

### That Pair of Boots.

The Wardels were to give a Christmas party, and my father declared I should attend it, notwithstanding my two great and only drawbacks—bashfulness the most distressing, and feet that took a full "tens and a half," with the big toe endeavoring to work its way in the direction of a pair of "elevens." Otherwise I was presentable enough, and was fairly educated besides. I thought I could decipher my father's anxiety regarding this, my first appearance in society.

Nelly Wardell was a handsome girl, and her mother, who was a widow, had the reputation of being wealthy. I surmised, therefore, that he thought Nelly and myself, who had never exchanged a word with each other, might accidentally knock up a flirtation that would end in the union of both our families.

Although in by no means indigent circumstances, I happened, through my own carelessness, to have but one pair of shoes that I could at all wear to the party, and these, to my utmost consternation, I had ruined completely while practicing a waltz, before the looking-glass, about an hour before it was time to dress. I was in a state of dreadful alarm, as I knew how difficult it would be to find a pair of anything that would fit me, and was equally satisfied that my father, whose temper was not the best in the world, would assert that I had purposely burst the uppers and soles asunder so as to avoid accompanying him to the house of his old friends. There was, therefore, not a moment to lose; so sending to a neighboring shoemaker in the hope of obtaining some sort of relief, the messenger returned with a pair of somewhat heavy new boots, about an inch too tight and an inch too short, that had been made for a customer for whom they were too large, and who had ordered two sharp "frost-nails" to be driven into the heel of each, to keep him from slipping on the icy sidewalks, and which, in my anxiety to try whether they would fit me or not, I had failed to notice. After half an hour's fearful and almost fruitless exertion, I managed to get my feet wedged into them; but not before Dick Meredith called for us, who was to take us in his "trap," and who just entered my room, as with one final jerk and effort I accomplished my all-but impossible task, and slipped on my overshoes that were now a mile too large for me.

Had I given the subject a moment's consideration, I would not have informed him of how the case stood, or of how I was beginning to suffer; but, being dreadfully perplexed and martyred at the moment, I let the cat out of the bag; and to a fellow who was one of the most incorrigible wags in the whole town, not even excepting Nelly Wardell herself, who was eternally playing the most mischievous pranks upon all her friends and acquaintances, without distinction.

When we arrived at the widow's they were dancing quadrilles, for it was somewhat late. Dick helped me to alight, as my feet were so numb and painful that they seemed about to fall me altogether, for I scarcely knew when they came in contact with the flags. After a few steps, however, I got a little relief; although, when I entered the hall and got a peep at the glass over the umbrella-stand, I perceived that I was absolutely pink about the ears, from the fact of the blood having been driven to my head.

Not daring to complain, I staggered through the presentation to our hostess and her fair daughter pretty decently, and subsided into a corner, determined to make my escape from the house at the earliest possible moment, and wondering at the ease and agility displayed by the dancers in an adjoining apartment, the folding-doors of which were thrown wide open.

When I first entered the hall, and removed my Indian-rubber overshoes, I seemed to stick to the floor at every step; but once within the carpeted drawing-room, this sensation passed away, and I thought no more of it, being sufficiently occupied with the pleasant consideration that my feet were steadily becoming larger and larger, and that if I did not experience sudden relief, I should be constrained to rush from the premises without a word of explanation.

While in this distressing state of mind, and while cursing the folly which tempted me into so dire a dilemma, I noticed Miss Nelly, to whom Dick had just been speaking, coming toward me. For a single moment I forgot my agony and arose from my seat; but what were my horror and dismay, when she took my arm in the most bewitching manner possible, and led me into the ball-room, declaring that I must dance a polka with her! I thought that I should have sunk through the floor; but there was my father at my elbow, and to attempt to hesitate for a moment, would, I was satisfied, lead to a serious rupture between us. Consequently, as best I could, I expressed my delight at the honor she did me, and I stood with her on the edge of the dance, ready to cut in, at the risk of my life, the moment opportunity served.

Now, when I alighted from Dick's "turn-out" on the hard stone flags, the sharp points of the frost-nails must have been bent into claws, for no sooner did I step on the polished floor than the sensation of the hall returned in full force, as my feet again stuck to the boards as if they weighed twenty or thirty pounds each. Determined, however, to shake off the nightmare which seemed to be overshadowing me, I made one desperate effort, and dashed off with my partner, while the wood flew in minute particles like sawdust at my heels, as I began to plow up the smooth expanse in the most frightful manner. I was becoming at once furious and paralyzed; but feeling that my only safety lay in courage and rapidity of motion, I raced my partner along until, in passing an open fire place, I picked up a hearth-rug with one of my demoniacal heels, and whirled it among her feet. The next instant we were dashing headlong into a knot of the first people in the place, who were unceremoniously scattered in all directions.

Fortunately, Miss Nelly, who had for some time been convulsed with laughter, regained her feet without injury, while I amused the company by endeavoring to extricate myself from the infernal rug, through a sort of Indian war-dance, in which no sooner had I kicked it off one foot than it clung to the other. It was more than human nature could bear. Young and old were holding their sides, save my father, who thought I had gone suddenly crazy. Through a final, fortunate dash, however, I got clear of the disastrous article, and rushed for the door leading to the hall, with a view to escaping into the open air. Just, however, as I was flying past Mrs. Wardell, who was seated in a flowing, cherry-colored silk dress, directly in my way, one of the cursed crooked nails or fangs which had already wrought me such dire destruction, caught one of her flounces, and the next instant she was whipped out of her chair

and thrown on the broad of her back, while I fled, bare-headed, into the street, with a strip of silk about two yards long flying at my heels!

How I got home I never could tell; but this I know, I had to cut the villainous boots off my feet piece-meal, and on the following morning only discovered the mystery of the iron fangs with which my heels were armed.

As may be presumed, my father was terribly disappointed and mortified, for he perceived his hopes, as to Nelly, scattered to the winds. It was a week before I left the house, and when I did venture down the village, the first persons I got a glimpse of were Nelly and Dick, turning a corner, arm-and-arm, while a short distance from them a group of ragamuffins, who were playing on the sidewalks, cried out at the top of their voices the moment they caught sight of me, "That pair of boots!" Within a day or two I remembered that I had received an invitation to visit my uncle out West, and, availing myself of it, I bade a temporary adieu to the scenes of my youth.

### The Food of the Ancients.

The diversity of substances which we find in the catalogue of articles of food, is as great as the variety with which the art of the science of cookery prepares them. The notions of the ancients on this important subject are worthy of remark. Their taste regarding meat was various. Beef they considered the most substantial food; hence it constituted the chief nourishment of their athletes. Camels' and dromedaries' flesh was much esteemed, their heels more especially. Donkey flesh was in high repute, and the wild ass brought from Africa was compared to venison.

In more modern times we find Chancellor Cupret having asses fattened for his table. The hog and the wild boar appear to have been held in high estimation. Their mode of killing swine was refined in barbarity as in epicurism. Pigs were slaughtered with red hot spits, that the blood might not be lost; stuffing a pig with assafetida was a luxury. Young bears, dogs, and foxes (the latter more esteemed when fed upon grapes), were also much admired by the Romans, who were also so fond of various birds that some consular families assumed the names of those they most esteemed. Catus tells us how to drown fowls in Falernian wine, to render them more luscious and tender. Pheasants were brought over from Colchis, and deemed at one time such a rarity, that one of the Ptolemies bitterly lamented his never having tasted any. Peacocks were carefully reared in the Island of Samos, and sold at such a high price that they fetched yearly upwards of \$10,000 of our money. The guinea-fowl was considered delicious; but the Romans knew not the turkey, a gift which we moderns owe to the Jesuits. The ostrich was much relished; Heliogabalus delighted in their brains, and Apicius especially commends them. The modern gastronome is, perhaps, not aware that it is to the ancients he owes his fattened duck and goose livers—the inestimable *foies gras* of France. The swan was also fattened by the Romans, who first deprived it of sight; and cranes were by no means despised by the people of taste.

While the feathered creation was doomed to form part of ancient delights, the waters yielded their share of enjoyments, and several fishes were immortalized. The carp was educated in their ponds; and rendered so tame that he came to be killed at the tinkling of his master's bell or the sound of his voice. The fame of the lamprey is generally known; and the sturgeon was brought to table with triumphant pomp; but the turbot, one of which was brought to Domitian from Ancona, was considered such a splendid present that this Emperor assembled the Senate to admire it. The red mullet was held in such a distinguished category among genteel fishes, that three of them, although of small size, were known to fetch upwards of \$1,000. They were more appreciated when brought alive, and gradually allowed to die, when the Romans feasted their eyes in the anticipated delight of eating them, by gazing on the dying creatures as they changed color like an expiring dolphin. Snails were also a great dainty; Fulvius Herpinus was immortalized for the discovery of the art of fattening them on bran and other articles; and Horace informs us that they were served up, broiled upon silver gridirons, to give a relish to wine. Oysters were brought from England to Rome, and frozen oysters were much extolled. Grasshoppers, locusts, and various insects were equally acceptable to our first gastronomic legislators.

### Parental Sympathy.

The *Illustrated Christian Weekly* is of opinion that parental sympathy, viz., feeling for and with the child, sharing the child's joys and sorrows, is one of the most potent influences for good in the family government. A family may be under strict discipline without it, certainly. The home may become, under the reign of a strong will, a little realm of order and quiet. There is obedience because the strong hand of the law is feared, but it is not obedience in the best sense. The usual result is that the moment the opportunity is presented the yoke will be thrown off, and the new-found liberty will probably degenerate into license. We are no advocates of loose family government. We believe most profoundly that if parents were more positive in securing obedience from their children, there would be less lawlessness in the State. But we know also that the two things can go together. There can be firm family government and at the same time true parental sympathy. It is vastly better to rule by love than law. The law must be invoked sometimes; its penalties must be inflicted. But, as for us, give us love, give us sympathy as the keynote of our household government rather than law. Law, by all means; obedience. But secure obedience by your fellow-feeling with your child. Then have your obedience from the heart and not from slavish fear. Then you have obedience not only to positive commands, but even to unspoken wishes. Then you have obedience—the best there can be.

### True Women.

Every man of sense and refinement admires a woman as a woman, and when she steps out of this character, a thousand things that in their appropriate sphere would be admired, become disgusting and offensive. The appropriate character of a woman demands delicacy of appearance and manners, refinement of sentiment, gentleness of speech, modesty in feeling and action, a shrinking from notoriety and public gaze, aversion to all that is coarse and rude, and an instinctive abhorrence of all that tends to indelicacy and impurity, either in principle or action. These are the traits which are admired and sought for in a woman.

### Female Courage.

There is a branch of general education which is not thought at all necessary for women; as regards which, indeed, it is well if they are not brought up to cultivate the opposite. Women are not taught to be courageous. Indeed, to some persons, courage may seem as unnecessary for women as Latin or Greek. Yet there are few things that would tend to make women happier in themselves, and more acceptable to those with whom they live, than courage. There are many women of the present day, sensible women in other things, whose panic-terrors are a frequent source of discomfort to themselves and those around them. Now, it is a great mistake to imagine that hardness must go with courage; and that the bloom of gentleness and sympathy must all be rubbed off by that vigor of mind which gives presence of mind, enables a person to be useful in peril, and makes the desire to assist overcome that sickliness of sensibility which can only contemplate distress and difficulty. So far from courage being unfeminine, there is a peculiar grace and dignity in those beings who have little active power of attack or defense, passing through danger with a moral courage which is equal to that of the strongest. We see this in great things. We perfectly appreciate the sweet and noble dignity of an Anne Boleyn, a Mary, Queen of Scots, or a Marie Antoinette. We see that it is grand for these delicately-bred, high-nurtured, helpless personages to meet death with a silence and a confidence like his own. But there would be a similar dignity in women's bearing small terrors with fortitude. There is no beauty in fear. It is a mean, ugly, disheveled creature. No statue can be made of it that a woman would wish to see herself like.

### Modest Merit.

At the last meeting of the Limekiln club, Brother Gardner rose up, swept the hall with the glance of an eagle, and said: "Gem'len, ez I was walkin' round dis maw'nin' I 'proached a spot where a hoss hed fallen on der street. Dar was a right smart o' men roon' dar, an' eb'ry man o' dem was pushin' an' jammin' an' clawin' to be nearest to de dyin' anamul. One man yelled out one ting, an' den anodder yelled sunthin' else, an' de poor hoss didn't know whedder it was best to live or die. Did I rush inter dat crowd? Did I jump up an' down an' raise my clahyun voice above de odds? Did I push all dem fellers away an' shriek out dat I'd raise dat hoss or die?" "In course you did!" replied Chowder Davis, as the president halted for breath. Brother Gardner bestowed upon him a look of XXXX contempt, and slowly continued, "No, gem'len, I didn't! I stood back on the outskirts o' dat crowd, sayin' nuffin to nobody, an' knowin' dat I'd be called on, if wanted. Dat's my principul, and dat's de principul dat I wants to vaccinate into eb'ry black man in de country. Some fokes hab got be impresshun dat de man wot does de mos' whoopin' and yellin' and attracts de mos' attenthun am de chap wot makes de bigges' pile o' cash, but doan' you believ it! De empty wood-wagon makes five times de noise dat de costly kerridge does. De burdock takes up ten times de room dat de tulip does, but de tulip hez de bulge on de burdock when it comes down to beauty and mahket value. De modest man hez all de bizness chances dat de forward man hez; he keeps on gainin' de respect of de world, an' bimely he crawls to de top of de hen-coop, while de blow-hard rolls into de ditch. Modesty am its own reward. It am capital in de bank; it am first morgage on improved real estate; it am a purty fa'r sort of religun. Stand back! Doan' try to git dar befo' all de rest. Doan' be shootin' off dem moufs for de simple sake of usin' up yer spar' time. As do poet says:

"De big sunflower may rise above  
De modest 'tater-vine,  
An' brag about its Sunday clothes,  
An' put on airs so fine;  
But when de winter howls around,  
And de snow lies at de doah,  
De big sunflower, oh! whar am he—  
De 'tater hez de floah!"

### Courage.

It is so easy to say, "Never give up the ship." It is so easy to hold your head up and step firmly, to laugh cheerily, and have a pleasant word for everybody, when safely hedged in from sorrow and poverty, by the love of friends and a bottomless purse. When sickness passes by and knocks at some other door, when home is the one "sweet, safe corner" in all the world, when there are those who would suffer that you might go free—ah! then it is so easy to feel as if nothing could ever make you quite discouraged. This is a beautiful world, and there are lots of good things in it. Yes, many a son and daughter, a few wives and mothers, and about the same proportion of husbands and fathers, do not live more in the shine than in the shadow of life. But there are so many, so many more, who have to buckle on their armor, and spend their best heart's blood in the daily life. Such bitter trials as men and women do live through! Who can doubt that Heaven sends them their fortitude? It cannot be of earth. Such strain of heart as hearts and brains do bear up under! Is it any wonder that weary hands sometimes fall despondingly, and weary heads bow discouraged? O, ye, whose paths are in the pleasant places! whose faith was never tried by Heaven's seeming disregard of your prayers and tears! who never knew the lack of tender home love and protection, exult in your happiness, and thank Providence. But while you drink from your cup of life such honey-sweet draughts, give a thought now and then to those whose daily portions savor so strongly of wormwood, and remember that a kind word and a helping hand, which cost so little, may make lighter the burdens of one now almost discouraged.

### A Test of Honesty.

A gentleman once bought two lottery tickets, one for himself and one by request of a friend who was absent. In the course of a few months the lottery was drawn, and the friend for whom he had bought the second ticket, and who had not been called upon to pay for it, received a note informing him that he had drawn \$20,000.

"But how did you know which ticket was mine and which was your own?" inquired his friend.

The honest man replied: "I bought two tickets and placed them in my bureau drawer; but, thinking there might be some question, I marked the one I intended for you with a cross, and I found it was your ticket had drawn the prize."

Match this who can as an instance of downright honesty.