

What a Strawberry said.

BY MARY ST. MAUR.

"THE working-classes are not to be despised." I dropped the little strawberry that I had been piercing with my needle, as this sentence was uttered in a clear, hard tone.

I was sitting alone; if I had been asked where that voice came from, I should have replied, those words actually proceeded from that strawberry. All the years it had been in my possession, never had such a thing happened.

It would not have happened now, had you not tried my feelings beyond endurance. When should I have been left in peace, and that castle-building suspended, had I not asserted myself? I really believe you have never seen me face to face. If you will tear away that false, but fair exterior, I will tell you my history.

You see before you a thimbleful of bluish black grains that might easily scratch to ruin your pretty opal ring.

My name is Emery, and I belong to the justly celebrated Alumina family; in our branch are found the most precious gems, next in hardness to the diamond.

I am the working member, and make myself invaluable to the world. The hardness of my organization enables me to grind any softer substances. There is not a steam-engine, printing-press, or any kind of machinery made, that I have not worn all its parts to smoothness by my perseverance. Plate-glass owes its even surface to me, and precious gems yield their imperfections to my touch.

The purest specimens of my race come from the Eastern world, the islands of the Grecian Archipelago yielding inexhaustible supplies.

My home was in the mountains east of ancient Ephesus. There I lived in the free, pure air, happy and undisturbed, until one day I was tossed into a basket with some of my companions, and slung over a camel's back. Many of my associates lying in huge boulders on the ground, resisted all iron tools that were used to reduce their size, that they also might share the fate that awaited me.

I knew they must suffer for this stubbornness, for soon great fires were burning around them. After they had been exposed to the heat several hours they yielded to the heavy blows that at once rent them asunder.

The camels started, and we passed through a lovely country till we reached Smyrna, whence we were shipped to different parts of the world.

I cannot stop to enumerate the vicissitudes through which I have passed, but I have been crushed and ground to powder that I might suit the caprices of man; but my spirit is as strong as ever. I cannot be made useless.

I was not sorry to hear, in my travels, that our branch of the family had been discovered in many localities in the United States, the best specimens being found in Chester, Mass. Now I hope we may remain in our own land; but in this age, when machines do men's work, my expectations are vain.

Perhaps you did not fully understand the sentence which awoke you from that day-dream.

At that moment I was thinking of my nearest relative, Madame Corundum, who, I will not deny, ranks a grade higher in importance than myself, yet that is no reason she should look with scorn upon me.

We had frequent conversations on the subject. Said she, "Emery, don't talk to me; you know you are too often found associated with the plebeian vein to be of great importance."

Said I, "Madame, I can hold my own if I am,

and how often are you crushed to powder because you endeavor to assume crystallizations of which you are incapable?"

"That is, as you well know, in consequence of the purity of my character," replied she. "It was only yesterday that I heard two of the workmen say that a prize had been offered by the Royal Museum of Berlin for a perfect crystal of Corundum, and I should not be surprised if I am the one they are looking for," said Madame, glittering and swelling with pride.

"My dear friend and relative," replied I, "don't hurt any of those six sides of yours with grand expectations; you would then no longer be a rhombic prism, but only a heap of grains, like myself.

At these words, Corundum really looked so handsome that I did not doubt her hopes might be realized, but she controlled herself, fearing there might be truth in my warning.

"I am determined," said I, "never to be ashamed of my position. If I am glued to paper, muslin, or applied to wheels for useful purposes, and even made in patent razor strops, I shall still preserve my individuality."

"I admire your spirit more than your sarcasms," answered she, after a short pause.

"Pardon me, Madame, I did not intend to injure your feelings, but you know we are both formed from clay, or alumina. The purer the substance the nearer we approach perfection, and culminate in the most lovely gems the world is proud to own."

"Well," said Corundum, in a pacified tone, "let us settle these differences in our mutual pride of the beauty that is above us."

"Still, I must, in justice to myself, assert that my substance is the same as the sapphires. I only fail to equal them in purity, depth, and brilliancy of color. The ruby is red; if large in size, it is more rare than the diamond; if the color be green, it is known as oriental emerald; if yellow, oriental topaz; when violet in color, it is known as oriental amethyst; and if brown, it is called adamantite spar, but blue is the true sapphire color."

"Sometimes, when the stone is polished, a six-pointed star is disclosed—"

This valuable information was concluded with a deep sigh.

It was our last conversation, for the next day I was carried away as I have described.

I will tell you what I never told Corundum. She was really a beautifully formed crystal, of a pale ruby tinge. If her retreat was ever discovered she is now probably enjoying all the admiration her ambition craved.

The Law in New York as it Relates to Family—Dower.

BY LILLIE DEVEREAUX BLAKE.

A BRIEF statement of the laws of New York as they affect the rights of property will be of interest to our readers, since every woman should have a clear understanding of what are her claims in the ownership and inheritance of estates.

One of the oldest and most long-established privileges is that of the widow's right of dower, that is, her claim to the use for her life of one-third of her husband's real estate, whether he leave a will or not. This claim is one of the oldest usages of Anglo-Saxon nations, dating, in its origin, to a remote antiquity, and having been long held as a right which all legal enactments should respect, it is found hedged around with every security in

that compendium of jurisprudence which is the foundation of all our legislation, the English common law, and from that is taken the statute which confers the right of dower in this State.

"A widow shall be endowed of the one-third part of all the lands whereof her husband was seized of an estate of inheritance at any time during marriage."—(Rev. Stat. N. Y., Part II., Chap. ii., p. 1121.)

The right thus given to the widow takes precedence of every other claim; no will can be made which can debar her from her dower, and it must be satisfied before the husband's debts are paid. Even where a mortgage has been executed during the husband's life, if made without his wife's consent, at his death, so soon as the mortgage can be paid, the widow is entitled to one-third of the property.

All this applies, it must be remembered, to *real estate* alone, that is to houses and lands, and has no reference whatever to personal estate, which includes every other form of property of which a man may be seized, as bank stocks, goods in store, horses and cattle, furniture, etc.

The law of distribution of personal estate differs widely from that governing the realty. A man has absolute control over it, and can will every dollar of it away from his wife; but, in case he dies intestate, *i. e.* without a will, then the widow is entitled to one-third of this also, the remainder being shared equally among the children, if there be any; in case there are no children, then the widow is entitled to half the estate, whether real or personal, the rest going to the next of kin, brothers and sisters, etc.

The widow's right of dower, or a life-use of one-third of the realty, is, however, a claim so universal that it is protected by statute in nearly every State in the Union, and this claim rests with iron hand upon every acre of land and every tenement that a man owns. It is for this reason that a man cannot, without his wife's consent, sell any portion of his real estate, since, should he do so, and live twenty years thereafter, his widow would still, at his death, be entitled to claim one-third of the property thus sold. Whenever, therefore, a man wishes to dispose of real estate, his wife must sign away her right of dower voluntarily, to relieve the purchaser of this claim.

This law would seem to be only just, since it protects a woman in her title to some provision after her husband's death; and yet it often works curiously against a man. We once knew, for instance, of a dealer in real estate, who, without due reflection, married a charming girl of eighteen. From this moment he found himself much hampered in his transactions, as he could make no sales without his wife's signature, and, until she was twenty-one, her signature was not binding.

It will be seen that, as the right of dower affects only real estate, a widow may be left, at her husband's death, utterly destitute, as many men, even in very comfortable circumstances, own little or no real estate; while, even among wealthy men, the bulk of the property is usually personal estate, as railroad shares, government bonds, goods in store, etc., and on this the widow has no claim. A husband can, by will, deprive her of it all, or, what is much more frequently the case, as the debts must first be paid, it often happens that, through mismanagement, out of a seemingly fine estate, there is little or nothing left for the widow, even where husband and wife have labored together to build up a fortune, as in keeping a store, for instance, the joint earnings belonging entirely to the husband; in case of his death the whole property may be willed away or seized for debts.

A striking instance of the hardship which the existing laws sometimes work, was illustrated by the well known litigation on the Taylor will. The property was estimated as worth at least three

millions, nearly all personal estate. The will made ample provision for the widow, but it was contested; the lawyers' fees were enormous, amounting to nearly a million; there was some indebtedness and, practically, at the end of some years of litigation the estate is gone, the widow having nothing for her support except one-third of the real estate, which gave an amount barely sufficient to afford a decent maintenance.

By provision of the law, "A widow may tarry in the best house of her husband for forty days after his death, without being liable for rent, and have reasonable sustenance from the estate."—(Rev. Stat., Part II., Chap. II., p. 1123.)

For this first month of bereavement she is thus protected. At the end of that time, if the property be personal she must abide the slow settlement, and accept her portion after all debts are paid. But if it be real estate, whatever may be the indebtedness, she is at once entitled to the use of the third part, secured inalienably by her right of dower.

What Women are Doing.

At Leghorn more than a thousand women are employed in the manufacture of coral beads for necklaces, etc.

Rev. Ellen G. Gustin has been called to be pastor of a church in Westerly, R. I.

Mrs. Patience Albro, of Foster, Conn., has just died at the age of 102. She lived on the same farm seventy-five years.

Mrs. M. E. Dickinson is now lecturing to large and appreciative audiences in Missouri, upon the "Political Status of Women."

Miss Lou C. Allen was made Professor of Domestic Science, which is a marked step in advance, at the eleventh anniversary of the State Industrial University at Champaign, Illinois.

Miss F. E. Willard, of Chicago, recently addressed the students of Michigan University at Ann Arbor upon temperance, and a society was at once organized among them with 600 pledged members.

Mrs. E. B. Grannis publishes the *Little Gem*, a periodical for young readers which has taken up Kindergarten work.

Mrs. Mary F. Thomas, President of the Indiana Woman Suffrage Association, is the first who brought the question of Suffrage before a State Legislature; and the Indiana Suffrage Association is the oldest organization of the kind in the United States.

Mrs. Annie Wittenmeyer, of Philadelphia, President of the Woman's National Temperance Union, lectured last week before the ladies of Binghamton College, organizing about a hundred of them into a Young Ladies' National Temperance Union before leaving the college, including among the number seventeen Seniors and forty-two Juniors.

Mrs. Antoinette Brown Blackwell intends to enter the ministry again soon. Mrs. Blackwell was the first ordained minister among women in this country. She was settled and ordained at South Butler, in New York, nearly thirty years ago.

Miss Berrian, a wealthy Stamford woman, has purchased a new brick building in the village for \$10,000, the first floor of which is to be used as a reading-room, while the remainder will be fitted up as a temperance boarding-house for young men who refrain from intoxicating drink.

Mrs. Clarissa C. Cook, of Davenport, Iowa, recently deceased, has, by her will, devoted \$161,900 out of \$223,000 to the churches, parishes and

charities of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Among some fourteen bequests, the large sum of \$50,000 was given to a "Home for the Friendless."

Mrs. C. M. Williams has just been elected President of the State National Bank, at Raleigh, N. C. Her husband had held the office. When he died Mrs. Williams was elected. This is the first instance where a woman has been chosen as head of a public corporation of this character.

A Marshall County (Iowa) paper has the following complimentary notice of a woman Recorder: "Among the best county officials is Miss Jennie Tuffie, the Deputy Recorder; faithful as the sun, she is the real officer, and helps Capt. Messenger through all his difficulties, as he is a crippled soldier. She has been deputy for over three years."

Women Teachers in New Jersey.—The report made by the New Jersey Board of Education states that as the appropriation for salaries was last year smaller than usual, the salaries were reduced, so that a number of men quitted the profession, and women filled their places. Instead of this being a disadvantage, the standard of scholarship required for license has been raised, and the examinations exact more of the candidates.

Sewing in Boston Schools.—Every girl who passes through the Boston schools now receives three years' instruction in various kinds of needlework, and is capable of being an expert seamstress. It is said that the benefits resulting from this instruction are seen in the improved appearance of the children's clothing in the schools, and are felt in thousands of homes.

Prof. Maria Mitchell has established a course of free lectures on "Science," by women, in Poughkeepsie, N. Y. Mrs. Ellen Swallow Richards, Miss Graceanna Lewis, Mrs. A. B. Blackwell and Dr. Helen Webster are among the lecturers. The movement is under the auspices of the Committee on Science of the "Association for the Advancement of Women," of which Miss Mitchell is chairman.

Women as Government Officials.—Mr. Alexander Delmar, a former director of the United States Bureau of Statistics, made the experiment of employing women in his department, and said, in answer to inquiries about their efficiency, that "they made the best of clerks." A Philadelphia paper says: "They were honest and faithful; they were not given to gossip and intrigue, hoping thereby to supplant each other; they kept their books well, and were, as a class, finely educated. Mr. Delmar would probably have indorsed the proposition made at a late 'Women's Congress,' that the government should appoint women as assistants in taking the census, as in certain departments of inquiry their qualifications were higher than those of men. This would be the time to propose it, as much of the discussion in Congress, on the new bills, turns on the fact that the men engaged in the work will be voters, and so bring in political elements, and, as yet, the women are clear of that rock, and could keep the work on a legitimate basis."

Mrs. Josephine R. Lowell, of the State Charities Aid Association, of New York, has prepared a bill to establish a reformatory for women. A board of trustees are to select and determine upon a plan, and to purchase an eligible site for the erection of a suitable building to accommodate five hundred inmates, together with the households of a superintendent and necessary subordinates, but the cost shall not exceed \$300,000. The building, when completed, is to be used for the confinement of female offenders between the ages of fifteen and thirty who have never been convicted of a felony.

A Distinction with a Difference.—Hon. W. J. Bowditch, in a recent speech, said: "More than

six times as many women as men are teachers, and those in our high schools are qualified to teach young men about the 'civil policy of this Commonwealth and of the United States.'

"More women than men are engaged in the manufacture of carpetings, cotton goods, and paper: twice as many in the manufacture of worsted goods: three times as many in the manufacture of silk goods, and five times as many in the manufacture of clothing.

"On the other hand, five times as many boys as girls are in reformatories. More than five times as many men as women are convicts. More than twice as many men as women are paupers, and about five times as many men as women are engaged in the manufacture of liquor—the nurse of pauperism and crime!"

Mrs. Erminie Smith gave a paper recently, before the New York Academy of Science, based on original geological investigations, which was highly commended by such experts as Prof. Newberry, President of the Academy. Mrs. Smith gave a course of lectures on geology, in Jersey City (where she lives), during the past winter, and founded and has sustained the "Eclectic" Club of that place at her own expense. At the closing meeting, a magnificent Japanese cabinet was presented to her by a number of ladies in acknowledgment of the success of her efforts to "elevate the standard of social and intellectual enjoyment in the community." Mrs. Smith possesses the finest private cabinet of gems in the State.

The London Society for obtaining Homes for Working Girls has opened its second Home, the "Victoria" House, Queen's Road, Bayswater; the first one was the "Alexandria" House, St. John's Street, West Smithfield. The *English-Woman's Review*, says: "Board can be obtained in these Homes for about 4s. 6d. a week; each girl has to pay a weekly sum of 1s. 9d. or 2s. 6d. (according to the room selected) for lodging, and they have also to pay for their own washing. Such Homes cannot be made self-supporting; the slender payments of the girls cannot meet the heavy charges of rent, taxes, coals, etc., and to charge more would be to exclude the very class most needing them. Not only money but cast-off clothes would be very acceptable, for many of these girls only earn from 6s. to 9s. weekly, and therefore can only just meet these low charges for board and lodging without having any surplus left for clothes."

Livret de l'Union des Amies de la Jeune Fille. Neuchâtel.—This is a useful little brochure, which merits our notice from the simplicity and good sense which have been used in its compilation. The union of young girls' friends was established in Switzerland in September, 1877, with the object of creating a network of protection for young girls who are compelled to leave their homes to go out and earn wages. The society endeavors to get lady correspondents in every town, small or great, and these ladies make themselves thoroughly acquainted with all associations which may be useful to their protégées: infirmaries, convalescent hospitals, homes, young women's associations, places of worship for different sects, evening schools, etc. It is particularly appropriate that this union of ladies should take its rise in Switzerland, as so many Swiss girls go out to service in foreign countries, away from all friends or assistance from home.

A Housekeepers' Association.—The good example given by Berlin housekeepers has been copied with great success during the last three years in Vienna, as we learn from a correspondent to the *Droit des Femmes*. Vienna is *par excellence* an expensive city to live in (about one-third dearer, it is supposed, than Paris), and it was to put a stop to