

my wedding-dress, and we returned to our old lodgings at the Isle of Wight. It was Jack's suggestion that we should be married in the place where we had such happy associations—probably, though he did not say so, because the only alternative would have been a revival of very sad ones; and I readily acquiesced. Our banns were published in the sweet little Bournemouth church, wherein we sat, Sunday after Sunday, side by side, to listen to them (though we were warned how unlucky it was); only a few friends amongst the congregation, who afterwards witnessed the ceremony, knowing who John Stafford and Margaret Monteith were. I used to begin to tremble violently as soon as I saw the clergyman open his book at the second lesson, in anticipation of what would follow; but Jack faced the ordeal on each occasion with his characteristic *sang-froid*, gazing into vacancy over the meaner heads of his fellows, with a calm air of lofty indifference which must have defied suspicion. Only he would seek my hand furtively, if he could do it unobserved, and hold it tightly.

The day came, bright and beautiful after a night of summer showers. I rose early and made the tea, and gathered some roses for the breakfast-table; and Mrs. Carter and I had our morning meal together, as usual, with the windows thrown open to let in the delicious sea-air. The kind old lady was far more unhinged and tearful now than she had been on the former occasion. She had had us both about her so long that she could not bear to part with us. Arrangements had been made by some of our friends in Bournemouth to take her away from the loneliness of the house when we were gone, and in a day or two to escort her back to London; but the prospect of settling down quietly

for the rest of her life in her comfortable little Bayswater home did not seem to cheer her. However, she made a gallant effort to bear up, and did it nobly.

I need not describe the wedding itself; nobody can want to know about that. I dressed myself all in white, at Jack's express desire; and a Colonel Moberly, from Portsmouth, who had known both him and my father in years gone by, came over to Bournemouth to give me away. It was like other quiet weddings, I suppose, only it *must* have been a happier one. As we were coming down the churchyard path, somebody in the crowd which had gathered to look at us whispered audibly, "What a handsome, well-matched couple!"

"I'm glad of that," observed Jack, in his calm way; "I was rather afraid they would think you had married your grandfather, Daisy." He must have known that nobody ever could look at him and entertain so preposterous an idea for a moment!

When it was all over—the little breakfast, and the speeches, and the congratulations—when I had changed my white dress for a cool suit of brown holland (for it was such a hot afternoon), and kissed dear Mrs. Carter, and shaken hands with our small circle of friends, who were already preparing for a cruise about the Solent in Colonel Moberly's yacht—my dearest Jack and I went away to a remote corner of the island, which he had long ago selected as being out of the track of autumn tourists, and took up our abode for a fortnight in an old farm-house.

People say there is no such thing as perfect happiness in this world; but they are wrong.

THE END.

## HOW WE MANAGED OUR GARDEN PARTY.



TO begin with, our garden was not large. It was a very pleasant one; indeed, to us who had always lived in the town, it was perfectly delightful. During the long, cool evenings of summer, it was our greatest pleasure to stroll up and down the walks, picking a weed here and there, cutting the dead leaves off the twigs, collecting the fully-blown roses for our potpourri, and, when in an industrious mood, taking the hose and watering the plants, and listening to the sound of

the drops falling upon the thirsty earth.

Our garden was one of the old-fashioned kind. It was not straight up and down, but of an indefinite shape, which made it appear much larger than it really was. The part at the front of the house was laid out as a lawn, and round it were beds filled with bright flowers and shrubs. On one side an iron

archway, covered with Virginian creeper, led to the kitchen-garden. On the other side was a clump of evergreens proudly denominated the shrubbery, and a winding path round this led to a rather insecure rustic seat, overshadowed with roses and clematis. There was nothing extraordinary about the place, still it was retired and pleasantly shaded, and much to be preferred during the hot weather to the close stuffy rooms in-doors.

For my own part, I rather liked the idea of giving a garden party, and with a little hesitation broached it to Charlie.

"What has made you think of it?" said he. "Is this a consequence of visiting Mrs. Woodhead, and seeing the gaily-dressed people passing to and from the garden parties at Chiswick?"

"Well, I believe that has put it into my head," said I, "though, of course, I should never dream of having anything in the least approaching to—"

"The Prince of Wales' garden parties. I am glad of that," said Charlie, and we both laughed.

"I would not imitate his Royal Highness at all in this affair," said I. "For instance, his guests assemble about three, and leave at six, in time for dinner. I



would have ours meet at six, and stay as long as they can. It is light now till nine o'clock, and the evening is the pleasantest part of the day. When it is too dark to stay outside, they might go in and spend the rest of their time in-doors."

"Oh, then you don't intend to have a marquee erected," said Charlie.

"No, I don't; but you need not smile so quizzically. If we were very rich I would, and I would have supper laid out there, and have the place lighted with wax tapers and Chinese lamps. I think I could arrange it very well. But we are not rich. We are only "ordinary people," and we wish to have a few friends to spend the evening with us. The weather just now is fine, but very hot; it is much pleasanter out of doors than in; we are fortunate enough to possess a pretty little garden, and therefore we propose that our friends should be invited to a garden party. If they are told what they have to expect, they can come dressed suitably for walking out of doors."

"I see now where you are, my dear," said Charlie, "and I think it is a very good idea. I could not fall in with it at once, because I did not quite understand. A garden party is such a large term—it may mean a breakfast party, a *déjeuner à la fourchette*, or a croquet party, or an archery meeting, or a kettledrum, or Mrs. Leo Hunter's *fête champêtre*, or a reception at Chiswick."

"It would not mean anything out of the way with us," said I. "It would mean a pleasant social gathering, in which the guests were entertained in the garden instead of in-doors. I have arranged it all in my own mind, and I only want your consent and assistance."

"Oh! I am your most obedient," said Charlie. "I should like to make one suggestion, however, and that is about the day."

"Is there any day that you would prefer?"

"No; I only wish to suggest that it should be soon; say a day at the beginning of next week. The weather just now seems settled; the glass is very high, and I think we are justified in expecting that it will be fine for some days to come. But if you give a long invitation it may change, and how unfortunate it would be if it were pouring with rain all day! that would spoil everything."

"Of course it would. To-day is Wednesday. We will say next Tuesday."

"Now, what assistance can I give you?"

"Plenty. We will divide the labour between us. You must have everything prepared for croquet and lawn tennis and bowls; the best way to make people enjoy themselves is to give them something to do; then introduce them to each other, if they are not acquainted, and set them to work, or rather to play, as soon as possible. I shall never forget the uncomfortable evening my sister and I spent at Mrs. Harvey's garden party. All the arrangements were excellent, and the supper was perfection, but we knew none of those present—we were not introduced to the others—and we walked round and round, professedly admiring the plants, and wishing the affair were over."

"I don't see any occasion for feeling like that," said

Charlie. "You should have talked to people. You would have found them very agreeable, and very likely as desirous to make acquaintance as yourself."

"Ah! that would have been easy for a gentleman, but it was not easy for us. I must say, I don't like going to places where the hostess does not introduce her guests to each other."

"Very well, I will help you in that," said Charlie. "What else?"

"Of course you must provide the wine."

"Shall we have wine?"

"I think so. Shall I tell you what I should like us to have, Charlie?"

"If you like, you can; but I don't see the good of it. Whatever you propose I am sure to agree to, because I don't understand the details of a thing like this. I can tell you what I wish you would do, however, and that is, let me know what the cost of the whole thing will be. I shall have it to pay for, and I like to know beforehand and understand clearly what I am agreeing to."

"That is quite right," said I. "I will put it all down for you, and if you think my ideas are too expensive I will circumscribe them. One thing I must have, and that is about ten shillings' worth of flowers."

"Flowers are cheap now," said Charlie, "and you can get *some* out of the garden, though of course we must not spoil its appearance for the evening, but have it looking as pretty as possible. But do you think you will need as many as that?"

"Yes. I know they are cheap, but I so much like plenty of flowers on the table. I would have large epergnes in the middle of the table, filled with flowers and fruit; and besides this, a small vase should be placed before each guest; then there should be vases here and there and everywhere. If only the cloth is snowy white, the glass and china are bright and sparkling, and there are plenty of prettily arranged flowers upon it, a table is sure to look well."

"Yes; I know your weakness for flowers," said Charlie; "still, if I were you, I should have a few good plants, as well as the flowers."

"That is a very good idea. So we will. We have some plants, and we can hire more from the nurseryman. A few plants will improve the table, and they will be less expensive than if we have all flowers."

"Don't you think it will be a little awkward to have the table laid in the garden?" said Charlie.

"No, I don't. Of course, we would have everything prepared and laid on the table beforehand, then we could hide our preparations from view by throwing a cloth lightly over all, and keeping it there till the last moment. If we were overlooked in any way, we should be compelled either to have a tent or to go into the house to tea, but we are so pleasantly situated here that there is no occasion for it."

"I hope we shall have a table large enough to accommodate all our friends at once," said Charlie. "I don't like dividing the company."

"Oh, no! nor do I. There is a tedious time both for those who wait for tea, and for those who finish tea first, which we can do very well without. Besides,





OUR GARDEN PARTY.



I don't think we shall have any difficulty. We shall send out thirty invitations. I hope that all will accept, and if they do, we can very easily make a table of boards laid upon trestles, which we can hire of the carpenter, and which will do for fifteen at each side."

"You don't intend to imitate Mrs. Leo Hunter's example then—issue cards for a hundred, and provide refreshment for fifty; or, in other words, feed the very particular lions, and let the smaller animals take care of themselves?"

"No, indeed; and remember, dear, we are going in for an enjoyable middle-class garden party, not a grand aristocratic one."

Our invitations were sent out, and in reply we had twenty-five acceptances. This gave me twenty-seven people to provide for. Of course, the first thing to be done was to draw out, for Charlie's inspection, a list of the dishes I thought suitable. This list was as follows:—

A large piece of pickled salmon, served with sliced cucumber and mayonnaise sauce.

Two boiled fowls and a tongue, all in one dish. The fowls to be masked with stiff white sauce, and garnished with ornaments stamped in beet-root. The tongue, placed between the two fowls, to be frilled, glazed, and garnished with ornaments stamped in butter. The bottom of the dish to be covered with very stiff aspic jelly cut into dice.

(The above two dishes were for the top and bottom of the table.)

Two boiled fowls, cut up into joints, covered with white sauce, and garnished with parsley and lemon.

A small ham, or a dish of ham sliced.

A boiled tongue, or a dish of sliced tongue.

A leg of lamb.

A shoulder of lamb.

A piece of pressed beef.

Two pigeon pies.

One veal-and-ham pie.

Four jellies.

Four blancmanges.

Two fruit tarts.

Two dishes of cheesecakes.

Two dishes of small tarts.

Three compôtes of fruit.

One dish of creams.

Twelve dishes of summer fruits.

Three English pines.

Three Savoy cakes.

"I suppose it is all right," said Charlie, after looking it over. "Is everything down here?"

"No, there are only the principal dishes. We should want also mint sauce for the lamb, a little salad, a couple of cucumbers, a quart of cream for the compôtes and tarts, some brown and white bread and butter, tea, coffee, and wine."

"You don't think the table will be too much crowded?"

"We must arrange the dishes as well as we can. I don't think I have named more than will be suffi-

cient for twenty-seven people. It will be dinner to a great many, you know. It will be a tolerably long table, and I have no doubt we shall manage very well. Of course, we must put the large high dishes down the centre, and fill up the spaces with the smaller dishes, the fruit, and the flowers. If the colours are made to contrast nicely, and if no two dishes of a sort are allowed to come together, the table will look very pretty."

"I was going to suggest that one or two of the large dishes should be put on the sideboard, but of course there will be no sideboard."

"Oh, no. We must put everything on the table; but I don't think we shall find any difficulty about that."

"No doubt, it will be very pleasant having tea in the garden," said Charlie. "I must say, however, that for my own part I prefer having my meals in the ordinary prosaic fashion. Do you remember Mrs. Nickleby's immortal friends, the Dibabses? They were the people who lived in the beautiful little white house, covered with ivy and creeping plants and twining honey-suckle. They used to have tea in the garden during the summer, and the earwigs always fell into the tea on their backs, and kicked dreadfully."

"Yes, I remember them, but we shall not be in much danger of that kind of thing; and if it does happen it will only add to the fun."

"And now about the cost?" said Charlie.

"I was going to tell you about that. You understand that I do not include the wine in my estimate. That is your business. I don't suppose much will be required, for a good many will prefer tea or coffee. Still, those who are accustomed to dine late may wish to have it."

"Very well," said Charlie, "I accept the responsibility of the wine. What next?"

"The next thing is that I cannot tell you exactly what our party will cost. Prices are so uncertain that it is impossible to calculate the cost to a halfpenny. I have gone into it as closely as I could, and I expect the expense will be £11 or £12, and that sum includes everything."

"Even the flowers?"

"Yes; the flowers, and also the hire of the table, some seats, and a portion of glass and plate."

Charlie considered a few minutes. At last he remarked, "I am bound to say that it is less than I expected."

"Oh, I can make it cost more if you like; but I think there is no necessity for it. A tea like this would be very good, though not extravagant; and I feel sure we should have a very pleasant time."

And we had a very pleasant time. The day turned out fine, although we had occasion for a little uneasiness on the subject. The tea was a decided success, the games were entered into with spirit, and at the end of the day both Charlie and I determined that, though it had been our first garden party, it should certainly not be our last.

PHILLIS BROWNE.