

## A SLIGHT SKETCH OF MISS JUMBLE'S CAREER.

BY HERSELF.

FANNY said to me the other day: "I wish I could write such sweet, interesting pieces as you do for Q's Magazine. I'd publish, too, and get a reputation for being literary, as you have."

"Which is not at all desirable."

"Dear me! why not?" And Fanny stared at me, her great blue eyes opening wider than ever with wonder.

"Let me tell you some of my woes, and trials, and annoyances, and then you will see for yourself that it is not so very fine to be the literary star of a small village firmament."

"Pray do; but you will be unable to change my wish. When I was a little girl, I used to think you the most wonderful person in the world, because I read your stories in print. And I'd like to be such a marvel to others."

"That is the worst part of the whole matter. Hear me. I began to write when a child of nine years, because I couldn't help it, stories, school compositions, and endless letters to all my young cousins. When I was older, and went to boarding-school, the girls would beg me to write their compositions. I did so at first, partly because it gave me a sense of superiority, and partly because I liked the work. But I not only soon grew weary of laboring in this way for others, but began to see that it was wrong, and then refused. They called me a very selfish, disobliging person. After leaving school, and when the stern realities of life looked me in the face, I kept on scribbling, and at length saw myself in print. This I took quietly, but was glad to profit by—thanks to a publisher as kind as he was liberal—to the amount of sundry convenient sums of pocket-money, not large, but very welcome. And then to hear the remarks of friends and acquaintances—'Jane Jumble was *so literary* they were afraid of her.' It is very queer that some people will persist in calling a woman literary who has only written a few light, *very light* articles for the magazines. It was not long, however, before their awe subsided, and then such an ordeal as some of these same friends would subject me to, would have been funny if it had not been so vexatious.

"They started a 'literary association,' a sort of 'mutual admiration' affair, meeting once a week at each others' houses to read 'original pieces,' talk over the last romance, and have

a 'little music and flirtation.' A very good thing they made of it, too, as they did not happen all of them to be geese. But it so fell out that time, and again on the very morning of the day on the evening whereof a meeting was to be held, Molly Jones, or Tilly Smith, or somebody else would rush to my house, saying: 'Oh, look here, please! The Athenians meet to-night, and there isn't a single original article. Do now, Miss Jumble, write one of your funny essays, or a poem, or a little story, or something—now do. You write so easy—it's nothing for you to throw off an article. And they are going to meet at my house, and I want a real nice lot of pieces, you know, when they come there.' It was of no avail to tell Tilly or Molly that I could write nothing good in such haste. They believed my brain was a sort of mill, and that I had only to grind with a few strokes of the pen, and a story or essay would come forth. If I went to the gathering, without a peace-offering of this description, some would look cross at me, and others bemoan and lament my dereliction in a manner that was meant to be flattering, but that proved greatly tiresome. So I would hunt up some old thing that I was ashamed of, or scratch off a few pages in such a hurry that nobody but myself could make sense of them, and read aloud to an admiring auditory. No matter what it was, it was always praised. My favorite style then was serio-comic, and I mention it as one of the trials of my 'career,' that often after an article had been read, some matter-of-fact young man in the company would ask his neighbor—'Do you suppose that's written in earnest?'

"Once I went out West to visit some relatives whom I had never seen. They received me kindly, but very constrainedly, and for several days were shy and embarrassed. I could not understand their manner till after a week had brought about some signs of confidence; and Cousin Peggy said to me one morning, with the first genial expression of face that she had worn: 'Well, I don't see but what you can make up a bed jest as well as my girls, and wait on yerself, too. I was dretfully afraid to have you come here, for I thought *ye'd be stuck up, because ye wrote for the papers.*' Shade of my grandmother! Wasn't that a poser!'

Fanny thought these very trifling troubles when compared with the *éclat* of being such a "lovely writer" as myself.

"But I have not told you all yet. One summer I went to — Spa with my brother, to drink the sulphurous nectar for both our healths. I had not the least idea that anybody there knew me for the same 'Jane Jumble' that wrote for Q's Magazine, for I put my real name to my articles. But fate had decreed that I should be famous, and my identity was soon discovered. The second day after my arrival, our private parlor was unceremoniously entered by two tall young gentlemen, evidently country youths, who introduced each other, and then asked if 'this was Miss Jumble?'

"Yes, that is my name, gentlemen," said I, rather bewildered by their abrupt entrance, and thinking them farmers' sons with butter and cheese to sell.

"Well," said the foremost, sitting down in a gawky way, 'we heard you was the one that wrote for Q's Magazine, and we had a curiosity to see you, and so we've called.'

"That was coming to the point with refreshing frankness. They believed that no kind of talk except about 'literatoor' would be agreeable to me, and at it they went, asking my opinion of all the authors with whose names or works they happened to be acquainted, and especially of lady writers. Much amused, I turned the subject as soon as possible, by inquiring into the peculiarities of the soil in that region, and the properties of their very fragrant spa. They stared and soon went away, evidently disappointed because I looked and acted like other women."

Fanny thought it must be delightful to have strange youths hunt you up in a strange place by reason of your literary reputation having gone there in advance. I did not agree with her.

"But, Fanny, my next experience was rather more startling. In a certain large inland town where I went to rub off the rust of country life, and visit a married schoolmate, it was soon made known to me that the general impression of the reading folks there was—that I was actually the original Mrs. Partington. That was too much for me—me, who never concocted a single Partingtonian saying in my life, and who secretly prided myself on the growing dignified character of my magazine articles; and homewards in disgust I went.

"Yet this was nothing to what happened not long after, when I was staying at the famous watering-place of S——, where a lady, whose

acquaintance I made in a quiet way, introduced me to all her friends in my literary character. One day, after dinner, I sat with my own party on the piazza, when this person joined us, and asked me if I would like to be introduced to a New York lady, who held a high and influential position in society. 'A very remarkable woman,' she proceeded to say; 'very fond of literary people, and she has literary soirees at her house every week. Encourages all the young writers, and does a great deal to elevate the tone of society.' Hardly waiting for an answer, she dragged me through the nearest window to a sofa just within, where sat an elderly lady of a very serene and elegant aspect, richly, but quietly dressed, diamonds on her fingers, and diamonds in the superb lace of her coiffure.

"Mrs. Van Derbunt, my dear madam, I am glad to have found you here. This is the lady I spoke of. Miss Jumble, that writes for Q's magazine. Allow me to introduce you to each other."

"Mrs. Van Derbunt eyed me kindly and patronizingly. She must have had the names of all the writing women mixed up in a queer heap inside her dear, old, honest head. For she said to me: 'Oh! then, you're Fanny Fern, ain't you?'

"No, madam, I beg your pardon—I never saw that authoress, but am quite familiar with her writings."

"Excuse the mistake," said my lady patroness; 'I meant to ask if you were not the author of "Say and Seal." Or her sister—I have heard there are two of them.'

"Another disclaimer from myself;—and then Mrs. Van Derbunt, being determined to settle in her mind who I could be, launched forth once more.

"I remember now all about you. I am sure I have seen your name to that long story in the *Weekly Budget*, 'the Red plumed Bandit,' that is just finished. I have not read it. I get no time to read though I admire talent very much. But my son and daughter are delighted with it. You must come to the city and attend my literary reunions."

"What do you think of that, Fanny, to be pronounced a contributor to the *Weekly Budget*—a writer of sensation stories? I withdrew from my officious new friend after this adventure. Such scares are rather more than human nature can bear and maintain gravity."

"There is nothing terrible in what you have told me," said Fanny. "And in the end you found a husband too, notwithstanding the men

are said to be afraid of writing women. My associates tell me the gentlemen will all be afraid of me if I cultivate my taste for composition, and that I shall be an old maid. Surely they were not all afraid of you."

"Wait a moment, and hear that part of my experience. You know that, about the time of my visit at S——, that lucky man who was to be my husband came to our village to reside, a man weary of business cares, and seeking retirement. My literary fame had become an old story, and nobody thought of telling him that I was a writing woman. Whatever may have led him to become interested in me, it certainly was not my reputation as a writer. But we were engaged—when, ten days before the wedding, my cousin lent him a bound volume of Q's Magazine with some of my effusions in it. He handed me the book a few days after, saying, rather gravely: 'I like those stories of yours. They are very good. Some of the love scenes are very touching—but if I had read them before I made your acquaintance, you may be sure that I should never have had the courage to approach you.'

"It was too late to back out, therefore back out he did not. And what do you suppose he really did? In a retired farming village, a pleasant day's drive from us, live some of his kinsfolk and many warm friends. So he must e'en freight the invitations to our marriage feast with some odd numbers of Q's Magazine containing what he, in his newly found pride in my so-called talents, thought my best productions. Mark this instance of masculine vanity. The gifted author of these 'interesting articles' was to be *his* wife. He had secured this intellectual prize—no matter whether he knew it or not when he proposed to me. On reading these writings, they would know how to appreciate his choice. Well—and what was the result? Not one of those good people came to the wedding—a circumstance that caused in us regret and wonder. They afterwards confessed that they were afraid to come. I was 'so literary,' that the party would be of the bluest, primmest kind, they were sure, and being used to the freedom and joyousness of country gatherings, they 'couldn't stand it, they knew they couldn't.' We went among them on a round of honeymoon visits, and you would have laughed to see the astonished faces of the women, and to hear the admiring remarks of the men, when they found that I ate, and talked, and joked like other folks, knew how to keep house, could prescribe for a sick child, and give a receipt for a new kind of cake. And before I tell

you any more of my experiences, let me say that they have proved congenial friends, and are as conversant with the best authors as they are skilful in farming and housekeeping. The only difficulty had been, that they had not a live author among them, and could not detach the creator of books from his works."

"It all turned out nicely, then," said Fanny; "and you have just as good a husband as if you were not literary. I am still determined to write if I can."

"But Fame, my dear Fanny, has other drawbacks, and many humiliations that I have not mentioned yet. There are people living on the same street with me who do not dream that I write, and to them I am only 'one of the neighbors.' A few days ago, my washerwoman's daughter came to me, and said: 'Noaw, mother's been out West to Uncle Smith's, and she heard how 't you wrote a story 'twas printed in a book, and she wants to borrow it.'

"Alas! thought I, and you have lived near me these six years, and never before knew that I wrote. And again, your acquaintances are always making you out to be your own heroine, and saying such absurd things to you, that it is out of the question to frame a reply. Not long ago, a sketch of mine appeared in the *Trumpet*, our weekly paper. Most of my neighbors take it. The object of the sketch was to depict a certain social foible, and turned on the incident of the writer having been visiting a distant town.

"That piece sounds just like you," said Molly Jones of the olden time, now a quiet matron. "And the other day, at the sewing society, we all said the same. But then we knew you couldn't have written it, because you hav'n't been away anywhere in more than a year."

"Such a misconstruction is by no means distressing; but too intensely foolish not to make one feel a little wiser than one's neighbors, which is not good for me."

"And you are just as good a wife and house-keeper," said Fanny, "as if you never wrote. And I know all your household look up to you."

"Alas! no. Do you not believe that saying about no man being a hero to his *valet-de-chambre*? Now, there is my cook, who duly buys and reads each number of the *Ladies' Parlor Friend*. She holds me in no more awe for knowing that I write for its pages. In fact, I think she would respect me more if I was not a writing woman. She doesn't hesitate at all to dispute my ways of doing things. And the

only fact that has made me of late rise in her estimation is this: Last summer I insisted that the green corn should be boiled before drying. She insisted just as strongly that it should be scraped from the cob and dried raw; and so she did it. The consequence is that our winter dish of 'succotash' is not fit to eat. And she has been glad to have left some corn of my own preparing the previous season. I heard her say to your mother's maid the other day that I did know something after all."

"And, after all," said Fanny, with a laugh, "just give me your receipt for making a magazine article, and I will set about concocting one without delay."

"Well, Fanny, laugh if you please; but your jesting request reminds me of another of my experiences. Many a one has come to me and begged it as an especial favor that I would tell her or him even how to go to work to write an article. What hour in the day to begin, and what to begin with; what to do with the personages of a story, if a story it was to be, or how to evolve from their misty brains a subject for an essay. There was something mechanical about the process that they could not just hit upon, unless I would be so kind as to give them a hint. Rules for composition are very proper; but where there is nothing in one's noddle to apply them to, they can be left unknown."

"So I am not to have your receipt," said Fanny. "You put me among the empty noddles."

"No, far from it. But go home and read 'Addison's Spectator,' and Washington Irving, and those delicious old tales of the days of King Arthur, and the Knights of the Round Table. Then, if you are determined on being a writing woman, stick to good, old-fashioned English. And be sure of my deepest sympathy with you in your 'career.'"

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### THE CASKET OF THE YEAR.

BY WILLIE E. PABOR.

*Pearl the Seventh.—July.*

Now the long, fervid summer days  
Oppress the heart; the sultry rays  
Of solar heat make weak the nerve,  
And men from all their purpose swerve,  
And only ask some quiet spot  
Where, all forgetting and forgot,  
They may in indolence and ease,  
Beneath the cool, umbrageous trees,  
Or by the limpid streamlet, lie,  
And watch the white clouds in the sky,

And call them angels, on their way  
To far off realms of endless day,  
With messages of love and bliss  
To brighter, fairer worlds than this;  
Or, listening to singing birds  
Repeating tender, wooing words  
In bowers hard by, they fall asleep,  
And in their dreams Time's barriers leap  
And reach that fair, Utopian clime,  
Where—like a song of perfect rhyme  
To sweetest music wedded—life,  
Forever separate from strife,  
From agony of hope or fear,  
From bursting sigh, from falling tear,  
From disappointed plans, and from  
The woe that makes its victims dumb—  
Moves onward in the grooves of joy  
Without the taint of Time's alloy;  
Where perfect happiness resides,  
Where Summer as a queen abides  
In a perpetual reign, and where  
All beatific things and rare  
Present their pleasures to the soul,  
As from an overflowing bowl.

So, 'neath the fervor of July,  
Its sultry heats, its torrid sky,  
Man languishes with time and sense,  
And lapses into indolence,  
While Nature from her treasure pours  
Upon the world her myriad stores  
Of fruits and flowers, and strews the road  
With gifts that leads to her abode.  
The droning bee, amid the hay,  
Fears not the reaper in its play;  
The butterfly, amid the flowers,  
Heeds not the child that roams the bowers;  
The humming-bird upon the rose  
Sits idly, careless of all foes;  
And all the children of the air  
The confidence of nature share.  
The days go by, we scarce know why,  
We scarce know how; they're born, they die,  
And others come, and still we turn  
And in the sky and air discern  
A sense of heaviness and gloom,  
Though freighted with Cathay's perfume.  
Turning aside from written books,  
We find our lessons in the brooks;  
The leaf of the witch-hazel gleams  
With the bright alphabet of dreams;  
In the lake lilies' bosom lie  
Stars with twin-sisters in the sky;  
And the sweet violet offers up,  
Within the azure of her cup,  
The heavy freighted odorous hour,  
And bids us prize the precious dower.

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EXCELLENCE.—Excellence is never granted to man, but as the reward of labor. It argues, indeed, no small strength of mind to persevere in habits of industry, without the pleasure of perceiving those advantages which, like the hands of a clock, whilst they make their hourly approaches to their point, yet proceed so slowly as to escape observation.