

LITERATURE.

LAYS OF MARRIED LIFE.

THE WEDDING DAY.

I am married! I am married!
Weep, ye flirting maids of Cam,
The deed is done, the point is carried—
What a lucky dog I am!
What a pleasant dream my life is!
(Best of dreams, because 'tis true!)
What a charming thing a Wife is!
(I almost wish that I had two!)

Noble brow of thought and feeling—
Lips whence music breathes her spell—
Cheeks whose blushes are revealing
What that music dares not tell—
Eyes, in whose blue depths divine, ho!
Purest spirits deign to lodge—
All these beauties now are mine, ho!
Marriage is a splendid dodge!

I'm so glad I fixed on Nancy!
Laura speaks so loud and quick;
Caroline quite took my fancy,
But her ancles are too thick,
Jane should be an hair's breadth shorter,
Helen is a size too small,
Rose, I'm sure, drinks too much porter,
Fanny is too thin and tall.

They all have loved me—how intensely
Maiden ladies only know—
Oh, I pity them immensely,
They have much to undergo!
Such devotion, such attention,
Whispers, blushes, smiles, and tears;
But 'tis hardly fair to mention
All they do, poor little dears!

Nancy's hit the proper medium,
(What the French call *juste milieu*.)
Who could feel a moment's tedium,
Sportive Nancy, when with you?
Gentle, tender, soft, complying,
Yet not wanting intellect,
On my every glance relying,
Looking up with sweet respect.

How I wooed her, how I pressed her,
By one little word to bless,
On my bended knees addressed her,
Till the darling whispered 'yes';
Half a dozen men of fashion
All rejected for my sake,
To reward her soft compassion
What a husband I will make!

When she plays, I'll turn the leaves, and
When she works, I'll hold the skein,
Soothe her kindly if she grieves, and
If she laughs I'll laugh again;
Read aloud in rainy weather,
Give her up the easy chair,
Never smoke when we're together,
Nor at other women stare.

Every moment play the lover,
Let her have a female friend,
Never sleep when dinner's over,
Make her presents without end;
Pay her bills when she requires it,
Fill her purse with joyful haste,
Cut my hair if she desires it,
(But I know she's too much haste!)

Happy then, thrice happy we, love,
Thus to share so bright a fate;
Married life to us shall be, love,
One delightful *tele-a-tele*!
Turn we from the world's caressing,
From its pleasure, pomp, and pride,
To enjoy life's dearest blessing,
At our own beloved fireside!

THE MYSTERIOUS HUNTSMAN.

BY PAUL CRAYTON.

CHAPTER I.

The Family of the River-Des-Plaines.

To him who has been pent up in the walls of a city during a portion of his life, or for him who has sailed for months upon the ocean without beholding land, there can be no sight more beautiful, more refreshing, than the prairie, between the months of May and October.

We speak not of the prairie which has been described as low, monotonous, and capable of giving root and nourishment to naught but tall coarse grass, but of the prairie as it still exists—broad, fertile, undulating, covered with a robe of the richest green, and ornamented with a variety of the loveliest wild flowers—in short, of the prairie which the first of American poets has so beautifully described, and which we have wandered over in person with no companion save our dog and gun.

Within a few years the population of the prairies of

Illinois has increased with astonishing rapidity. The banks of all the principal rivers, which are bordered for the most part with thickets and heavy oak trees, are now inhabited by emigrants from almost every portion of the world. The timber has fallen, the deer is hunted from its native home, and on the broad prairies which extend from stream to stream, houses, barns, and fields of grain appear.

Upon the banks of the *River des Plaines*, several miles south of the famous Mount Juliet, which Schoolcraft has so ably described, there dwelt not many years ago, a family which had emigrated from Vermont. The population at that time was somewhat smaller than at present, but still the neighborhood in which this family resided boasted of many respectable emigrants from the Eastern States. Of these none were more highly esteemed than the family in question, and surely, none possessed a finer locality or richer lands. In short, Mr. Austin was an industrious, enterprising and benevolent man; his wife a fit companion for such an individual, and the fair Ellen, a worthy offspring of an upright father, and a once beautiful and still good-looking mother.

Besides Ellen, who was sixteen years of age, Mr. Austin had another child—a son—who remained at the East to finish his education, and who, at the time our story opens, was daily expected by his parents in the West. This young man was of a fiery disposition, talented but self-conceited, head-strong, and above all, bitterly satirical.

Not far from the residence of Mr. Austin, which as we have said, was one of the banks of the *Des Plaines*, there lived a young man of an eccentric disposition, about whose existence a sort of mystery hung. He was about twenty five years of age, tall, well made, dark complexioned, and possessed of a most striking and expressive countenance, which, if not handsome, was at least dignified and manly. He lived alone upon the edge of the prairie, dividing his time between hunting and fishing, and cultivating a small tract of land which he had purchased. He was affable to all; but there was but one whose society he courted; and that one was Ellen Austin. In fact, matters had been carried so far that it was rumoured that Clinton Grover and Ellen Austin were soon to be united by bands which death alone can sever. It is needless to say that Ellen's companions cautioned her against encouraging the addresses of one whom she scarcely knew, and who was apparently poor and friendless. However, there was something in Clinton's appearance that dispelled all her doubts, and won her heart in spite of his poverty and mysterious course of life.

CHAPTER II.

The Inn.

It was in the month of August; the day was drawing to its close, and the shades of evening were gathering slowly over the prairie. It was at that hour when the day seems to melt gently away, and the stars appear faint and glimmering upon the canopy of heaven.

A hunter, at that time, might have been seen plodding his way along the sloping banks of the *Des Plaines*.—His gun upon his shoulder, and his game-bag, filled with a dozen grouse, or prairie hens, was strapped upon his back. A faithful pointer, faint and weary, followed close behind him, stopping occasionally to bathe his burning tongue in the waters of the stream.

This hunter was no other than Clinton Grover. In the middle of the afternoon he had wandered forth to enjoy his favorite sport, and giving way to the excitement of the hunt, had carelessly proceeded several miles from home. Hunger now became pressing, and having left the prairie for the bank of the stream, he began to look forward in hopes of seeing the well known roof of a tavern which was situated on the river *Des Plaines*.

At length, after proceeding some distance down the stream, the inn of the 'White Rabbit' appeared in view. This was a rudely constructed building, designed for the accommodation of hunters and travellers in that portion of the West; and well it carried out its design, as ourselves can witness, having more than once had occasion to test the skill of the landlord, and to taste his wines, his venison, and wild fowls.

Clinton entered without ceremony, and giving his gun and bag of game into the hands of Boniface, threw himself carelessly upon a lounge.

'You are always sure of making a good hunt, you are,' said the landlord, casting a glance of admiration at the heavy game. 'If I was to hunt a week I'm sure I could not kill a dozen of as fat chickens as you have got to-day.'

'And not to-day,' returned Clinton, 'but during just two hours time this afternoon. But it is nothing; I have killed twice as many before in just half the time.'

'Lucky fellow!' sighed the landlord.

'Lucky? Why every man has his gifts, as my grandfather used to say. I have the good fortune of being a tolerable good shot, while you, old fellow, are blest with the faculty which enables you to get up the most tempting supper in the world. By the way, I am a little fatigued in the region of the stomach, and the memory of the fat venison steaks I've had the honour of eating at your table before now makes me impatient; so serve me a dish as soon as possible, and in addition to the usual fee, you shall take your choice of the fattest chicken in my bag.'

'Good!' exclaimed the landlord; 'and if you have no objections I'll take the rest at the usual price.'

'Impossible,' replied Grover, 'I killed them expressly to give to my neighbours. But the supper.'

'In eleven minutes and a quarter,' said Boniface, looking at his watch.

Left to himself, Clinton Grover took his dog's head upon his knees, and stroking his head mechanically, was soon lost in meditation.

He had remained but a short time in this position, when two travellers arrived at the door of the inn. The waiter hastened to take care of their horse and carriage, and invite them to enter.

'Water him in half an hour, and give him four quarts of oats,' said the elder of the two, who was apparently one of those who, at that time, in case of necessity, helped travellers on their way by private conveyance. 'Do not unharness him,' he continued, 'for although he has been driven from Chicago to-day, he has got some half a dozen miles further to go to-night.'

'Is it not more than half-a-dozen miles?' asked the young traveller.

'It is not more than eight, at farthest,' replied his companion.

'Then it seems to me it is scarcely worth the while to stop.'

'You can do as you like about it,' said the elder traveller, somewhat sharply; 'but as for my horse, he shall go no further until he has been fed.'

'I beg your pardon,' returned the other, 'I had forgotten the horse in my impatience to get along.'

The two now entered the tavern and Clinton Grover had a fair view of the countenance and figure of each. The younger alone attracted his attention. He was a year younger than himself, and possessed of a fine dark eye, a lofty brow, and a slight but well proportioned frame. He entered and sat down at a short distance from the huntsman.

Clinton, who was somewhat vexed to think that his supper was delayed, continued to pat the neck of his dog without appearing to notice the strangers.

As is often the case, when we least wish for company, two additional travellers arrived just at the time when the landlord was coming to announce that supper for three was ready. As it was his custom to make all his guests sup together, he hastened to order a few additional preparations, thus causing a second delay, to the great annoyance of Clinton.

The new comers advanced to the bar-room, and seemed greatly rejoiced at beholding the young traveller who sat opposite Clinton. It appeared that they had become acquainted at Juliet, or on the road between that place and Chicago.

Clinton, who was of a taciturn disposition, remained silent while the four new comers engaged in a lively conversation. At length supper was announced.

The table was plentifully spread, but five excellent appetites served greatly to relieve it of its load. The repast ended, the company returned to the bar-room in which the horse boy had, in the meantime, been regaling Fido, Clinton's dog, with scraps of venison and poultry.

CHAPTER III.

The Combat.

'Dogs are curious animals,' said the young traveller whom we have described, regarding Fido, and at the same time lighting his cigar.

Fido, as if being conscious of being the subject of conversation, crept to his master's side and slunk behind his chair; Clinton paid no attention to the remark, but began to make preparations for continuing his journey homeward.

'Curious animals,' continued the young man, who was evidently anxious of saying or doing something to gain the approbation of his companions, 'by the way, did you ever see a dog smoke?'

'Never.'

'It's a pity: they are the finest smokers in the world. If you wish to see the operation, I promise to make that cur smoke my cigar down to nothing.'

'Good!' exclaimed his companions.

Clinton said nothing. The young man called to Fido, who remained obstinately behind his master's chair; at last, he advanced, and took the dog by the ears, and in spite of his resistance, dragged him to the centre of the room. Clinton's eyes flashed fire, but he said not a word. As for the young traveller, he had promised his companions a treat, and did not easily retract.

'He may not like the taste at first,' said he proceeding to place the cigar between Fido's lips, 'but I promise you he will soon get used to it.'

A cry from Fido—a long, pitiful cry—told that in the struggle he was burned.

'Fido, come here,' said the hunter, in a half-suppressed decided tone.

The poor dog struggled to get free, but the young man, who had evidently been piqued by Clinton's silence, still held the animal by the ears.

'Young man,' said the hunter, pale with suppressed passion, 'let my dog come to me—I have called him.'

The traveller answered with a sneer. His companions shrunk back, for they saw the storm about to burst.

'Do you hear?' cried Clinton, starting to his feet.

'And what if I do?'

The young man loosed the dog, but it was only to advance with a passionate gesture towards the hunter.

'Do you dare insult me?' said he.