

With the scalp-lock riven from his head
And an arrow in his heart.

And the women scream in wonder,
For all can plainly see
That a little lad with a smiling face
Bestrides the saddle-tree.

He tosses a kiss to his mother,
He tenderly bows to all,
And they know that their eyes behold indeed
The spirit of little Paul.

The horse flies by the cottage,
And into his pasture home,
Yellow and bright in the sunset gold,
And spotted with silver foam.

And the women hasten homeward,
Among the dropping dews,
To tell of the marvels they have seen,
And to bear the heavy news.

But Miriam passeth inward,
Her hand in goodwife Hurd's,
And readeth there, for her comforting,
The Bible's gracious words.

Then reverently she kneeleth
And uttereth a prayer,
That the childless and the widowed one
Might have the Father's care.

But e'er her prayer she endeth,
With fervent voice she saith;
"Oh punish not our blundering more
With chastisement of death!"

"But when Thou sendest poets
To such dull folk as we,
Inspire our blind and doubting eyes
To know them when we see!"

OUR ARCHERY CLUB.

WHEN an archery club was formed in our village, I was among the first to join it; but I should not, on this account, claim any extraordinary enthusiasm on the subject of archery, for nearly all the ladies and gentlemen of the place were also among the first to join.

Few of us, I think, had a correct idea of the popularity of archery in our midst, until the subject of a club was broached. Then

we all perceived what a strong interest we felt in the study and use of the bow and arrow. The club was formed immediately, and our thirty members began to discuss the relative merits of lancewood, yew, and greenheart bows, and to survey yards and lawns for suitable spots for setting up targets for home practice.

Our weekly meetings, at which we came together to show, in friendly contest, how

much our home practice had taught us, were held upon the village green, or rather upon what had been intended to be the village green. This pretty piece of ground, partly in smooth lawn, and partly shaded by fine trees, was the property of a gentleman of the place, who had presented it, under certain conditions, to the township. But as the township had never fulfilled any of the conditions, and had done nothing toward the improvement of the spot, further than to make it a grazing place for local cows and goats, the owner had withdrawn his gift, shut out the cows and goats by a picket-fence, and having locked the gate, had hung up the key in his barn. When our club was formed, the green, as it was still called, was offered to us for our meetings, and with proper gratitude, we elected its owner to be our president.

This gentleman was eminently qualified for the presidency of an archery club. In the first place, he did not shoot: this gave him time and opportunity to attend to the shooting of others. He was a tall and pleasant man, a little elderly. This "elderliness," if I may so put it, seemed in his case, to resemble some mild disorder, like a gentle rheumatism, which, while it prevented him from indulging in all the wild hilarities of youth, gave him, in compensation, a position, as one entitled to a certain consideration, which was very agreeable to him. His little disease was chronic, it is true, and it was growing upon him, but it was, so far, a pleasant ailment.

And so, with as much interest in bows, and arrows, and targets, and successful shots as any of us, he never fitted an arrow to a string, nor drew a bow; but he attended every meeting, settling disputed points (for he studied all the books on archery); encouraging the disheartened; holding back the eager ones, who would run to the targets as soon as they had shot, regardless of the fact that others were still shooting, and that the human body is not arrow-proof; and shedding about him that general aid and comfort which emanates from a good fellow, no matter what he may say or do.

There were persons—outsiders—who said that archery clubs always selected ladies for their presiding officers, but we did not care to be too much bound down and trammelled by customs and traditions. Another club might not have among its members such a genial, elderly gentleman, who owned a village green.

I soon found myself greatly interested in

archery, especially when I succeeded in planting an arrow somewhere within the periphery of the target; but I never became such an enthusiast in bow-shooting as my friend Pepton.

If Pepton could have arranged matters to suit himself, he would have been born an archer; but as this did not happen to have been the case, he employed every means in his power to rectify what he considered this serious error in his construction. He gave his whole soul, and the greater part of his spare time, to archery, and as he was a young man of energy, this helped him along wonderfully.

His equipments were perfect; no one could excel him in this respect. His bow was snake-wood, backed with hickory. He carefully rubbed it down every evening with oil and bees-wax, and it took its repose in a green baize bag. His arrows were Philip Highfield's best; his strings the finest Flanders hemp. He had shooting-gloves, and he had little leathern tips, that could be screwed fast on the ends of what he called his string-fingers. He had a quiver and a belt, and when equipped for the weekly meetings, he carried a fancy-colored wiping tassel, and a little ebony grease-pot, hanging from his belt. He wore, when shooting, a polished arm-guard or bracer, and if he had heard of anything else that an archer should have, he straightway would have procured it.

Pepton was a single man, and he lived with two good old maiden ladies, who took as much care of him as if they had been his mothers. And he was such a good, kind fellow that he deserved all the attention they gave him. They felt a great interest in his archery pursuits, and shared his anxious solicitude in the selection of a suitable place to hang his bow.

"You see," said he, "a fine bow like this, when not in use, should always be in a perfectly dry place."

"And when in use, too," said Miss Martha; "for I am sure that you oughtn't to be standing and shooting in any damp spot. There's no surer way of gettin' chilled."

To which sentiment Miss Maria agreed, and suggested wearing rubber shoes, or having a board to stand on, when the club met after a rain.

Pepton first hung his bow in the hall; but after he had arranged it symmetrically upon two long nails (bound with green worsted, lest they should scratch the bow through its woolen cover), he reflected that the front

door would frequently be open, and that damp draughts must often go through the hall. He was sorry to give up this place for his bow, for it was convenient and appropriate; and for an instant he thought that it might remain, if the front door could be kept shut, and visitors admitted through a little side door, which the family generally used, and which was almost as convenient as the other,—except, indeed, on wash-days, when a wet sheet or some article of wearing apparel was apt to be hung in front of it. But, although wash-day occurred but once a week, and although it was comparatively easy, after a little practice, to bob under a high-propped sheet, Pepton's heart was too kind to allow his mind to dwell upon this plan. So he drew the nails from the wall of the hall, and put them up in various places about the house. His own room had to be aired a great deal in all weathers, and so that would not do at all. The wall above the kitchen fire-place would be a good location, for the chimney was nearly always warm; but Pepton could not bring himself to keep his bow in the kitchen: there would be nothing æsthetic about such a disposition of it; and, besides, the girl might be tempted to string and bend it. The old ladies really did not want it in the parlor, for its length and its green baize cover would make it an encroaching and unbecoming neighbor to the little engravings and the big samplers, the picture-frames of acorns and pine-cones, the fancifully-patterned ornaments of clean wheat-straw, and all the quaint adornments which had hung upon those walls for so many years. But they did not say so. If it had been necessary, to make room for the bow, they would have taken down the penciled profiles of their grandfather, their grandmother, and their father when a little boy, which hung in a row over the mantel-piece.

However, Pepton did not ask this sacrifice. In the summer evenings, the parlor windows must be open. The dining-room was really very little used in the evening, except when Miss Maria had stockings to darn, and then she always sat in that apartment, and of course she had the windows open. But Miss Maria was very willing to bring her work into the parlor,—it was foolish, anyway, to have a feeling about darning stockings before chance company,—and then the dining-room could be kept shut up after tea. So into the wall of that neat little room Pepton drove his worsted-covered nails, and on them carefully laid his

bow. And the next day Miss Martha and Miss Maria went about the house, and covered the nail-holes he had made with bits of wall-paper, carefully snipped out to fit the patterns, and pasted on so neatly that no one would have suspected they were there.

One afternoon, as I was passing the old ladies' house, I saw, or thought I saw, two men carrying in a coffin. I was struck with alarm.

"What!" I thought, "can either of those good women ——? Or, can Pepton ——?"

Without a moment's hesitation, I rushed in behind the men. There, at the foot of the stairs, directing them, stood Pepton. Then it was not he! I seized him sympathetically by the hand.

"Which ——?" I faltered. "Which? Who is that coffin for?"

"Coffin!" cried Pepton, "why, my dear fellow, that is not a coffin. That is my ascham."

"Ascham?" I exclaimed. "What is that?"

"Come and look at it," he said, when the men had set it on end against the wall; "it is an upright closet, or receptacle for an archer's armament. Here is a place to stand the bow; here are supports for the arrows and quivers; here are shelves and hooks, on which to lay or hang everything the merry man can need. And you see, moreover, that it is lined with green plush, and that the door fits tightly, so that it can stand anywhere, and there need be no fear of draughts or dampness affecting my bow. Isn't it a perfect thing? You ought to get one."

I admitted the perfection, but agreed no further. I had not the income of my good Pepton.

Pepton was, indeed, most wonderfully well equipped, and yet, little did those dear old ladies think, when they carefully dusted and reverentially gazed at the bunches of arrows, the arm-bracers, the gloves, the grease-pots, and all the rest of the paraphernalia of archery, as it hung around Pepton's room; or when they afterward allowed a particular friend to peep at it, all arranged so orderly within the ascham; or when they looked with sympathetic, loving admiration on the beautiful polished bow, when it was taken out of its bag,—little did they think, I say, that Pepton was the very poorest shot in the club. In all the surface of the much perforated targets of the club, there was scarcely a hole that he could put his hand upon his heart and say he made.

Indeed, I think it was the truth that Pepton was born not to be an archer. There were young fellows in the club, who shot with bows that cost no more than Pepton's tassels, but who could stand up and whang arrows into the targets all the afternoon, if they could get a chance; and there were ladies who made hits five times out of six; and there were also all the grades of archers common to any club. But there was no one but himself in Pepton's grade. He stood alone, and it was never any trouble to add up his score.

And yet he was not discouraged. He practiced every day, except Sundays, and indeed he was the only person in the club who practiced at night. When he told me about this, I was a little surprised.

"Why, it's easy enough," said he. "You see, I hung a lantern, with a reflector before the target, just a little to one side. It lighted up the target beautifully, and I believe there was a better chance of hitting it than by daylight, for the only thing you could see was the target, and so your attention was not distracted. To be sure," he said, in answer to a question, "it was a good deal of trouble to find the arrows, but that I always have. When I get so expert that I can put all the arrows into the target, there will be no trouble of the kind, night or day. However," he continued, "I don't practice any more by night. The other evening I sent an arrow slam-bang into the lantern, and broke it all to flinders. Borrowed lantern, too. Besides, I found it made Miss Martha very nervous to have me shooting about the house after dark. She had a friend, who had a little boy, who was hit in the leg by an arrow from a bow, which, she says, accidentally went off in the night, of its own accord. She is certainly a little mixed in her mind in regard to this matter; but I wish to respect her feelings, and so shall not use another lantern."

As I have said, there were many good archers among the ladies of our club. Some of them, after we had been organized for a month or two, made scores that few of the gentlemen could excel. But the lady who attracted the greatest attention when she shot was Miss Rosa.

When this very pretty young lady stood up before the ladies' target—her left side well advanced, her bow firmly held out in her strong left arm, which never quivered, her head a little bent to the right, her arrow drawn back by three well-gloved fingers to the tip of her little ear, her dark eyes

steadily fixed upon the gold, and her dress—well fitted over her fine and vigorous figure—falling in graceful folds about her feet, we all stopped shooting to look at her.

"There is something statuesque about her," said Pepton, who ardently admired her, "and yet there isn't. A statue could never equal her unless we knew there was a probability of movement in it. And the only statues which have that are the Jarley Wax-works, which she does not resemble in the least. There is only one thing that that girl needs to make her a perfect archer, and that is to be able to aim better."

This was true. Miss Rosa did need to aim better. Her arrows had a curious habit of going on all sides of the target, and it was very seldom that one chanced to stick into it. For, if she did make a hit, we all knew it was chance and that there was no probability of her doing it again. Once she put an arrow right into the center of the gold,—one of the finest shots ever made on the ground,—but she didn't hit the target again for two weeks. She was almost as bad a shot as Pepton, and that is saying a good deal.

One evening, I was sitting with Pepton on the little front porch of the old ladies' house, where we were taking our after-dinner smoke while Miss Martha and Miss Maria were washing, with their own white hands, the china and glass in which they took so much pride. I often used to come over and spend an hour with Pepton. He liked to have some one to whom he could talk on the subjects which filled his soul, and I liked to hear him talk.

"I tell you," said he, as he leaned back in his chair, with his feet carefully disposed on the railing so that they would not injure Miss Maria's Madeira vine, "I tell you, sir, that there are two things I crave with all my power of craving; two goals I fain would reach; two diadems I would wear upon my brow. One of these is to kill an eagle—or some large bird—with a shaft from my good bow. I would then have it stuffed and mounted, with the very arrow that killed it still sticking in its breast. This trophy of my skill I would have fastened against the wall of my room, or my hall, and I would feel proud to think that my grandchildren could point to that bird—which I would carefully bequeath to my descendants—and say, 'My grand'ther shot that bird, and with that very arrow.' Would it not stir your pulses, if you could do a thing like that?"

"I should have to stir them up a good deal before I could do it," I replied. "It would be a hard thing to shoot an eagle with an arrow. If you want a stuffed bird to bequeath, you'd better use a rifle."

"A rifle!" exclaimed Pepton. "There would be no glory in that. There are lots of birds shot with rifles,—eagles, hawks, wild geese, tom-tits —"

"Oh no," I interrupted, "not tom-tits."

"Well, perhaps they are too little for a rifle," said he; "but what I mean to say is, that I wouldn't care at all for an eagle I had shot with a rifle. You couldn't show the ball that killed him. If it were put in properly, it would be inside, where it couldn't be seen. No, sir; it is ever so much more honorable, and far more difficult, too, to hit an eagle than to hit a target."

"That is very true," I answered, "especially in these days, when there are so few eagles and so many targets. But what is your other diadem?"

"That," said Pepton, "is to see Miss Rosa wear the badge."

"Indeed!" said I, and from that moment I began to understand Pepton's hopes in regard to the grandmother of those children who should point to the eagle.

"Yes, sir," he continued, "I should be truly happy to see her win the badge. And she ought to win it. No one shoots more correctly, and with a better understanding of all the rules, than she does. There must, truly, be something the matter with her aiming. I've half a mind to coach her a little."

I turned aside to see who was coming down the road. I would not have had him know I smiled.

The most objectionable person in our club was O. J. Hollingsworth. He was a good enough fellow in himself, but it was as an archer that we objected to him. There was, so far as I know, scarcely a rule of archery that he did not habitually violate. Our president and nearly all of us remonstrated with him, and Pepton even went to see him on the subject; but it was all to no purpose. With a quiet disregard of other people's ideas about bow-shooting and other people's opinions about himself, he persevered in a style of shooting which appeared absolutely absurd to any one who knew anything of the rules and methods of archery.

I used to like to look at him when his turn came around to shoot. He was not such a pleasing object of vision as Miss Rosa, but his style was so entirely novel to me that it

was interesting. He held the bow horizontally, instead of perpendicularly, like other archers; and he held it well down—about opposite his waist-band. He did not draw his arrow back to his ear, but he drew it back to the lower button of his vest. Instead of standing upright, with his left side to the target, he faced it full, and leaned forward over his arrow, in an attitude which reminded me of a Roman soldier about to fall upon his sword. When he had seized the nock of his arrow between his finger and thumb, he languidly glanced at the target, raised his bow a little, and let fly. The provoking thing about it was that he nearly always hit. If he had only known how to stand, and hold his bow, and draw back his arrow, he would have been a very good archer. But, as it was, we could not help laughing at him, although our president always discountenanced anything of the kind.

Our Champion was a tall man, very cool and steady, who went to work at archery exactly as if he were paid a salary, and intended to earn his money honestly. He did the best he could in every way. He generally shot with one of the bows owned by the club; but if any one on the ground had a better one, he would borrow it. He used to shoot sometimes with Pepton's bow, which he declared to be a most capital one; but as Pepton was always very nervous when he saw his bow in the hands of another than himself, the Champion soon ceased to borrow it.

There were two badges, one of green silk and gold, for the ladies, and one of green and red, for the gentlemen; and these were shot for at each weekly meeting. With the exception of a few times, when the club was first formed, the Champion had always worn the gentlemen's badge. Many of us tried hard to win it from him; but we never could succeed—he shot too well.

On the morning of one of our meeting days, the Champion told me, as I was going to the city with him, that he would not be able to return at his usual hour that afternoon. He would be very busy, and would have to wait for the 6:15 train, which would bring him home too late for the archery meeting. So he gave me the badge, asking me to hand it to the president, that he might bestow it on the successful competitor that afternoon.

We were all rather glad that the Champion was obliged to be absent. Here was a chance for some one of us to win the badge. It

was not, indeed, an opportunity for us to win a great deal of honor, for if the Champion were to be there, we should have no chance at all; but we were satisfied with this much, having no reason—in the present, at least—to expect anything more.

So we went to the targets with a new zeal, and most of us shot better than we had ever shot before. In this number was O. J. Hollingsworth. He excelled himself, and, what was worse, he excelled all the rest of us. He actually made a score of eighty-five in twenty-four shots, which at that time was remarkably good shooting, for our club. This was dreadful! To have a fellow, who didn't know how to shoot, beat us all, was too bad. If any visitor who knew anything at all of archery should see that the member who wore the champion's badge was a man who held his bow as if he had the stomach-ache, it would ruin our character as a club. It was not to be borne.

Pepton, in particular, felt greatly outraged. We had met very promptly that afternoon, and had finished our regular shooting much earlier than usual, and now a knot of us were gathered together, talking over this unfortunate occurrence.

"I don't intend to stand it," Pepton suddenly exclaimed. "I feel it as a personal disgrace. I'm going to have the Champion here before dark. By the rules, he has a right to shoot until the president declares it is too late. Some of you fellows stay here, and I'll bring him."

And away he ran, first giving me charge of his precious bow. There was no need of his asking us to stay. We were bound to see the fun out, and to fill up the time our president offered a special prize of a handsome bouquet from his gardens, to be shot for by the ladies.

Pepton ran to the railroad station, and telegraphed to the Champion. This was his message:

"You are absolutely needed here. If possible, take the 5:30 train for Ackford. I will drive over for you. Answer."

There was no train before the 6:15 by which the Champion could come directly to our village; but Ackford, a small town about three miles distant, was on another railroad, on which there were frequent afternoon trains.

The Champion answered:

"All right. Meet me."

Then Pepton rushed to our livery stable, hired a horse and buggy, and drove to Ackford.

A little after half-past six, when several of us were beginning to think that Pepton had failed in his plans, he drove rapidly into the grounds, making a very short turn at the gate, and pulled up his panting horse just in time to avoid running over three ladies, who were seated on the grass. The Champion was by his side!

The latter lost no time in talking or salutations. He knew what he had been brought there to do, and he immediately set about trying to do it. He took Pepton's bow, which the latter urged upon him; he stood up, straight and firm on the line, at thirty-five yards from the gentlemen's target; he carefully selected his arrows, examining the feathers and wiping away any bit of soil that might be adhering to the points after some one had shot them into the turf; with vigorous arm he drew each arrow to its head; he fixed his eyes and his whole mind on the center of the target; he shot his twenty-four arrows, handed to him, one by one, by Pepton, and he made a score of ninety-one.

The whole club had been scoring the shots, as they were made, and when the last arrow plumped into the red ring, a cheer arose from every member excepting three: the Champion, the president and O. J. Hollingsworth. But Pepton cheered loudly enough to make up these deficiencies.

"What in the mischief did they cheer him for?" asked Hollingsworth of me. "They didn't cheer me, when I beat everybody on the grounds, an hour ago. And it's no new thing for him to win the badge; he does it every time."

"Well," said I, frankly, "I think the club, as a club, objects to your wearing the badge, because you don't know how to shoot."

"Don't know how to shoot!" he cried. "Why, I can hit the target better than any of you. Isn't that what you try to do when you shoot?"

"Yes," said I, "of course that is what we try to do. But we try to do it in the proper way."

"Proper grandmother!" he exclaimed. "It don't seem to help you much. The best thing you fellows can do is to learn to shoot my way, and then perhaps you may be able to hit oftener."

When the Champion had finished shooting, he went home to his dinner, but many of us stood about, talking over our great escape.

"I feel as if I had done that myself," said Pepton. "I am almost as proud as if

I had shot—well, not an eagle, but a soaring lark.”

“Why, that ought to make you prouder than the other,” said I, “for a lark, especially when it’s soaring, must be a good deal harder to hit than an eagle.”

“That’s so,” said Pepton, reflectively, “but I’ll stick to the lark. I’m proud.”

During the next month our style of archery improved very much, so much, indeed, that we increased our distance, for gentlemen, to forty yards, and that for ladies to thirty, and also had serious thoughts of challenging the Ackford club to a match. But as this was generally understood to be a crack club, we finally determined to defer our challenge until the next season.

When I say we improved, I do not mean all of us. I do not mean Miss Rosa. Although her attitudes were as fine as ever, and every motion as true to rule as ever, she seldom made a hit. Pepton actually did try to teach her how to aim, but the various methods of pointing the arrow which he suggested resulted in such wild shooting, that the boys who picked up the arrows never dared to stick the points of their noses beyond their boarded barricade, during Miss Rosa’s turns at the target. But she was not discouraged, and Pepton often assured her that if she would keep up a good heart, and practice regularly, she would get the badge yet. As a rule, Pepton was so honest and truthful that a little statement of this kind, especially under the circumstances, might be forgiven him.

One day Pepton came to me and announced that he had made a discovery.

“It’s about archery,” he said, “and I don’t mind telling you, because I know you will not go about telling everybody else, and also because I want to see you succeed as an archer.”

“I am very much obliged,” I said, “and what is the discovery?”

“It’s this,” he answered. “When you draw your bow, bring the nock of your arrow”—he was always very particular about technical terms—“well up to your ear. Having done that, don’t bother any more about your right hand. It has nothing to do with the correct pointing of your arrow, for it must be kept close to your right ear, just as if it were screwed there. Then with your left hand bring around the bow so that your fist—with the arrow-head, which is resting on top of it—shall point, as nearly as you can make it, directly at the center of the target. Then let fly, and ten to one

you’ll make a hit. Now, what do you think of that, for a discovery? I’ve thoroughly tested the plan, and it works splendidly.”

“I think,” said I, “that you have discovered the way in which good archers shoot. You have stated the correct method of managing a bow and arrow.”

“Then you don’t think it’s an original method with me?”

“Certainly not,” I answered.

“But it’s the correct way?”

“There’s no doubt of that,” said I.

“Well,” said Pepton, “then I shall make it my way.”

He did so, and the consequence was that one day, when the Champion happened to be away, Pepton won the badge. When the result was announced, we were all surprised, but none so much so as Pepton himself. He had been steadily improving since he had adopted a good style of shooting; but he had had no idea that he would that day be able to win the badge.

When our president pinned the emblem of success upon the lappel of his coat, Pepton turned pale, and then he flushed. He thanked the president, and was about to thank the ladies and gentlemen; but probably recollecting that we had had nothing to do with it,—unless, indeed, we had shot badly on his behalf,—he refrained. He said little; but I could see that he was very proud and very happy. There was but one drawback to his triumph: Miss Rosa was not there. She was a very regular attendant; but for some reason she was absent on this momentous afternoon. I did not say anything to him on the subject; but I knew he felt this absence deeply.

But this cloud could not wholly overshadow his happiness. He walked home alone, his face beaming, his eyes sparkling, and his good bow under his arm.

That evening I called on him, for I thought that, when he had cooled down a little, he would like to talk over the affair. But he was not in. Miss Maria said that he had gone out as soon as he had finished his dinner, which he hurried through in a way which would certainly injure his digestion if he kept up the practice; and dinner was late, too, for they waited for him; and the archery meeting lasted a long time to-day, and it really was not right for him to stay out after the dew began to fall with only ordinary shoes on, for what’s the good of knowing how to shoot a bow and arrow, if you’re laid up in your bed with rheumatism or disease of the lungs? Good old lady!

She would have kept Pepton in a green baize bag, had such a thing been possible.

The next morning, full two hours before church-time, Pepton called on me. His face was still beaming. I could not help smiling.

"Your happiness lasts well," I said.

"Lasts!" he exclaimed. "Why shouldn't it last?"

"There's no reason why it should not—at least for a week," I said. "And even longer, if you repeat your success."

I did not feel so much like congratulating Pepton as I had on the previous evening. I thought he was making too much of his badge-winning.

"Look here!" said Pepton, seating himself, and drawing his chair close to me, "you are shooting wild—very wild indeed. You don't even see the target. Let me tell you something. Last evening I went to see Miss Rosa. She was delighted at my success. I had not expected this. I thought she would be pleased, but not to such a degree. Her congratulations were so warm that they set me on fire."

"They must have been very warm indeed," I remarked.

"Miss Rosa," said I, "continued Pepton, without regarding my interruption, "'it has been my fondest hope to see you wear the badge.' 'But I never could get it, you know,' she said. 'You have got it,' I exclaimed. 'Take this. I won it for you. Make me happy by wearing it.' 'I can't do

that,' she said. 'That is a gentleman's badge.' 'Take it,' I cried, 'gentleman and all!'

"I can't tell you all that happened after that," continued Pepton. "You know it wouldn't do. It is enough to say that she wears the badge. And we are both her own—the badge and I!"

Now I congratulated him in good earnest. There was a reason for it.

"I don't care a snap now for shooting an eagle," said Pepton, springing to his feet, and striding up and down the floor. "Let 'em all fly free for me. I have made the most glorious shot that man could make. I have hit the gold—hit it fair in the very center! And what's more, I've knocked it clean out of the target! Nobody else can ever make such a shot. The rest of you fellows will have to be content to hit the red, the blue, the black, or the white. The gold is mine!"

I called on the old ladies, some time after this, and found them alone. They were generally alone in the evenings now. We talked about Pepton's engagement, and I found them resigned. They were sorry to lose him, but they wanted him to be happy.

"We have always known," said Miss Martha, with a little sigh, "that we must die, and that he must get married. But we don't intend to repine. These things will come to people." And her little sigh was followed by a smile, still smaller.

OUT OF THE WORLD.

It is the nature of all things to grow, and the worse they are the faster they grow. Bad habits can take care of themselves; it is only the good habits that require vigilant supervision. I have been carrying on for some years a petty and unequal contest, on a little plot of ground, to develop order, clean growth and fruitfulness, and to suppress the vicious tendencies of the earth to produce disorder, to express itself in a coarse and hateful vegetation, and to riot in slovenliness.

The purity of my purpose and the benevolence of my intentions go for nothing. I purpose to raise a crop of strawberries for the support of the omniverous robin and the enterprising children of the neighborhood. Nature, represented by an alliance of weeds, dirt, and sun, has other views.

The contest is always unequal. I must sleep sometimes, and occasionally I wish to go on a journey. These forces, which are my enemies, never sleep and never travel. They work in darkness and they waste at noonday. They are myriad in number and fertile in all useless invention. The liking of men and of gardens to revert to barbarism, when restraint is removed, is the most perplexing phenomenon we encounter.

Why is it that your lawn, which has become smooth and sightly and well rooted with white clover and herd's-grass, yields so ignominiously to an epidemic of moneywort or a sporadic disfigurement of dock? If I plant anything good it thrives only so long as I put my life into it, and coax it with all the anxiety of a regenerated nature. If anything evil drops into the ground it springs