

The dark-eyed widow from Miss Triplett's sat just above them, in the "dress-circle;" she discovered them at once, and behind her black crêpe-trimmed fan whispered knowingly to her attendant, a blonde young patent-office clerk:

"Of course you know she never would have gotten him, if he had not been from the backwoods—a *Western* member!"

ZAIDEE BETTS SMITH.

Sometime.

"SOMETIME," I said, and kissed the face so sweet
That nestled close to me!
"Sometime? Sometime?" her baby-lips repeat;
"O, when will sometime be?"
So, often we, with our maturer years
Sigh for some happier clime,
And ask "Our Father," through our blinding tears,
To haste the glad—Sometime!

The happy maiden dreams her rose-hued dreams
Of a not distant day,
When, all along her path, Love's golden gleams
In floods of light will lay.
"Sometime! Sometime!" she murmurs in her sleep—
"Sweet marriage-bells will chime,
For he who crosses now the far-off deep
Will call me his—Sometime!"

The aspiring youth beholds the distant goal
Where all his longings tend;
"Sometime," he whispers to his waiting soul,
"I shall achieve my end.
What though I struggle—if at last I reach
Mount Pisgah's height sublime,
And there behold, beyond all power of speech,
My Promised Land—'Sometime!'

"Sometime, sometime," the stricken mother sighs
With stifled sob and moan;
And lifts to Heaven her burning, tearless eyes,
Where all she loves has flown;
And cries, "I thank Thee, Loving God, that he
Is safe from sin and crime,
I thank Thee for the blessed hope that we
Shall meet again—'Sometime.'"

I passed an aged pilgrim, at whose door
Life's waning shadows fell;
And heard him softly whisper o'er and o'er
"Sometime all will be well!
In 'pastures green' where the 'still waters' glide,
Sweeter than poets' rhyme;
Through golden streets, with the dear sanctified
My feet shall walk—Sometime."

Sometime—sometime! O fatal, treacherous sea,
Where all we prize the most—
Our loves, our hopes—even our faith in thee,
Lies wrecked upon thy coast!
And still we keep thy promised goal in sight,
Toward which we daily climb;
Believing we shall gain the blissful height
We strive to reach—Sometime!

L. A. PAUL.

"The Perplexing Choice."

(See page Engraving.)

JOSEPH COOMANS, the painter of "The Perplexing Choice," was born in Brussels, in 1816. When sixteen years of age, he became a pupil of Pierre Van Hasselaere, of Ghent. Subsequently he went to Antwerp, and studied under M. DeKeyser, and at a later date, he received the instructions of Baron Wappers. In 1841, he exhibited his painting "The Capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders," which was painted for the Queen of the Belgians, and which, with "The Battle of Ascalon," painted for the King of the Belgians, established his fame as an artist. He visited various countries for the purpose of studying the scenery and customs of the people, and was with the allied armies in the Crimea. After his visit to Greece, he turned his attention to depicting classical scenes, which he rendered with great accuracy and skill. His "Last Days of Happiness in Pompeii" was purchased by the Emperor of the French. Prang has made a chromo of the "Roman Maiden."

"The Perplexing Choice" shows us an ancient Greek scene in domestic life. In those times, the boys remained under the care of their mothers until they were six years old, and were reared with the girls, afterward being entrusted to the guidance of a teacher. They had their toys, many of which were not unlike those of modern times. Most of them were made of some inferior metal, but the more favored child of fortune had silver and even gold. There were dolls for boys as well as for girls, which were made of clay and painted. These sometimes represented the deities of the Greeks.

In the picture, the little boy is depicted as being greatly perplexed in his choice between a sword and a doll. He fixes his eyes admiringly upon the doll, while his mother seems to ask the question, "which will you have, a doll or a sword?" He is evidently in a great state of indecision, notwithstanding the efforts of his attendant who pleads in favor of the doll. There is an appearance of sturdy manliness about him, as he plants his feet resolutely on the ground, which seems to indicate that the sword and not the doll will be the choice ultimately.

A careful study of this interesting picture reveals the fidelity with which the eminent artist reproduces classical scenes. The paintings on the wall, the mosaic floor, the rich furniture, and the graceful easy dress of the women evince a thorough knowledge of his subject and great technical skill.

Wedding Clothes.

"If either of my daughters want to get married they will have to elope," I heard a gentleman say a few evenings since, "for I am not in circumstances to provide the *trousseau* the average young lady thinks positively necessary."

His remark caused a general laugh; but the subject of wedding garments is a very serious one, and very often there is a very little common sense shown in the preparation of the wardrobe of the expectant bride.

It is well to provide a good outfit, but it should be a suitable one, and have reference to the sort of life the bride is to lead.

I knew, years ago, a young girl who prepared a very elaborate *trousseau* on the occasion of her marriage to a gentleman whose home was several hundred miles from her own. He was too busy to visit her often, and she made no inquiries as to the social position she would occupy as his wife, but took it for granted that she would find use for evening, ball, and

lunch dresses, and therefore had many such made. Her surprise and chagrin may be imagined when, on arriving at her new home, she found that her husband cared nothing for society, and was so thoroughly tired on his return from business in the evening that all he desired was his newspaper or a quiet game of cards. He did not dance, abhorred visiting, and had no lady friends to introduce to his wife. And he could not be persuaded to keep house; so his wife had to give up any idea of entertaining.

A year after her marriage when she had settled down to a quiet, monotonous existence which knew no dissipation other than an occasional evening at the theater, she packed a trunk full of her wedding finery and sent it home to her younger sister.

"I find no use for anything better than a black silk," she said in the letter which accompanied the trunk, "and it is wicked to let these handsome dresses go out of fashion without being used. I do hope, Nellie, that when you marry you will have a more sensible *trousseau* than mine was."

Piles of underclothing are as unnecessary as a great number of dresses, for while the latter go out of fashion the former grows yellow and rotten. A friend of mine who on her marriage, nearly thirty years ago, had twenty-nine white skirts made is *wearing them still*.

"They will last as long as I live—some of them, at least," she said, "a perpetual reminder of my ignorance and folly."

In her anxiety to have a *trousseau* which shall do her credit and be a source of envy and admiration to her friends, the bride-elect who has not the means to have her sewing "done out" frequently overtasks herself to a lamentable degree.

This was the case with Ada H——. For three or four months before her marriage she sewed from eight in the morning until six at night, taking neither recreation nor exercise, and growing more nervous and irritable with every day. But her parents made no effort to check her zeal, seeming, indeed, to think it very praiseworthy, for they called the attention of all their friends to it.

A more delicate looking girl than Ada was on the day of her wedding it would have been hard to find, and it surprised no one except herself and her parents that within a week of her marriage she was taken ill with nervous prostration.

It was only at the cost of a stay of nearly a year at a home in the mountains, where she had complete rest and entire freedom from excitement and noise, that her nerves recovered their tone, and she was able to assume her duties as wife and housekeeper.

"I fairly loathe the sight of my wedding dresses," she said, one day, "for I cannot help thinking when I look at them of the wretchedness they cost me, and the many weary months I was separated from my husband because of them."

Calling on an intimate friend some time since, I found her finishing off a most elaborate white wrapper. The front was composed entirely of insertion, beneath which ran pale pink ribbon, and the long train was edged with lace.

"I thought you had too much to occupy you in the care of the baby and the house to spend time in making anything so elaborate as this," I said, as I examined it. "This is really a work of art."

"I can't let you think that I have been guilty of this folly since my marriage," she said, blushing. "No; this was one of the night-dresses of my *trousseau*. John has assured me that he doesn't know 'bias from tuck,' and so I am turning it into a white wrapper to wear sometimes in the evening when it is too warm to dress up. I haven't altered it at all except to make the waist half-tight. It is hard for me to believe now that I ever was so silly as to put so much work on a *night-dress*."

For years Carrie D—— had as housekeeper and seamstress a middle-aged woman who was very skillful with her needle, and kept Carrie well supplied with underclothes of the most beautiful make, and elaborately finished with every variety of embroidery and thread edge. But at length the woman became engaged to be married to a man living in Florida, and Carrie felt sure she should never see her again. So she set her immediately to work on underclothing, saying:

"No one can make underclothing like you, Margaret, and I want you to make me enough for a bridal outfit, for if I marry I will need them."

Margaret made *three dozen sets* before Carrie was satisfied.

They were folded away in a big chest to wait the wedding of their foolish owner, and sad to tell, *they are there still*, though Carrie's hair is thickly sprinkled with gray, and there are numberless crows'-feet about her eyes.

Another young lady who had her underclothing very elaborately trimmed, has been obliged since her marriage to make herself some perfectly plain undergarments because she could not, in the little western town to which her husband carried her, find a washerwoman competent to do up laces and embroidery. It seems to be the custom for parents to provide the daughter's *trousseau* on her marriage without any reference to her future condition in life, but in accordance with her own wishes or the mother's desire to make a show.

Not long since I was invited to inspect the wedding garments of a very dear girl friend, who was to go to New Mexico to live. The dresses were too numerous to mention; but among them were a cardinal satin with plush polonaise of the same color, a green surah with damassé overdress and basque, a black satin elaborately trimmed in Spanish lace and jet, a black silk, a bronze gold rhadame with plush basque, and a black velvet underskirt to be worn with a polonaise of cream-colored satin. There were also several wrappers, one of pale blue cashmere trimmed in Oriental lace, and one of white surah silk. There were seven bonnets to match the different suits, and gloves, stockings, collars, and handkerchiefs without number.

Well, she was married—in a white moire with a long train and a Spanish lace flounce nearly a foot deep—and went away the happiest bride I ever saw; but I have often wondered if she has ever worn any of those costly dresses; for I have had several letters from her, and she tells me she is living in a small settlement of about one hundred souls, fifty miles from a fort, and two hundred miles from a town!

Another friend who was married with great *éclat* found when she had been a wife only a few weeks that her husband was horribly in debt, and that the greatest economy was necessary if irretrievable ruin was to be averted.

She moved into the country at once, taking a house several miles from any other because the rent was low. In her last letter she said that for *three months* she had not spoken to a woman except her servant. She has her *trousseau*, in which are several ball and reception dresses, packed away in four large trunks in the garret! She finds a calico morning dress and a black cashmere for evening all that she requires.

I might go on thus enumerating instances which have come under my personal experience of the folly of preparing a *trousseau* without regard to its future use; but feel sure that any one who reads this can supply from his or her own experience similar cases without number.

In the choice of wedding presents the same regard to circumstances should be paid. It is not an unusual sight to see two people living on a very small income, and yet having in every room of their small house dozens of ornamental articles in gold, silver and cut glass in sad incongruity with the cheap ingrain carpets and plain furniture.

FLORENCE B. HALLOWELL.