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Oh! you are so brave, you soldiers. "You will meet me at another time?" "Perhaps," was her arch reply. "But promise me." "Where?" "And then the two drew very near together upon the seat, and there was some low and confidential conversation, no doubt to the entire satisfaction of both parties. The marked flirtation of the General with the orange girl was not observed by the assembled fashion and rank of the city, and when the two separated a few moments later, the old soldier was compelled to run the gauntlet of many a sarcastic remark. However, he was well satisfied with his success, and could afford to put up with a few jests at his expense from those whom he could not feel envied him.

But the mid-night hour had come all too soon for him; still, with a punctuality characteristic of his calling, he hastened to leave his gay scene which afforded him such delight, and proceeded to the official distinction already named. He was hardly fit, however, to sit in council, for his head was full to repletion of the exquisite little figure with which he had been whirling in the giddy mazes of the waltz. He could not get her out of his mind for a single moment.

As all fashionable Madrid was abroad that night, it was some considerable time before the General's carriage could be found and brought forward in response to his order. In his tedious moments of waiting, he once more sought the ball-room, endeavoring among the revellers to distinguish his gay young partner, but to his great disappointment she was nowhere to be seen. Like Cinderella, at the mid-night hour she had vanished from the gay scene, as though a fair spell had been broken. The General rubbed his eyes as if he expected to awake and find it all a dream.

His carriage came at last, and entering it he started at once to fulfil his appointment. "It was a clear, bright night; the moon was full and serene in its effect. The General looked out as he left the city gates and started upon the road, then setting himself upon an easy position, hoping to catch a nap by the way. With the happy faculty required in camp life of being able to sleep under nearly any circumstances, he was quite oblivious to all about him. He was soon dreaming of the bewitching eyes that had been beaming upon him through the mask of the orange girl.

Suddenly his ears were saluted by a loud peremptory direction: "Halt!" At which the vehicle was suddenly came to a standstill. He was hardly sufficiently awake to ask himself what all this signified, or how any one dared to interfere with a person of his rank upon the road, when the door of the vehicle was thrown open and a couple of brigands, armed to the teeth, jumped into the carriage in the most unceremonious manner. The General was too much amazed to make or attempt any resistance, besides which, while he was entirely unarmed, his ears were saluted by the ominous sound of cocking a pistol, which he saw by the bright moonlight held by one of the brigands ready for instant use.

"What means this?" demanded General Arieta. "Don't use harsh words, General," said one of the brigands, "while the other, putting his head out of the carriage window, gave the word for the vehicle to drive on. "Now, General," said he, who evidently was captain of his fellows, "you are my prisoner." "So it seems; but what is your object?" "Answer my questions faithfully and truly, and I shall not put you to any great inconvenience." "But suppose I decline?" "My advice to you is not to try it."

"Why not?" "Because we should slit your ears and nose in a manner which would make you a human curiosity to your friends and the public," was the cool reply. The General saw it would be useless to contend with these men. He knew how literally they often carried out their threats when they held a prisoner for ransom, and he shuddered internally, though a brave man, at the idea of being personally maimed for life, as they threatened. The carriage in the meantime was moving along at a smart pace. "Whether are you conducting me to?" asked the Queen's officer. "You will be informed by and by," was the reply. "But I have an important appointment." "What do you suppose we care for that?" "You will be made to suffer for this." "First catch your hare," said the robber chief. "Take what you desire of my personal property, but I beg that you will not detain me," said the General. "Well," said he, who had acted as spokesman, "you may give me that signet ring, General." "Nay, anything but that." "It suits my fancy, and indeed it is all I require of your personal effects." "I will you a note for a hundred pesos, rather." "It will not answer—I require the ring." "Strange!" "Do you think so?" "Its intrinsic value is not half the sum." "True, but it is a signet ring." The General reluctantly handed his ring to the robber, saying: "Let our interview be brief, for you

determine me from a Cabinet meeting of importance." "Exactly; and now, General, what question in politics is up that should demand a Cabinet meeting at this unusual hour?" "That is the Queen's business." "Undoubtedly, but you have not answered me, and until you do so be sure you lose time." It seemed to be no use to try to avoid the inquiries of the precious brigand. Indeed the General felt that the best course to pursue was to answer all inquiries frankly, believing that he should facilitate his deliverance thereby. And then commenced a series of interrogatories which showed remarkable intelligence on the robber's part, and to which the General responded frankly and truthfully. He was thus forced to retail all the court gossip; to tell who was in favor with the Queen and who was under the ban of her displeasure; what appointments, civil and military, were under discussion, and who were likely to be dismissed from favor.

At last, after the General had been absolutely pumped dry of all information he was capable of imparting, and without robbing him of any other property save the signet ring, the carriage was ordered to stop. The two brigands stepped out, and were at once joined by the one who had mounted the box beside the driver. The General then saw that there had been but three engaged in the attack upon his vehicle. The two robbers bade the General "good morning," for it was already daylight, and immediately disappeared.

The Queen's officer found himself on the very spot where his carriage had been stopped. The vehicle had been driving all the while in a circle of 100 yards or so. The author of this frolic, the beautiful orange girl of the masked ball, the dashing brigand chief who stopped the General's coach, and who, while seated beside him, extorted a dozen court secrets, and stole his signet ring, was no other than Eugenie, then Courtesse of Montijo, and now the ex-Empress of France.

Discouraged. It is so easy to say, "Never give up the ship." It is so easy to hold your head up and step firmly, to laugh cheerily, and have a pleasant word for everybody, when safely hedged in from sorrow and poverty by the love of friends and a bottomless purse. When sickness passes by to knock at some other door, when home is the one "sweet, safe corner" in all the world, when there are those who would suffer that you might go free,—ah! then it is easy to feel as if nothing could ever make you quite discouraged. This is a beautiful world, and there are lots of good things in it. Yes, many a son and daughter, a few wives and mothers, and about the same proportion of husbands and fathers, do live more in the shine than in the shadow of life. But there are so many, so many more, who have to buckle on their armor, and spend their best heart's blood in the daily life. Such bitter trials as men and women do live through! Who can doubt that heaven sends them their fortitude? It cannot be of earth. Such strains of heart and brain as hearts and brains do still, bear up under! Is it any wonder that weary hands sometimes fall despondingly, and weary heads bow discouraged? Oh! ye, whose paths are in the pleasant places! whose faith was never tried by heaven's seeming disregard of your prayers and tears! who never knew the lack of tender home-love and protection, exult in your happiness, and thank Providence. But while you drink from your cup of life such honey-sweet draughts, give a thought now and then to those whose daily portions savor so strongly of wormwood, and remember that a kindly word and a helping hand, which cost so little, may make lighter the burdens of some one now almost discouraged.

Mending the Basket. A lady of benevolence and wealth sent some delicacies to a family very sick and poverty made them very welcome. The basket in which they were carried was a nice one in its day, but had been carefully mended in several places where time and use had made ravages. The fruit and cakes were highly prized by the poor invalid, but one of the family, noticing the repairs on the basket, exclaimed, "Well, now, who would think that such rich people would mend a basket?" Just here, doubtless, is the secret of the wealth for the one and the poverty of the other. The rich family had been brought up to mend the basket, indeed, to be careful in little things according to the old homely adage, "A stitch in time saves nine," and the proverb, "A penny saved is a penny earned." The other despised such trifles and neglected to take the stitch or save the penny. These times, esteemed so hard, call on all to mend the basket for one can be as useful and happy when practicing economy as when indulging in lavish wastefulness. The present prosperity of France, coming after an expensive war, is said to be owing to the economical habits of the people. The tasteful French dishes so much extolled by our countrymen, can many of them, be resolved into very simple and inexpensive ingredients. The economies of the kitchen are quite worthy the attention of our lady housekeepers, even if Bridget scold and threaten, to leave if her absolute and often wasteful rule is broken. —[Providence Journal.]

THE HESSIAN FLY.—Mr. M. B. Bateham, of Painesville, Ohio, an authority upon agricultural matters, warns the farmers that the indications are that should the weather prove mild next spring, without much rain, considerable mischief will be done by the larvae of this insect among wheat fields. In the spring with the first warm weather, the fly will come forth and deposit its eggs upon the leaf, which will then soon hatch, when the worms, crawling down to the leaf, feeds upon the stalk, injuring its growth, often causing it to die. He recommends farmers to watch closely for the appearance of the flies in the spring, and as soon as the eggs are laid, to turn sheep enough into these fields to eat off the tops of wheat. This will not materially injure the crops, if the plants are strongly rooted.

LUMBER.—A wineglass of spruce beer and three-quarters of a wineglass of rum or whisky, with brown sugar to taste, taken in a tumbler of hot water every alternate night, is said to be a excellent cure for lumbago.

THE TOAD AND HIS HABITS. Formerly the toad was considered a venomous reptile, but in our days its habits have become more carefully observed, and its great value to the pomologist and gardener has been fully established on account of its propensity for destroying insects, especially those injurious to vegetation. We should, therefore, sedulously cultivate the friendship and crave the assistance of the insectivorous reptiles, including the striped snake, as well as that of birds. Every tidy housewife detests the cockroach, mice and other vermin. Two or three domesticated toads would keep the coast clear of these, and they be found more desirable than a cat, as they are wholly free from trespassing on the rights of men as does the cat. The toad is possessed of a timid and retiring nature, loving dark corners and shady places, but under kind treatment becoming quite tame. Many instances might be cited of pet toads remaining several years in a family, and doing valuable service with no other compensation than immunity from persecution. All that is necessary to secure co-operation, indoor or out, is to provide them with cool and safe retreats by day, convenient access to water, and they will go forth to the performance of their nocturnal duties "without money and without price."

In Europe toads are carried to the cities to market, and are purchased by the horticulturists, who, by their aid, are enabled to keep in check the multiplication of the insect tribes which prey upon their fruits, flowers, etc. No one can study the anatomy of this reptile without being convinced of its perfect adaptation to the sphere which it has been carefully mended in several places where time and use had made ravages. Its tongue, which is capable of great elongation, is attached to the anterior portion of the lower jaw; its free end, when the toad is in repose, reaching down to the border of the stomach. The moment the toad sees its prey, its eyes sparkle, its toes twitch, and, quicker than the eyes can follow, the insect is transfixed and conveyed to the stomach of the captor.

