fighting top all the various gun positions have it well, and firing can be continued without any delays. The instrument provides automatically for the deflection of range and the speed of the ship. The transmitter has proved completely satisfactory under test, the correct range being invariably obtained by the second trial shot. It has been perfected during the past year and is now in operation at the gunnery school at Whale Island and on board a war vessel, and its utilization is to be extended throughout the service.

Gull Island in Lake Superior.

"Gull Island, one of the Apostle group of Lake Superior, is one of the most interesting bits of land in this country," said a writer in Milwaukee Sentinel. "For the entire island, early in the summer, is literally a mass of gulls' eggs. The birds do not bother much about nest making. A little clump of mud kicked up into a mound, with a hollow top filled with grass or feathers, is all that a gull requires to lay its eggs. These are usually laid three in a nest. In the daytime they are left to the tender keeping of the sun's rays, while the old birds hunt food. When night falls the mother gull sits upon the eggs until the sun has again come well up into the sky so that they are never chilled. The nests are built within a few feet of one another and there are thousands of them. Fortunately the island is seldom visited by a vandal class, and most tourists are content to take one or two eggs as souvenirs, leaving the rest undisturbed. While walking about among the nests one is surrounded by a crowd of shrieking gulls, but in spite of their size they are not savage before the eggs are hatched. After the nests are filled with young, however, the parent birds will fly into the faces of any marauders and make a savage fight for their little ones."

Cordite Diamonds.

By exploding cordite in closed steel cylinders Sir William Crookes has succeeded in producing certain eight-sided microscopic crystals which, so far as examined, resemble diamonds. It further experiments confirm this, a new method of diamond formation will have been discovered. Prof. Crookes estimates that the temperature and pressure attained inside the cylinders at the time of explosion were respectively 5,400 degrees absolute and about 120,000 pounds per square inch.

Chinchilla Becoming Scarce.

The chinchilla, the little rat-like animal which produces the popular fur, is in danger of extinction. Chinchilla used to be found in great numbers in the higher ranges of the Andes, in Bolivia and Chile, but owing to the demand for their skins they have been ruthlessly hunted, in season and out of season, and the Chilean Government finds it almost impossible to enforce a law which has been passed for their protection. The exports from Coquimbo, the principal port for this trade, amounted last year to twelve thousand dozen skins, and the prices paid were double those of the previous year.

Carnegie Car of Gold.

The famous pay car of the Great Carnegie steel and iron interests makes its trips every fortnight, carrying its paymaster and his eight assistants over a route about seventy-five miles of railway from Donora, Pa., to Youngstown, O., paying out in that time upward of \$2,000,000, nearly all in gold coin. A well-known authority at Homestead, who is in close touch with the mill hands, says of present conditions as compared with former years: "The boys never made so much money nor have they been as prosperous as now. The increased tonnage and new machinery have made it possible for them to make more money than ever before. Everybody is happy and all is well."

The Windy Orator.

A longwinded member of the Massachusetts Legislature was delivering a political address in a town not far from Boston, and the village folk gathered in the town hall to hear it. He had been speaking quite a while, when suddenly an old Scotchman arose and walked out of the hall. At the door one of his countrymen was waiting with his back to drive the orator to the station. "Is he done yet, Sandy?" asked the Scot on the box. The old man turned about. "Aye," said he, "he's done lang ago, but he will na stop."

Exchange.

The British government owns more than 25,000 camels.

MEN COMPELLED TO VOTE.

Extra Taxes For Negligent Virginians Over a Century Ago.

In the clerk's office in Mecklenburg I find an old copy of the Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, says a writer in Richmond Times-Dispatch. In it an act is found passed by the Assembly on Dec. 20, 1766, which requires all persons entitled to vote to do so. This is the bill: "Any elector qualified according to this Act, falling to attend any annual election of Delegate or of a Senator, and if a poll be taken to give or offer to give his vote, shall pay one-fourth of his portion of all such levies and taxes as shall be assessed and levied in his county the ensuing year. And for disobeying such defaulters, the sheriff or other officer taking the poll, shall within ten days after the said election, deliver to the clerk of the county or corporation court, as the case may be, a copy of the poll by him taken, to be kept in his office, who shall suffer and candidate or elector to take a copy thereof, and the said clerk is hereby directed to cause a copy of the same to be delivered to the next Grand Jury, to be sworn for the county corporation who shall be charged by the presiding magistrate, to make presentment of all such persons qualified to vote residing in the said county or corporation, who shall have failed to have given their votes at the said election, agreeable to law. And for the better information of the said jury the sheriff of the county is hereby commanded under penalty of £50 to be recovered and appropriated as the penalties for other neglect of his duty to lay before them a list of all the landholders resident therein."

There are filed in the clerk's office many certified excuses to the court for failure to vote. Begging to be excused, by voters who had been indicted for failure to vote. Some of these excuses are novel as well as amusing. One fellow writes that election was held on his fishing day. Another one says he was working in a meeting house when another says he was ignorant of the day of the election. Still another said he would have had to walk eighteen miles as his mare was very lame and his plough horse very poor. One says if I copy him verbatim that he was ready fixed to start to the court house of said county to vote when he was informed that a certain row of his which had a young calf, was missing, when I set out to look for her and did not find her that day, and several days after I found her drowned in the river. This excuse satisfied the court, as the paper is marked "excused."

Like the Ocean "Tramp."

Unlike the ocean "tramp" that steams in ballast from one port to another in quest of a charter, the ocean peddler starts out from Hamburg or San Francisco, the chief home ports of the trade with a definite object in view. Sailing from the former city the course is generally laid either to the coasts of Africa or South America, having in the hold varied assortment of goods likely to be marketable in the regions visited—cotton fabrics, trinkets, arms, ammunitions, liquors—and spare room filled up with coal.

A Queer Find.

The skin of a rattlesnake over three feet long was found at Menominee, Mich., wound tight around one of the pedals of a piano which was being tunned and placed in shape for use. The piano was shipped from Groveton, Tex., last summer, and was nearly two months on the road. Something appeared to be the matter with it when it was set up, the tone being imperfect. Not much was thought of it, however, for some time. Finally it was decided to have a tuner look the instrument over. When the piano tuner opened the instrument he found the skin of the snake, dried and almost pure white, tightly wrapped around the pedal.

The Heir of Holland.

The Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar who has never quite got over the sad death of his young wife, which took place just a year ago, is about to start on a sporting tour in India. Though possessed of most things which are supposed to make life worth living, the young prince has never known much happiness. Early left an orphan, the pathetic story of his lonely childhood is said to have inspired the play of "Old Heidelberg," of which he is supposed to be the hero. He is the richest unmarried prince in Germany. Should the present Queen of Holland have no children he will inherit her kingdom through his grandmother, Princess Sophia of Holland, who married the Grand Duke Charles Alexander of Saxe-Weimar in 1842, so the question of the young grand duke's second marriage is naturally the subject of much speculation.

WEATHER TOLD BY ANIMALS.

Household Pets Act as Thermometers and Barometers.

Before man acquired the pernicious habit of sleeping indoors and when he still practiced the economy of growing his own coat he doubtless, like his four-footed brethren of the animal world, was by dint of constant and intimate intercourse with nature better informed as to her plans for the immediate future—quicker at receiving and registering her telegraphic messages concerning such changes as might be traveling toward this planet. Nowadays neuragic "shoots," gouty "twinges," to say nothing of one gnawing tooth of rheumatism and waves of mental depression play their fiendish part in warning mere man as to what he may prepare to expect. Climatically and atmospherically nevertheless, if he but give heed to the manner in which such furry members of his household that have not been unduly pampered deport themselves he will learn much that shall profit him.

The present scribe, for instance says a writer in the Pall Mall Gazette, knew a cat that in her small person united all the essentials of an expensive Negretti and Zambra. She was thermometer and barometer rolled into one, accurate to a nicety and never liable to "get out of working order." Should the spot upon which she elected to take her constant nap after but a hairs breadth in the matter of temperature she would instantly wake and make a new selection, invariably in some place where the thermometer registered precisely the degree her original resting place had been the particular temperature experience had taught her as being essential to her comfort, and well being. And this though the human occupants of the room had as yet been alive to no perceptible change in the atmosphere of the apartment. Nevertheless such was her innate courtliness of breeding, never failed to call attention to those whom it might concern to the fact by a plaintive "mew" and we feel certain to a meteorologist her presence and revealing admonitory hints would have proved invaluable.

Dogs which are allowed to lead a natural and healthy existence are remarkably reliable in the matter of weather prophecy.

Dogs which are allowed to lead a natural and healthy existence are remarkably reliable in the matter of weather prophecy. Drowsiness and disposition to leave their food uncasted is the way in which a coming wet weather spell takes must dogs. In direct opposition to the canine inertia displayed at such times is the nervous and noisy activity of the woodland squirrel which is wont to give quite 20 to 24 hours warning of an approaching storm, dashing about the trees in a ceaseless state of frenzied agitation, until the expected downpour descends, when he vanishes into his water-tight nest; with all imaginable celerity, even going so far as to stop up the entrance to his fastness and court asphyxia rather than "rheum."

Peddlers of the Sea.

Trudging along over the ocean at a seven or eight knot pace, saving his coal as much as possible, the peddler opens his trade by casting anchor in, say, a South or Central American port, when, having "squared" the commandant, he invites local merchants and others on board to inspect his stock. Duty, of course, has to be paid by the purchaser, but in certain cases that difficulty is often overcome by the visitor to the ship going ashore swollen out, perhaps, to three times his normal size by as many new suits of clothing.

The Value of Massage.

Massaging the scalp is useful for promoting the hair growth and getting rid of headache due to rheumatism. Two hands should be used. One hand is to be placed on either side of the head and then shifted from point to point, the scalp being moved to and fro beneath the fingers. Painless pinching of the scalp between the fingers is also of service. The massage has a great influence over scalp nutrition and if carefully selected hair foods are used at the same time hair growth is a certainty provided the roots are alive.

Man's sugar-coated sweetness usually wears off by the time he reaches home.

QUEER CEREMONIES.

When the Gate of Chinese Capital City Are Closed.

To this day the great gates in the walls of Peking are closed every evening with the queer ceremonies that have been observed for centuries past. Says the Peking and Tientsin Times: "The daily performance is marked with a due ceremony which is quaint and full of interest to the intelligent on-looker, as the closing by no means signifies the mere bringing together of the heavy wooden doors and the barring the emperor's highway against all comers. At the appointed hour preliminary signal is given by a large gong or iron shield being struck with a big iron bar fifty times in such quick succession as almost to defy calculation, and this is followed by 100 double strokes, commencing slowly and gradually increasing to half hurricane rapidly, and this set of 100 blows is repeated in precisely the same fashion three times. When the third and last cycle of gong strokes is entered on, a number of old and, at this season, very much bewadded and muffled up old Charles start a series of discordant yells to all and sundry to hasten or they will be shut out, and this combination of signals is followed by a jostling stream of people from both directions."

Presently the rum slackens until only a solitary pedestrian, or possibly a man on a donkey, full tilt, a belated rickshaw, or a heavily laden cart straggles through. Then a movement is made with the gates, yelling bursts out afresh and another rush ensues, the gates being meanwhile half closed and occasionally opened a little way again, until the outgoers having meanwhile ceased, there is a final scrum to get into the city, and the process of closing, which has taken some half hour in all is concluded.

Then the huge iron-plated doors having clanged to, a monster iron pole is dragged up and placed across them on iron supports, being retained in position by a padlock of enormous proportions and of the well-known Chinese type. There are in all in the city of Peking nineteen gates and the same ceremony is observed at each, but at such roughfares as the Hatanen there is naturally more traffic and the process is probably proportionately larger.

Homely Jobs on the Stage.

In the musical comedy, light opera, and extravaganza chorus beauty in some degree is certainly a necessary qualification, but in the "legitimate" the managers and the public demand talent, says Leslie's Weekly. The combination of beauty and talent is most desirable, but where there is only one, let beauty go. On the stage today, playing in the "legitimate," there are only one or two successful women who can lay any claim whatever to beauty. The biggest drawing cards and the cleverest actresses, by a great majority, are undeniably homely. Grace! yes, to be sure, they are grace, charm, magnetism, voice—anything and everything, but looks. An example substantiating this is Sarah Bernhardt, whose success cannot be challenged. Leslie Carter is one of the homeliest women on the stage, but her name is famous on two continents. Olga Nersisoff, Henrietta Crossman, Mrs. Fiske, Margaret Anglin and so on with half a dozen more, are only moderately good looking. Other successes are of the winsome type, like Maud Adams, but Maxine Elliott is one of the few women stars who are really beautiful.

The Masai of Africa.

Curious tales are told of the Masai, one of the most warlike of the native African tribes. They have been attacking the natives in the German protectorate with great daring, driving off great herds of cattle with singular ease. Half the attacking force will sweep down on a peaceful village, engaging in a bloody fight with the inhabitants, while the other half will drive away the herds. The Masai have a wonderful knack in the management of cattle. A German writer says that a single Masai is often able to coax behind him a whole herd of cattle by lightly whistling and tapping with his spear against his huge shield. The food of the Masai consists of milk and flesh from newly slain animals. In certain districts the Masai have driven away the peaceful inhabitants, whose settlements are now completely overrun by vegetation and almost obliterated.

Fox's Place of Refuge.

A mystery which has long puzzled the South Cheshire Hunt has been solved, says the London Graphic. Foxes hunted in the neighborhood of Combermere Abbey had a way of disappearing, and no trace whatever could be found of them. This occurred at the last meet. An attempt to dig out a fox from a hole into which he had vanished revealed the secret. He had fallen into a main drain, which was evidently a traditional place of sanctuary.

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