

A CULTURED BEING.

Really, Maria, it seems to me that the society is congenial.

"And Lavinia, I am equally certain that the notice emanates from a gentleman."

Miss Maria Kirkpatrick took up the copy of the Times lying on the table and read the announcement again, after which she passed it over to her sister, who perused it with a gentle frown.

It was rather a curious advertisement, and ran as follows:

A gentleman of some means desires for Two Months a Comfortable Home in Refined Circle. Maiden Ladies preferred. Handsome honorarium given. Must be quiet, and in a country district.—Address Vale, 468, Piccadilly.

"I think, Maria," Lavinia said at length—"I think it would suit us."

Miss Maria heaved a gentle sigh of relief. For some time each of the ladies had been frowning round the matter, both longing to suggest such an innovation and neither daring to advance such a heresy as a lodger at Mostyn Cottage. And now the fell thing was said.

That the sisters Kirkpatrick were refined goes without saying. Their late sainted mother had been the daughter of a baronet of long descent; on their father's side they were closely connected with Lord Ditton, whose illustrious ancestor had minded the goosequill with which King John signed Magna Charta at Runnymede.

But, if the ladies were extra genteel, and absolutely correct to the ends of their patrician fingers, they were also poor. The cottage where they lived was beautifully furnished, and one self-trained handmaid gave no cause for anxiety, and yet, at the same time, the internal economy of the place was carried out on rigid lines necessary to people who have to live on £150 per annum.

The advertisement in the Times came as a dispensation of Providence, at a time when money was in market parlance, extremely "tight." Were the sisters fortunate enough to secure the countenance and approval of the mysterious "Vale" it would be quite easy enough to account for his presence in the house. No faint of the lodger could possibly attach to a passing guest, especially as he happened to be a gentleman of some means.

"You had better write to the address in question, Maria," Lavinia said. "It may be worth £50 or £100 to us—it is impossible to tell."

A fortnight had passed since Miss Maria's missive had been dispatched to the address in Piccadilly, and much had happened in the interim. Letters had been exchanged and references given on the one side, at any rate, whilst the gentleman, who signed himself "Robert Vale," was extremely reticent as to his share of the contract. His letters were perfectly correct, but he seemed to know nobody, and, indeed, the thing would have gone off altogether but for a happy thought on the part of the mysterious gentleman himself. In his last communication he had forwarded a £50 note, that being the amount he intended to expend during his two months' visit, and hinting that that was the best kind of reference after all.

Lavinia hesitated, and was lost, the soft crumple of the banknote in her fingers made music in her soul, and her heart went out to Robert Vale on the spot.

It would be flying in the face of Providence to refuse.

As French polish adds to the brilliancy of a sideboard.

Miss Maria was probably more excited than she had ever been in her life before. As she came down to breakfast she held in her long, slim fingers a cornetted sheet of thick paper which was nothing less than an invitation from Lady Ditton to spend a month at Dittondyke, her ladyship's famous seat near to the ancient city of York.

"You had better go, Maria," Lavinia remarked. "Most of the others have been, and we owe some respect to the head of the family. For my own part, I shall never visit Dittondyke so long as that person is there. It will be rather lonely for me, losing you and Mr. Vale at the same time."

Mr. Vale glanced at Maria, and the pleasant, innocent face blushed. Alas! that it should be so, but Maria knew that she would miss Robert Vale far more than Miss Lavinia could. The handsome face and easy manner had done its full work.

"Permit me to be your escort," he said. "I will postpone my departure another day so as to accompany you. As I said yesterday, I, too, am going North."

"Maria, I have a humiliating confession to make to you. I have told you how I love you, and you say you return my passion. Can you forgive me?"

"I could, Robert," murmured Maria—"I could forgive you anything."

"We are nearly at York," Vale went on, as he glanced out of the carriage window, "where we must part for a time. I, too, am going to Dittondyke, but alas! not in the capacity of guest. Maria, I am the Earl's butler."

Maria could only gasp like one in the clutches of a deadly nightmare. "It was this way," Vale went on. "I had been there for ten years when my lord married his present superior, highly cultured wife. She liked me and my appearance very much, but she objected to my grammar. At her suggestion, this summer, while the family were in Germany, I looked out for a refined family where I could reside for a month or two as a guest. I did not fear that anything could betray me but my English, and how that has improved you know. In self-defense, I did not know till long after I came to you that you were related to his lordship."

Vale resumed, but Maria made no reply, and he resumed.

My post is a good one, everything is conducted, especially lately, upon the most lavish scale. In ten years I have saved £3,000. At the present moment I am in negotiations for one of the largest hotels in the Strand, where I shall not be known, and where I have only to remain behind the scenes, and pocket something like £1,500 a year. Maria, neither your sister nor any one else need know, we can live secluded on the continent. I can grow a beautiful beard and moustache. Will you wait for me and marry me?"

"Yes," Maria whispered. "Yes, Robert, for I love you in spite of all I will wait for you, and marry you when your moustache comes."

That night, with steady and manner grave as that of a bishop, Vale strode along behind the row of chairs in the big dining hall at Dittondyke, and as, leaning over Maria's seat, deferentially murmured, "Hock or sherry, miss?" with the aspirate in the correct place, none of the butterflies of fashion gazed at the little romance that blossomed like a full-blown rose in their midst.

The Egyptian Sails.

The sails is a runner who keeps in front of a carriage and warns common people out of the way, and who beats them with a stick if they do not hurry up about it, says the Boston Transcript. It is obvious that to do this he must run quickly. Most men when they run bend their bodies forward and keep their mouths closed in order to save their wind. The sails runs with his shoulders thrown back and trumpeting like an enraged elephant. He holds his long wand at his side like a musket and not trailing in his hand like a walking stick, and he wears a soft shirt of white stuff, and a sleeveless coat lined in gold lace.

And, indeed, to do him justice, so Mr. Robert Vale was. He was tall and spare, with refined, clean-shaven features, quiet and subdued manner, and yet perfectly at ease with the sisters. He was dressed from tip to toe in black, with a perfectly fitting frock-coat; he had handed the things about table with a lordly grace the sisters voted charming. About 40—Miss Maria's age to a day—he looked considerably older, as if by thoughtfulness and a scholarly occupation had aged him before his time.

But, although Mr. Vale's voice was sonorous and deliberate, there were times when his English left much to be desired. It was the one thorn to the rose, the fly in the amber of Miss Lavinia's approval of her guest.

"I have always been a solitary man," Mr. Vale explained, as he noticed a little uneasiness on the part of Lavinia at some faux pas of his, "and, as a boy, I was left entirely to the care of servants. Hence little peculiarities of speech, which you have noticed, although I am hardly cognizant of them. If you ladies will correct any trifling errors of mine, I shall be infinitely obliged."

Once a Year Playtime.

In most countries a girl considers her dolls and toys her own possessions, to appropriate at any and all times. This is not so with the Japanese girl. To play with her dolls is an event—a joy which comes to her but once a year. There is a party, also a meal. This is served on the floor with some sort of sweets, and not to partake is considered very bad form. The next day the treasures are removed and packed away, the girl longing for the day when she shall again enjoy her ever-increasing family. It is a common thing to see as many as 100 or more dolls in one home.

Relics of Ancient Days.

Attention is called by the Travelers' Gazette to recent acquisitions by the Louvre, notably of a life-size bust in chalk, primitively colored, of the hermit king of the eighteenth dynasty, Akhoumalon, or Amenophis IV., one of the strangest figures in the long line of Pharaohs. The bust is a remarkably fine specimen of the period and is well preserved. Besides this there are four sepulchral urns in blue porcelain from the tomb of Ramesses II. In these urns was found, besides funeral linen, certain organic matter, which is being chemically examined.

Spiders and Their Webs.

Spiders are not always solitary creatures. A scientist has lately found in Southern India a species of spider that builds spongy nests with outlying webs, each nest being occupied by forty to 100 spiders, with a large excess of females; sometimes five or six nests are clustered together. The spiders not only live and work together, but they share with one another any prey that may be captured, and some even show maternal affection approaching self-sacrifice.

Solidifying Gelatin.

It was not long ago discovered that by means of a simple chemical treatment ordinary gelatin can be solidified. In this form it resembles celluloid, but it is not inflammable and is therefore not dangerous to handle as celluloid is. It can be colored spotted, or streaked as desired, so as to imitate tortoise shell, coral, mother of pearl and other natural products.

An Unusual Landlord.

Lord Cadogan is known as one of the best landlords in London. When North Street, Chelsea, was remodeled, recently a syndicate wanted to buy his property. He said: "I will sell it, but I must insist upon your granting new leases to everyone who is in that street, so that they will have ample notice." It made a difference of £250,000 to him.

Fish Emitting Light.

In Alaska is found a kind of fish that makes a capital candle when it is dried. The tail of the fish is stuck into the crack of a wooden table to hold it upright and its nose is lighted. It gives a good, steady light of three-candle power and considerable heat and will burn for about three hours.

Mechanism of the Carp.

People marvel at the mechanism of the human body, with its 248 bones and sixty arteries. But man is simple in this respect compared with the carp. That remarkable fish moves no fewer than 43,866 bones and muscle every time it breathes. It has 4,320 veins, to say nothing of its ninety-nine muscles.

The Boy Smoker.

Mr. Saunders, a former school master, told the British House of Lords Committee on Juvenile Smoking that he could detect smokers by their handwriting—that of boys who smoked being of a loose, flabby kind. Handwriting, he said, was a cinematograph of the heart.

Much Married Queen.

Carmen Sylva, Queen of Roumania, story writer and poetess, was married to her husband four times. According to the German civil code, according to the Lutheran religion, according to the Roman Catholic Church and according to the rites of the Greek Church.

Miles of Sea Cable.

There are about 225,000 miles of cable in all at the bottom of the sea, representing \$250,000,000, each line costing about \$1,000 a mile to make and lay. The average useful life of a cable nowadays is anything between thirty and forty years, according to circumstances. About 6,000,000 messages are conveyed by the world's cables throughout the year, or 15,000 a day, the working speed of any one cable being up to 100 words a minute under present conditions. About 90 per cent of these are sent in code or cipher.

Height of English Women.

After taking measurements of the height of women in France, England and America, a doctor announces that an English woman is the tallest, and the American woman comes next. The average height of the French woman is 5 feet 1 inch. The American woman is nearly two inches taller, and the women of Great Britain half an inch taller than the latter American woman, however, weigh slightly more than either of the others, their average weight being about 117 pounds.

An Ancient Charity.

One of the most ancient charities in connection with the church is that at St. Swithin, Worcester. In 1668 William Swift decreed that twelve loaves of bread be given by the church warden every Sabbath morning, and so to continue forever, until twelve aged poor people such as his lifetime as he should appoint, and after his death according to the direction of the church warden and their successors.

Bath for Dogs.

At Dresden a new bath for dogs has been opened for the convenience of busy people, who have not the time to look after the cleanliness of their own pets. Dogs are left at the bath by men on their way to business and during the day they are kept in kennels, cared for, given a wash and a good rub down, clipped if necessary, and returned to their masters when the day's work is done.

Rothschild's Unfinished House.

Passers-by have often been struck by the fact that the chief cornice at one end of Lord Rothschild's house in Piccadilly, London, has been left unfinished. It is said that Jewish tradition insists that some part of a Jewish house shall be left incomplete, in order that the incompleteness may remind its owner that, like his father Abraham, he is only a stranger on the earth.

Favorable to Gladstone.

In the "Life of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury," by Edwin Hodder, the following appears in one of the speeches of the subject of the biography: "When Gladstone runs down a steep place his immense major-apros of nothing 'I found a lit like the pigs in Scripture, but hoping for a better issue, will go with him, snoring its grunts of exultation."

Salt in Epilepsy.

"Whenever we get a call to attend a case of epilepsy," said an ambulance surgeon at Bellevue, New York City, "we always find the patient's neck and face covered with salt. The efficacy of salt as a cure for epilepsy is evidently a relic of some old coin by superstition, though just what it is we've never been able to find out."

Shah of Persia's Wealth.

If the Shah of Persia were to be deprived of his income he could still make sure of being one of the richest men in the world. He would only have to sell his ornaments, gems and precious stones to become possessed of about \$5,000,000, the sum at which the magnificent collection is valued.

Cultivation of Silkworms.

In Italy there are cultivated every year 1,250,000 ounces of silkworm eggs, and there are produced 110,000,000 pounds of cocoons, having a total value, at today's prices, of \$30,000,000. Lombardy produces a full half of this total. The Venetian provinces produce about one-fifth, Piedmont about one-seventh.

LOVE AFFAIR OF A FREAK.

By Mary Roberts Rinehart.

Wilkinson was tired of being a freak; he was tired of selling his own photographs, marked "the tallest man on earth"; he was tired of second-class boarding-houses and of jolting over the country in the circus train; he was tired of drawing a large salary which he had no opportunity to expend. And so one day Wilkinson started out to establish for himself a normal existence and a permanent abiding place.

His seven feet seven inches had brought him money in the past, money which he had no opportunity to squander, and which now lay subject to call in his bank; but that same seven inches promised to prevent his earning any more.

Wilkinson was not discouraged, however. Some place, somewhere, there must be a niche large enough for him. And so, after a time, he found at least an opening. The general manager at Wunderley's was progressive beyond the usual run of dows, he rose another round in the estimation of the firm by engaging Wilkinson to stand in front of the main entrance, top-hatted, tan-booted, and white-breecher, to open and close carriage doors and assist their fair occupants to alight.

Being a good-looking fellow, on a magnified scale, the experiment was an instant success. But after a month or so the manager grew thoughtful. The giant was a great drawing card outside the store, mothers brought their children to stand and gaze, and small boys blocked the traffic on the street. But it was outside the store. The next day Wilkinson was transferred to the main aisle, where, in immaculate frock coat and patent leathers, he directed hesitating customers to their proper departments.

There could be no doubt of the business policy of this move. The ladies' hosiery department and the jewelry counter, both being near the door and Wilkinson's stand, asked for an extra wrapper each, and the store put out a special tie in the neckwear just across, and called it the Wilkinson.

Little Miss Arthurs, the head of the jewelry, who was barely five feet, gazed with envious admiration at Wilkinson's stalwart figure, and as she earnestly read advertisements of short people made tall, while the Shorty Jennings, in the neckwear, was apoplectic with envy.

"I'm fixing up a flat," he said, "the place in one of the new apartment houses, six rooms and a bath. There's a nice kitchen, too, but what's the use of a kitchen with no one to use it?"

Miss Arthurs flushed and gazed uneasily toward the neckwear, where the little Jennings was glaring through a crack in the door of green and brass. "Why don't you find some one to use it, Mr. Wilkinson?" she asked working the button nervously into place. "You've got a nice position, I'm sure."

"Who'd have me?" he questioned pathetically. "I'm still a freak, if I have left the circus. There are times yet when I reach in my pocket for my photograph, and the smell of tanbark makes me sick."

"When I was a kid young enough to bawl for things, I was as big as my father. I guess I never was a baby. Nobody thinks of me as a man. I'm a giant, that's all. When I meet any of the people from home, they never come up and ask me how I am and what I'm doing. No, they walk up and wink and clap me on the elbow, and say, 'Well, Jim, still growing, are you?'"

He sighed heavily, and slipped his hat into place. "I'm exactly like a mountain range," he said sadly. "We've each got one dimension, height. Talk about lonely mountain peaks!"

He stalked off then, and Miss Arthurs looked after him pityingly. "That even a casual acquaintance with an elephant will permit people to get on with Wilkinson, and a woman for these advances he condescended to a chosen few that the flat was practically furnished, even going into details of Morris chairs and Smyrna rugs with Miss Arthurs.

"It's a home, anyhow," he finished, "and I've been folded up like a camp chair in the berth of the circus sleeper so long that it's good just to have a decent place to sleep."

Business at the jewelry counter continued to increase, and Miss Arthurs asked for another saleswoman. Perhaps it was an accident, perhaps design, but there was a small sensation when the new clerk appeared. She was quite the tallest woman any of the clerks had ever seen, and when the manager, who was short and extremely corpulent, brought her around the corner and past Wilkinson, little Jennings withdrew behind his counter in an agony of mirth.

"Say," he whispered across to Miss Arthurs, "ask her if she's paid by the week or by the yard." But Miss Arthurs could have cried with vexation; beside the newcomer she dwindled into insignificance.

As for Miss McGowan, she towered elegantly behind the jewelry counter, dwarfing everything before her by comparison, until a six-inch silver nail-file which had made

a respectable appearance at fifty cents, shrank to half its former impressiveness.

It was some time before Wilkinson noticed the new arrival. It was still early, and the aisles were almost empty, so he came over and dropped into a chair near. When he leaned over and asked her height the girls around nudged each other and smiled, and when the following day he announced to Miss Arthurs that he had arranged at the basement confectionery for soda water for her department, it was considered a delicate attention to the new girl. And then the annual picnic occurred. Wilkinson had not expected to go, but the thought of a day alone was unbearable.

When he finally reached the car and slipped into the first vacant seat, which happened to be beside Miss McGowan, he was entirely oblivious to the titter that, beginning with Jennings, just behind, went through the car. Later he watched the dancing enviously—he had never danced, and worked off some of his loneliness and discontent at the seven inches promised to prevent his earning any more.

Wilkinson was not discouraged, however. Some place, somewhere, there must be a niche large enough for him. And so, after a time, he found at least an opening. The general manager at Wunderley's was progressive beyond the usual run of dows, he rose another round in the estimation of the firm by engaging Wilkinson to stand in front of the main entrance, top-hatted, tan-booted, and white-breecher, to open and close carriage doors and assist their fair occupants to alight.

Being a good-looking fellow, on a magnified scale, the experiment was an instant success. But after a month or so the manager grew thoughtful. The giant was a great drawing card outside the store, mothers brought their children to stand and gaze, and small boys blocked the traffic on the street. But it was outside the store. The next day Wilkinson was transferred to the main aisle, where, in immaculate frock coat and patent leathers, he directed hesitating customers to their proper departments.

There could be no doubt of the business policy of this move. The ladies' hosiery department and the jewelry counter, both being near the door and Wilkinson's stand, asked for an extra wrapper each, and the store put out a special tie in the neckwear just across, and called it the Wilkinson.

Little Miss Arthurs, the head of the jewelry, who was barely five feet, gazed with envious admiration at Wilkinson's stalwart figure, and as she earnestly read advertisements of short people made tall, while the Shorty Jennings, in the neckwear, was apoplectic with envy.

"I'm fixing up a flat," he said, "the place in one of the new apartment houses, six rooms and a bath. There's a nice kitchen, too, but what's the use of a kitchen with no one to use it?"

Miss Arthurs flushed and gazed uneasily toward the neckwear, where the little Jennings was glaring through a crack in the door of green and brass. "Why don't you find some one to use it, Mr. Wilkinson?" she asked working the button nervously into place. "You've got a nice position, I'm sure."

"Who'd have me?" he questioned pathetically. "I'm still a freak, if I have left the circus. There are times yet when I reach in my pocket for my photograph, and the smell of tanbark makes me sick."

"When I was a kid young enough to bawl for things, I was as big as my father. I guess I never was a baby. Nobody thinks of me as a man. I'm a giant, that's all. When I meet any of the people from home, they never come up and ask me how I am and what I'm doing. No, they walk up and wink and clap me on the elbow, and say, 'Well, Jim, still growing, are you?'"

He sighed heavily, and slipped his hat into place. "I'm exactly like a mountain range," he said sadly. "We've each got one dimension, height. Talk about lonely mountain peaks!"

He stalked off then, and Miss Arthurs looked after him pityingly. "That even a casual acquaintance with an elephant will permit people to get on with Wilkinson, and a woman for these advances he condescended to a chosen few that the flat was practically furnished, even going into details of Morris chairs and Smyrna rugs with Miss Arthurs.

"It's a home, anyhow," he finished, "and I've been folded up like a camp chair in the berth of the circus sleeper so long that it's good just to have a decent place to sleep."

Business at the jewelry counter continued to increase, and Miss Arthurs asked for another saleswoman. Perhaps it was an accident, perhaps design, but there was a small sensation when the new clerk appeared. She was quite the tallest woman any of the clerks had ever seen, and when the manager, who was short and extremely corpulent, brought her around the corner and past Wilkinson, little Jennings withdrew behind his counter in an agony of mirth.

"Say," he whispered across to Miss Arthurs, "ask her if she's paid by the week or by the yard." But Miss Arthurs could have cried with vexation; beside the newcomer she dwindled into insignificance.

As for Miss McGowan, she towered elegantly behind the jewelry counter, dwarfing everything before her by comparison, until a six-inch silver nail-file which had made