

THE LETTER THAT CAME

(Original.)

Poor little soul," said the surgeon, "she left it too late, you know, and we could not do anything. She'll hardly last through the night. Think. Her face seems very familiar to me."

"Why, of course, she was our wardmaid before she married two years ago. She used to come and see me very often, and always made him out one of those noble creatures that only want a chance—though, all the time I knew he was just a worthless wretch. He was brought into the accident ward early this morning. Rather a bad smash-up. It seems he broke into one of the city churches by some scaffolding, and when he was making off with the contents of the alms-boxes, fell from a height on to the aisle."

"He came to see his wife about ten days ago, and was stuffing her up with a long story that he was going down into the country to look for work. A fine bit of work he was accomplishing."

"Well, Sister, I must be off. Can't you contact a letter or something to keep her ignorant? It would be too brutal to let her know about him now."

"What is it, Mary?" she said gently, as a few minutes later she stood by No. 21's bedside and with skillful touches arranged the pillows till she saw a smile from the pale face assured her she was comfortable. "Sister, dear, in case I—shouldn't get better, I'm fretting so about Bill. He hasn't written yet, and he was hoping that if he got work in Ashleigh I would get strong again in the country air. My sister's there, and they are such loves of cottages. Perhaps I'll get better after all, with a hopeful glance, "but I wish he would write or Bessie would write for him. I feel I'd sleep easier tonight if I had a letter. Don't let me have the sleeping draught to-night, Sister. There might be a letter by the last post, and nurse wouldn't bring it then for fear of disturbing me."

Sister Evelyn, with a world of sorrowful compassion in her eyes, felt the weak pulse running like a stream that is nearing its end, and wiped the damp forehead where the soft little curls, that had always seemed so incongruous in a working girl, lay matted. "I'll tell nurse to wait awhile, and if there's a letter, will bring it to you myself. Perhaps he was waiting till he had settled everything comfortably before writing. Men don't understand what they call our 'impatient ways' do they? But now you must try and get a little sleep, else I shan't want to disturb you if the letter comes, and I shall want to know all about it. I'll write to your sister in the morning. Mrs. Orton, the postoffice, you said? Yes, now take your medicine and rest awhile. Nurse, No. 21 need not have the sleeping draught tonight. I'll see her myself about nine o'clock, and if you want me, I'll be in the 'Men's Accident.'"

Sister Ursula reported Mary's husband, though suffering from a broken leg and sundry cuts and bruises, to be quite capable of writing a letter, and had indeed just asked for writing materials. William Walton, it was evident at the first glance, was of a very superior class to Mary. Good-looking, with an almost aristocratic cast of features, no one would have dubbed him the idle unscrupulous loafer he had proved himself to be. Absorbed in his own "ill luck," as he called it, even the certainty of his poor little wife's end failed to strike an unselfish chord. He began by abusing what he chose to style the hospital's "lack of resources." Surely if he could not get out of bed, the porter could carry him to his wife, etc., etc. He quite failed to grasp the shock of an accident could not fall to have one in her condition. His idea of a letter seemed to be a detailed account of his own "trials," ending with a sentimental farewell to her self. Sister Evelyn's suggestion that he should write a letter that should give Mary the comfort of supposing he was really in the way of honest work, elicited a virtuous refusal to back himself to any deceit; but the sister had a way of getting people to see things in her light, and she did not leave till she went away triumphant with the following epistle:

"Dear Mary. You will be thinking I ought to have written before, but I've had so many disappointments that I thought it was no good writing. My luck has turned at last, for I've heard of a place as handy man a few miles out from here. There's a cottage too, none as bad they tell me, and you and I will tidy it up together. It will give us a fresh start, and you the country air you need. So duck up old girl. Your loving husband, Bill."

Reading this post No. 21's bed sister Evelyn listened to the shallow breathing with a tender thought of the letter which, by the by, would have comforted the loyal heart, and she soon saw the stamp so as to see the post. At last she went down to the post-office, and saw how the letter had been sent to the man.

AS SHE NEARED THE GLASS DOORS ON HER RETURN, SHE TOOK THE LETTER OUT OF HER APRON POCKET THAT THE BIG BLUE EYES, STRAINING THROUGH THEIR GATHERING WEAKNESS, MIGHT SEE THE WELCOME OBLONG.

"Sister, is that it? Let me feel it. Thank God!" The tender-hearted plotter put the letter in the cold feeble hands. "It's so dark in your corner. I'll fetch my little lamp and read it to you."

"Will you open it, Sister, my hands are so cold tonight." "I'll put your shawl over them, and then you can listen comfortably." Softly she read the letter, and slipping it under the pillow, stole a glance at the radiant happiness that lit up the dying face.

"Thank you, Sister. I felt it would come. My Bill only wanted a chance. Sister, I believe I'll get better after all. It wouldn't do to waste my chance, would it? I think I could sleep a bit now if I tried. The letter will make me dream of my Bill."

Her last words, and her last thoughts; but Sister Evelyn, standing half-an-hour later at the bedside, took absorption into her soul from the peace on the face of the dead woman.

The Science of Scarpology. Call's phrenological system, which had so prodigious a success sixty years ago, is well known. It was based on the hypothesis, not confirmed by experience, that the brain, constituted by parts or organs, each serving a certain affection or instinct or particular faculty, appeared to be in supposed relations with the development of each of the corresponding qualities. What is less known is that M. Garre, of Basle, wished to found, some twenty years ago, a similar science by attempting to prognosticate the mental characteristics by means of footgear. This is scarpology.

According to the Swiss doctor, old shoes are worth more in order to judge of the wearer's character than the facial features, the lines of the hand or the signs of the handwriting. By examining them one can recognize the lack of energy, inconstancy, the tendency of negligence and to elude obligations and attacks of bad humor. If the heel and sole of a shoe worn for two months are worn equally one finds one's self in the presence of an energetic man of business, of a safe employe, a distinguished wife or an excellent mother. If the wearing is more marked in the outer edge the wearer has a fantastical turn for adventure, a daring or a stubborn spirit. If the wearing is greater on the inner edge it indicates irresolution or feebleness in a man and modesty in a woman. And in support of this opinion M. Garre reports that, having some years before seen a stranger enter his house whose shoes were worn on the outer edge with the toes worn down and the remainder in an almost unused condition, he had a very correct sentiment that he had a rascal before him, and, in fact, the next day the man was arrested for theft.

This is what scarpology is capable of. To everybody it is therefore important to wear equally both heel and sole of boots at the risk of seeing one's reputation suffer. In any case, the example just given proves how phrenology, chronology, graphology and scarpology are far from serious, since from a more or less well observed fact one draws deductions the value of which is more than doubtful.—From the European Edition of the Herald.

A Paris for Millionaires.

If certain predictions are to come true and it looks really as if facts prove that they would a time will surely come when none but millionaires will be able to live in Paris. For some years past the prices of so many things have gone up that when compared with what they were formerly, or what one imagines they should be, they have attained fabulous heights. It is well enough for the traveler or occasional visitor to get a sort of chill at times at the sight of his hotel bill, but what about the permanent resident, who has to pay many another bill beside which that of a few days' hotel expenses is a mere trifle. Prophets have arisen on every hand to show that a time will come when the permanent residents will probably have to live on one meal a day and an abstinence of a few days' hotel expenses will be a mere trifle.

Prophets have arisen on every hand to show that a time will come when the permanent residents will probably have to live on one meal a day and an abstinence of a few days' hotel expenses will be a mere trifle. Prophets have arisen on every hand to show that a time will come when the permanent residents will probably have to live on one meal a day and an abstinence of a few days' hotel expenses will be a mere trifle.

Measuring 10 feet and 6 inches, an octopus, while being killed at Toronto, Victoria, entwined a tenacle so firmly around the foot of one of its captors that the membrane had to be cut to free the man.

A TRAGIC HONEYMOON

(Original.)

The tragic element in the thing lay in its happening on the eve of my wedding-day.

I had called at the house of my fiancée late in the afternoon impelled by that sense of insecurity that haunts a man in the face of a great impending happiness. An unconfessed desire to make sure of my Nina took me to see her for the last time before she would be actually mine. I was in love—desperately in love—infatuated above the common, having arrived at that mature time of life when one is liable to take the disease in an acute form.

Though painfully personal, it is essential to explain that for years my life had lain under a blight. I had been wretchedly handicapped by nothing more or less than physical bulk. But no need for me to advertise my humiliating proportions. Courses of Turkish baths, of massage, of Sandow—I had tried them all with unvarying failure. I was a spare eater and practically teetotal but the revolting tendency ran in the family, and refused to be checked.

Ushered into the drawing-room of the Larches, I became aware of something strangely unfamiliar about the apartment. Workmen and decorators had apparently been performing feats in anticipation of the morning, and tropical plants waved luxuriant branches, looking astonishingly at home, considering their brief term of occupation. A substratum of emerald moss, to be starred next day, Nina had explained to me, with gorgeous blossoms, was laid down on the tiled hearth.

While I waited, I suddenly realized that I was tired. The day preceding a man's marriage is not one which, as a rule, he feels called upon to kill time. Therefore I crossed to a chair. It was an unfamiliar basket one, but I did not notice this; also, that it was lower than I had realized—till I had taken it.

The back and seat were padded with dark velvet cushions, but, in spite of these, it creaked quite alarmingly as I lowered myself into it. To be strictly accurate, it squeaked, emitting a long-drawn crescendo sound, while the cushion beneath me gave forth audible protest, groaning after the manner of a deflated balloon.

When this had continued for fully half a minute, I rose with a vague, unexplained uneasiness. The cushion still faintly heaved. Had it been an animate thing, I should have said it palpitated. I put my hand out and touched it, and it was warm. I lifted it. It fell together in a formless mass. I was nonplussed. I had never in my life seen a well-conducted cushion behave so. I am extremely short-sighted. I screwed my eyes glass firmly into my eye, and stared at the object I held in my hand. Then a thrill of positive horror ran through me, as if an incision had been made in my spine, and ice-cold water squirted therein.

It was no inanimate square of down I clutched between my fingers, but something sleek, warm, quivering! I pressed my eyeglass more emphatically into my eye. It was the lifeless body—the muscles, still twitching convulsively of Nina's pet lap-dog!

Words are too feeble to express my sensations. I was transfixed with horror. Then a sound roused me from an aghast contemplation of the shapeless mass of fur in my hand. It was Nina's voice trilling in the hall: "Oubvres tes yeux bleus."

On the impulse of the moment I thrust the dog's dead body into my great-coat pocket, and turned to confront my sweetheart. "Well, what do you think of it?" she asked coming to meet me. "Think of it?" I blustered, steadying my lips with difficulty. "It's altogether too ghastly. I mean"—tardily grasping the fact that she referred to the decorations—"I never saw anything better gone in my life—never, upon my soul! They are simply A 1. Got the tropical touch about them to the life."

She was close to me now, and—yes, at the side nearest to the pocket. At this juncture a curious, unexplained mutual telepathy or "brain wave" caused her abruptly to cross the floor away from me.

"Fan—Fan!" she cooed, in approved baby lingo, addressing the empty basket-chair, which stood a little in the shadow. "Where is 'oo, ducky? Where is missus' own ikko girl?" Failing to discover her pet where she expected to find her, her eyes swept the room inquiringly. "Fan—Fan!" she reiterated. "Where can she be?" she went on turning to me. "I shut her up in 'ere. She had been out and in among the workmen's feet all day."

I was speechless, but she did not appear to notice my silence. She went to the door and opened it, detached a silver whistle from her chatelaine and blew a shrill blast. No reply. She returned to me, but her tone was only half concerned.

"She'd have liked to see you," she observed. "You ought to be flattered. She shares her mistress' partiality for you."

She smiled up in my face. I put my arm around her, and then abruptly withdrew it. She was on the pocket side again. I crossed, hastily to the present table. She followed, murmuring half to herself: "You should have seen her. She looks like the dullest thing imaginable, in a big white satin bow we've got for her for tomorrow."

"I—I daraway," I rejoined feebly. Dusk was falling—kindly, mercifully, as I walked away from Nina's door. Tomorrow at this time—But no, that train of thought got itself somehow swept out of sight. There was still to-day to be lived through. I walked briskly till I reached the fringe of the village, where the houses dwindled and scattered. Then the river came in sight, with its shelving gravelly sides. I chose a secluded spot, sheltered by a clump of trees. Surreptitiously I extracted the canine corpse from my pocket, selected a trusty stone, knotted a piece of string about it, attached it to Fan's lifeless body, and dropped it into a deep, dark pool.

The silent watery circles spread and spread above it with a weird noiselessness that made me feel a criminal indeed. But the deed once done, I walked away, breathing more freely. Let me put the incident out of my mind. Was not the morrow my wedding day, with a hundred and one pressing demands?

"If only Fan had not been lost!" sighed my new-made wife, nestling up to me in the railway carriage. "And on my wedding-day, too!" It seems so horribly unlikely, and has cast quite a gloom over things. But surely—surely, Ger, shall turn up."

"She always was a 'cute little beggar,'" I prevaricated. Next day a strange, foreign-looking telegram was handed to me at our first halting-place.

"Oh, Gerald, about Fan!" exclaimed my wife, clasping both hands round my arm, and raising eager, beseeching eyes to mine. "Oh, do—do say it's to say that Fan's found!" I disentangled myself gently.

"I am afraid," I said apologetically, opening the telegram, "it's—it's only about the key of my portmanteau."

"I sometimes think one of those horrid, horrid workmen stole my poor Fan," she muttered piteously. "You know the fourth was the last day she was seen."

"I hardly think so, darling," I said. "She wasn't quite the sort of pet a workman would fancy, and you know her breed wasn't sufficiently pure to make her really valuable."

"Then something has happened to her," she said with mournful conviction. "She may turn up yet, I suggested."

"Ethel has promised me she'll leave no stone unturned to find her," she wailed another day in disconsolate accents.

But, judging "from my sister-in-law's next letter, her promised intervention had been superfluous. The stone had turned itself.

"Poor dear Fan!" the letter ran. "The mystery is solved at last. The body was found a couple of miles down stream with a bit of string still round its neck, once weighted by a cruel stone."

My sister-in-law's next letter breathed a positively vindictive yearning for revenge. "I am absolutely determined," she wrote blood-thirstily, "to run the heartless wretch to earth. I have set all sort of machinery in motion. I shivered. Eugene Aram wasn't in it with me. That wretched animal, dead and buried even—Ethel had given it decent burial—was still to allow me no peace. Through all our honeymoon ran the refrain of "Fan—Fan!" like a wail in the minor key. It dogged our steps—the pun is unintentional, I being in a far from punning mood—it obscured Swiss mountains; it blurred Italian skies; it was waiting for us on our door-step—no, before that—on the railway platform!

"I've got a clue at last," Ethel burst out, receiving us at Charing Cross—"a clue to Fan's death! Sykes—you know Jim Sykes—the village idiot, declares he was an eyewitness of the whole affair."

"But—but Sykes, even by your own showing, is an idiot," I broke in, stammering, the beads of perspiration gathering on my brow notwithstanding that the evening was chilly. Ethel turned to me.

"But idiots are often astonishingly shrewd," she persisted. "He declares he saw a big man—a very big man—with emphasis—'come down to the river's edge, and deliberately take Fan out of his pocket, tie a string round her neck, attach a heavy stone and drop her into the river.'"

"A big man?" Nina echoed, in a voice of chagrin. "Oh, Ethel, that isn't much of a description! That won't convict no one!" "Jim is almost sure he could spot the wretch," she pursued.

Was I, then, to go in terror of the village "natural" for the rest of my life? Nina shuddered, momentarily covering her eyes with her hand. "I'm not done yet," went on Ethel, and there was a malicious ring of triumph in her tone. "I made Sykes take me to the spot, and I spent an hour there, raking round, up and down, through the grass and gravel—I always said I had the making of a detective—and I found this!" She put something into Nina's hand. My wife looked puzzled. Her eyes involuntarily sought mine.

LOVE AND ADVERTISING

By Charles H. Day.

A girl with physical charms and mental endowments is certain to have more than one admirer and in the course of human events a single person is elected to perpetual favor, barring the chances of fate, a divorce and remarriage, then another chap takes second or third place "and so on to the end of the chapter."

While A Girl is a Miss, the race for her favor and hand is a grand free for all with Cupid at the wire as the contestants come down the home stretch. During the run it may be everybody's race, although some fall out before the call of "Go!" wearied with ineffectual scoring. Some who, at the start, had apparent prospects of winning, only reach the distance pole to find themselves flagged out.

A Girl in Urban had for her two most ardent admirers, The Editor and The Storekeeper. They were first and second choice, with a local difference of opinion as to which swain was the real it. The many other eligibles were not considered and A Girl apparently was in doubt. Editor who jumped to his feet in a puzzled with all his experience in matters of the heart.

The wise men and the wiser women of Urban were equally divided as to the outcome and awaited the final result with intense interest. A Girl was possessed of literary ability and that it was argued, was in favor of The Editor, who published her poems and essays on the front page of the Banner, but that was no guarantee that he might not find himself "Respectfully declined with thanks" and consigned to the waste basket of blasted hopes as "not up to the standard."

The young ladies of Urban were free to prophesy that A Girl or any girl—should not hesitate to select The Storekeeper who kept almost everything a woman's heart could desire on his capacious shelves and could afford to keep a wife in style—at cost prices. Thus does finance figure in affairs tending toward the altar. At the same time, the fair one conceded that A Girl would find in the Editor a life companion quite as well to do and of similar tastes.

Elderly persons of both sexes who estimate matrimonial alliances on a mercenary basis agreed that from a money point of view The Storekeeper, with his larger earthly possessions, "had the inside track."

Young men of sporting proclivities who kept tabs on all the events of the season and at time risked a deposit on their opinions, said that it was "even money" as to the result, and if they were going to invest, they would "flip a cent before putting up a dollar."

"With honors even," both the contestants were confident, unlike Cupid and A Girl was granting "a fair field and no favor."

A former coquette, passe and returned, judging from her own sad experience, sighed and observed to herself: "What a pity if A Girl throws away both great chances, by not extending extra encouragement to one or the other and landing him and deciding her fate while the opportunity of youth and beauty presents itself."

The antique relic of conquests that failed of final victory at the altar, could have given expert advice to A Girl who, not being a coquette was unawares letting the future take care of itself.

The Storekeeper was the best patron of The Editor; the most enterprising merchant in Urban and although he was the most prosperous and his position a living evidence of success, his competitors were not awake to the profits pertaining to newspaper publicity. The Editor had time and again sounded several of the larger firms on the advisability of using generous space in the columns of the Banner, but they were not to be converted. In fact, they looked upon what advertising they did do as a sort of charitable contribution to the maintenance of a local newspaper. In a patronizing way they said one and all to the same effect:

"Of course we are glad to have a newspaper in Urban and are willing to encourage you. We run our cards in the Banner just to help you out." Fudge, the senior trader in town went further in saying quite offensively: "It is just giving you the money, advertising is no good. I got rich before you came here, without it."

The Editor retorted: "I am not passing the hat. What you did is one thing and what you are doing is another. You got rich before I came, but you have not made much money since. The Storekeeper is getting the best of the business and you are getting beautifully left."

"The same as you are," snapped Fudge, not hesitating to touch The Editor on a sore spot, the tenderest portion of his anatomy, the heart. "It's dollars to doughnuts The Storekeeper wins A Girl."

The Editor's retort "was more naughty than nice as he passed out in a huff. The remark of Fudge aroused a spirit of jealousy in the mind of The Editor which was increased as he was passed on the way to his office by his rival. The Storekeeper and A Girl chatting and laughing in a happy mood; they saluted him graciously, but in return he yanked his head in a surly manner and looked at his rival and remarked "As if he had been eating nails."

Arriving at the office of the Banner he found the copy for The Storekeeper's weekly change of advertisement; there was nothing strange in that. It was on time as usual, but for the first time it was in the handwriting of A Girl instead of the familiar dirigraph of the merchant. He dropped the copy on the floor and almost fell into the editorial chair so overpowered was the shock. Recovering from his overwhelming surprise, he regained the copy and sat with it clutched in his hand, dazed and irresolute, tempted as he pondered and gathered his scattered faculties by the impelling of the Green-eyed Monster that in the struggle conquered his better judgment and possessed him body and soul. To the demon that directs to destroy, he made a complete and abject surrender. Just as he had capitulated the foreman entered and asked for The Storekeeper's copy. At a glance he recognized the handwriting and he laughed as if greatly amused and volunteered a comment: "I thought so."

It was fortunate that the superintendent of the mechanical department passed out quickly and shut the door behind him. Fortunate for The Editor who jumped to his feet in a terrible rage and executed a waltz with awful verbal accompaniments worthy of a lunatic Sioux savage. The verbal and terpsichorean pyrotechnics made such a rumpus that the satanic imp of the establishment remarked to the tramp comp at the case: "Gee! I wonder what's broke loose in the intercollegiate bureau. The boss is either throwing a fit or kicking a man who's cum in to thrash the feller that writ that—" "Better peek in," suggested the tramp comp. "Not on your life," objected his satanic majesty "I did that once on the boss knocked us both through the partition. If youse any ways anxious, youse can investigate."

During the fandango in the editorial room and the conversation detailed, the foreman was chuckling over the copy of The Storekeeper, shaking his head and grinning with an extension of the mouth that threatened to push back his ears.

After his unseemly display of temper, The Editor plumed himself back in the chair editorial, as soon as he recovered his breath, his first impulse was to do something desperate. The Green-eyed Monster suggested that he rush to the bar of the hotel and fill up. The proportions of the Evil One was declined as beneath the editorial dignity and against the stomach of the bad advisor, there was no murder in his heart, although he felt very much like exploding from a high pressure of mental excitement. As reason began to attain sway, he rebuked himself for unseemly thought and action with the self advice: "Don't make a fool of yourself."

The Editor set out to follow his own advice by attempting to calm down and assume his normal condition. Just as he was approaching the state of safe and sane, the door opened and in walked A Girl all smiles and as serene as youth, beauty and contented complacency could make her. How fortunate that she did not arrive a few moments earlier and witness the crazy exhibition of a mad lover wrought to desperation by jealousy. The young lady remarked as she seated herself without waiting to be invited:

"I have brought in my latest, 'The Man of the Hour.' I hope you will like it."

"And who is the man of the hour?" asked The Editor almost savagely, quite forgetting himself. "That depends," returned A Girl sweetly with mischief in her dancing eyes.

"Is it me, or The Storekeeper?" asked The Editor, surprised at his audacity. "A Girl was the most composed of the pair, but she blushed furiously as she returned: 'I have never had the opportunity of declining either.'"

"Would you refuse me," pursued The Editor. "You have never asked," responded A Girl with her eyes directed to the floor.

"Will you?" he asked. "I will," she answered before he could complete the inquiry. An instant later the printer's devil opened the door on the sly and noisily peeked into the sanctum. What he saw he at once reported to the employees of the mechanical department.

"Get out an extra, the boss is hugging and kissing the star contributor."

The foreman was so upset by the authentic news that he so far forgot himself as to emit an ejaculation that would not look pretty in print. When the engagement was announced the first person to congratulate The Editor was The Storekeeper: "I thought I would bring you to it. Such are the sweet uses of advertising."

Glass bathtubs are coming into general use in Germany.

The Emperor of Japan has 30 physicians and 60 priests.