FINE FEATHERS

by WEBSTER DENISON

NOVELIZED FROM EUGENE WALTER'S DRAMA BY THE SAME NAME

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CHAPTER XXIII.

Six Hundred Dead—And One!

The days that followed Bob's collapse were the happiest he had known for over a year. Jane's tender nature and her deep rooted love for her husband asserted itself in a thousand ways. There is no field like a sick room to give scope to true women's devotion and strengthen ties that have become strained in the pursuits of the worldly. She spent nearly every waking moment at his bedside and the nurse, the physician had assigned found her task an easy one.

Reynolds was by nature a physical giant. He had narrowly escaped a severe attack of brain fever, but through the skilful administering of morphia and the soothing influence of his wife's presence he fallied rapidly. For nearly a week after the fight he had succumbed neither made any reference to the causes of the collapse. Dick called two or three times and his merry periflage pervaded the sick room with an atmosphere of cheerfulness as it had in doubtful days at the bungalow.

One day when the patient seemed stronger than usual Jane was seated at the bedside with his hand in hers.

"Bob," she said suddenly, "I haven't said a word to you about—about what happened that night. I've just wanted you to forget it, dearest, and get strong and well like your old, good self. But I know you are better now and that you'll be better still when I tell you what I've planned—Dick and I. Mr. Brand's fixed everything at the bank and as soon as you are able we're going back to Staten Island and live with Dick and his brother in the bungalow. Won't that be fine?"

She beamed down upon him with the love light in her eyes and as he looked his memory sped back six years to the time when she had looked at him that way and together they had talked, planned of the future home. He smiled a little sadly and pressed her hand.

"God bless you, my dear," was all he said.

"But, Bob," she cried, "aren't you glad? Aren't you glad it's all over and that we can start again just like we were? We'll never see the Brands again. Dearest, I know I was wrong; wrong all the time!"

She looked at him now through mist filled eyes.

"Oh, you don't know how I've suffered," she cried softly. "I've thought it over night after night here at your side and I just want to wipe the last year out of our lives and begin all over. We can; I know we can. Can't we?"

He drew her head down to his and kissed her. He could not bear to cast a shadow over the bright light of her optimism, but in his heart he knew that he could not share it. Brand had settled with the bank. Of course he had. There was nothing else for him to do from the mere standpoint of his own protection. But that did not remove the blight or ease the gnawings of conscience that had racked him in all the hours of his convelescence. He could not obliterate the deeds of the year past nor did he feel that he was immune to the penalties. He had been keenly aware of them in his waking hours, as before, and again they had haunted him in his sleep. "Whatsoever ye sow—" That was the text that had pounded constantly at the door of his befuddled brain. Only the stupor of his weakness had acted as a mute. The stronger he grew the clearer the future seemed to him. He had sown and he must reap. But he smiled bravely now and patted his wife's hand.

"Wait till I'm up, Jane," he said. "We will decide on something. Let us hope that it will come out all right—at least, for you."

"For me," she exclaimed. "Don't hope for me, Bob. I will do anything in the world you want me to; anything that you do. Whatever comes it will come to us alike."

He closed his eyes and sank back on the pillow. He was not strong enough to answer her or to reason for himself just what the future held for him. He knew only that he was tired and that there was no rest. He had struggled for days that was against some strange, haunting fear that would not down. The ringing of the doorbell had sounded loud and vibrant like some clarion alarm that bespoke the hour when he must pay. He wondered when he heard it, if it were some messenger from the bank—or worse—for twice in his sleep had come again that terrible dream of the bursting dam.

Jane saw that he was exhausted. The morphia brought these spells of inertia and collapse. She kissed him softly and slipped out of the room.

The following day Reynolds was able to get up and the next he went downstairs. He was much stronger now and though he felt no relief from the melancholy depression that obsessed him he had regained a physical poise that let him see things in their true light. Jane talked again of her plans and he let her rehearse them without a challenge. He could find no plausible fault with them. If Brand had paid the overdraft he was freed from imminent danger and there was nothing for him to do but realize such money as he could on the house and go back to Staten Island to take Jane and go away. He had not decided definitely on that. They were expecting Dick this afternoon and he intended to talk it over with them.

The vital spark of ambition had burned itself very low for Reynolds. He was in that languid state of both body and mind that accompanies convalescence, whether the recovery be from physical or mental suffering. He felt that he had faded from some great pinnacle like the lover who is suddenly bereft of mate or who is confronted with the realization that a great passion is unrequited. The regeneration of Jane's womanly affection calmed and soothed him; but it aroused in him no ambition to renew the battle in which he had fallen.

Shortly after luncheon Dick came and Jane received him with the joyousness of a child. His sincere encouragement and his cheerful way of tendering it in these terrible days following Bob's downfall had raised her from the depths completely and she had come to regard his presence and his promises as the salvation of both her husband and herself.

But today Dick's optimism seemed strangely dormant. His response to her glad greeting was half-hearted and

"You Must Catch the Boat Without Fail."

when she enthusiastically broached the plans that the reporter himself had suggested, he made no reply. He made solicitous inquiries after Bob's health and persisted in them, alternately pacing the floor and sitting, clutching now and then at a newspaper in his pocket.

His nervousness and distraction puzzled Jane, but for once her womanly intuition failed her. In her eagerness to restore her husband to the plans of her own renewed hopefulness she tried to force their visitor into a conversation about the bungalow and their future there, until Dick, unable to contain himself longer, wheeled and faced them. He jerked the paper from his pocket, concealing the front of it toward his chest.

"You are sure you're fit—Bob?" he asked breathlessly. "Able to hear anything I say and act quickly?"

Reynolds, who had watched his friend closely from the moment of his entrance, had detected what Jane had not. Something—he knew not what—had happened; something that augured no good. He read the import of Meade's constant questioning about his strength and braced himself accordingly. He was prepared for almost anything—anything except the dire news that the reporter had actually brought. The distress and alarm in Meade's features as he stood facing them should have fitted Reynolds for the worst.

"Bob—and—Jane listen to me!" he cried brokenly. "The Lusitania sails at one o'clock tomorrow morning. I have your tickets here—you must catch the boat without fail—and go under assumed names."

With a wild, frightened look Jane got to her feet and her husband pals but more contained, did likewise.

"What is it, Dick?" he asked hoarsely. "Leave America—assumed names? For God's sake speak out. Don't keep a man in misery!"

"Well, then, it's worse than misery, Bob! It's hell! The dam's gone. Went under at two o'clock this afternoon!"

He thrust the paper with its flaring headlines before their faces. With Jane swaying and clinging to her husband for support they read:

HUNDREDS DEAD!

Pecos River Dam Goes Out Sweeping All Before It!

Six Hundred Persons Caught in the Raging Torrent Are Drowned Like Rats in the Narrow Valley.

MOST OF THE VICTIMS WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

Inferior Construction Charged and Rigid Inquiry by Both State and Federal Authorities to Begin at Once.

As he finished the last of the screaming headlines Reynolds stood almost rigid with terror. Neither he nor Jane spoke a word. Dick, watching his friend for sign of physical relapse he dreaded, noted the look of terror as Bob's eyes left the paper and glanced at him. He construed the dread alarm that glance conveyed as one of personal concern and hastened to offer such meager assurance as he could.

"There's no real report about the cause yet, Bob," he said. "They merely say the work was not up to standard and by the time they find out where the real weakness was—the cement—you and Jane will be well away. You must be," he added quickly, as Reynolds raised a hand of dissent. "You can't think of anything else for quick and sufficient protection of—"

But Reynolds cut him off with another wave of his hand—this time a gesture for silence, imperative and imperious.

"How many are really dead?" he asked almost inaudibly and sank down on the divan with face buried in his hands.

"Probably a hundred or less, by the time the truth is sifted out," Dick answered. "You know reports of these things are always exaggerated in the newspapers. Not intentionally," he continued, in quick defense of his calling, "but the suddenness and horror of and catastrophe always impresses the man who is sending the report with the idea of a greater calamity than actually occurs. And there is always a propensity for overestimating rather than underestimating. Especially in floods. There are a hundred ways for escape that are never thought of—"

Again Reynolds interrupted him.

"Men — women — and children—dead," he cried hoarsely. "Dead! And I killed them!"

He repeated the accusation over and over. There was no thought of the personal penalty he faced. Truly Dick had misunderstood the appeal of that pitiful look, one that would rend the heart of the coldest man. For Reynolds was not entirely unprepared for this terrible culmination of his sin. Twice in his dreams the terrible phantasm of such a scene had loomed and then, as now, it had brought no thought of self peril, but realization of the awful effect of his transgression.

To Jane the announcement of the disaster brought not only shock, but sickening fear, and womanlike, her first thought was self preservation. She staggered up from the divan where she had sunk beside her husband and stood wringing her hands in a hysterical way while from lips that were dry and parched, she whispered:

"I'll pack the things, Bob. We should get away—away—now. Every moment is precious."

She looked appealingly at the reporter as if urging confirmation of her fears, and he was not slow in seconding them.

"She's right, Bob," he warned briskly. "The telephone may ring or someone may come any minute. Come, old man, brace up for your own sake and for Jane's. What's done can't be undone now and the thing for you to do is to act quickly for the protection of all. Come," he repeated, and pulled gently at his friend's coat sleeve. But Reynolds sat immovable with face still pressed between his hands and through them, raven like, he moaned:

"Men — women — and — children—Dead. Oh, my God!—And I killed them."

The stupor and apparent helplessness of her husband aroused Jane now to acute realization of their peril and the need of immediate action in which she must take the lead. She spoke softly behind the divan and bending over, drew Bob's hands away from his face. With infinite tenderness she pressed her own hands against his temples and held them there as if she hoped the touch of them would end the wild throbbing of his brain. She coaxed and petted him as one might a suffering child.

"Bob, dear," she cried softly, "come. Do as Dick says. You know we must get away. There is no other way now. I love you, dear, and I want the chance to show it; to begin all over; to convince you that you didn't marry just a

"You're Past Arguing With."

grasping, worldly woman, but what you thought you did—a woman who can love and make you happy."

A sudden clanging at the doorbell startled them and put an end to Jane's soft persuasions. It roused even Reynolds from his lethargic grief. He glanced up with the others, but his look was one of quiet resignation.

"It's too late," was all he said and started toward the door. But the reporter seized his arm and pulled him back.

"Let me answer it," he warned. "You and Jane keep your nerve and say nothing."

Dick, braced for most any emergency, from crossing wits with some colleague of former newspaper days to laying his suavest blandishments at the feet of an omniscient detective, smiled in spite of himself as the opening door admitted Brand; Brand hurried and worried, and bent as the reporter well knew, on the same mission as himself—to get the Reynolds with all possible speed out of the reach of the law. But the millionaire, seeking only his own protection, misread the purpose of Meade's visit. He glowered at the reporter. His look was a mingling of vindictiveness, concern and infinite disgust.

"Good Lord, you here already," he cried. "You'll have to clear out while I have a word with Reynolds. There's no time for your chatter now. You know what's happened, Reynolds?"

He pushed past the reporter and stood confronting Bob.

"Yes, I know and he knows, Brand. Once again there's no need for him to leave. I've told you before that I'd trust Meade before I would you, so either he stays or you go. There's your choice."

The millionaire hurled a venomous look at Dick, and turned again to Reynolds.

"All right," he exclaimed impatiently. "You're past arguing with. Time's precious and I won't attempt it. We've got 24 hours to get ready for what's going to happen and if we act instead of talk we'll beat them to it. There's hell to pay. You can count on that. The thing crumbled like dust. They say the first reports were exaggerated, but I know the situation in that valley and the probability is it'll be worse."

"And you said it would last a hundred years," Jane interrupted, tremulously.

Brand gave her a withering glance. The pitiful look of the helpless girl whom he had deluded and cajoled and who felt now that the sacrifice of all these lives were on her head and not on her husband's or the millionaire's, he met unabashed. He turned back to Reynolds.

"I'm not here to argue what I said or what I didn't say. I'm here to get us out of the consequences of what has happened. They've never had such high water in the history of the country and the dam would have stood everything that was asked of it under ordinary circumstances. Luck broke against us, that's all. Now you two have got to get out of the country and you've got to get out quick. That's the first thing."

Something in the quiet look of the man he addressed settled Brand and the words that followed upset him more.

"So you've come to run me away?" said Reynolds. "Criminal first and fugitive afterwards. That's the only solution you see to it, is it?"

"Of course, it's the only solution. You've got to save yourself and your wife, too. I'll be all right. Every wheel's been started to offset the engineers' reports. I'll handle them all right, but they mustn't get hold of you. Not now, anyway. You're not safe. Afterwards things will adjust themselves and you can come back. But the first thing is to get you away."

For the first time since his acquaintance with Brand, Meade felt that he could honestly second one of the millionaire's arguments. His words nearly took Brand off his feet, for he had feared more than anything else the conscienceless scheming of the young genius and their probable effection the man who stood between him and safety.

"Brand is right this time, Bob," said the reporter calmly. "I have arranged for all that." he continued, turning to the millionaire. "I've got their tickets and they can sail on the Lusitania at one o'clock in the morning."

"Well, I'm a fool, if you haven't got some sense after all," he complimented. Then he faced quickly again towards Reynolds. "I've brought you a letter of credit and some ready money. Where the letter of credit came from nobody knows and nobody will know. As soon as you get to England, if nothing stops you, go to Belgium. There's an address on this letter where I'll communicate with you at Brussels. Don't worry. You'll slip through like an eel."

He turned again to Dick.

"If you've got the transportation and sailing arranged, that's fine. I want to get out of here now and don't want anyone to know I was here tonight. Brace up, Reynolds, and you, too, Mrs. Reynolds. Keep your heads up and take it easy. That's all, I guess."

He put out his hand with the letter but Reynolds raised his in dissent.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

BABOO DRIVEN TO COMPLAIN

Not Wild, But Domestic Animals Disturbed the Peace and Quiet of Indian Officials.

Serpents, baboons, tigers and other dangerous and disturbing creatures have not infrequently interfered with the work of progress and improvement in India. The latest case on record is a baboo station master, asking for instructions, in the unpleasant, emergency of, "tiger dancing on platform," has long been a stock anecdote. He was certainly excusable for being rather upset in his mind, and, in his English. The recent plea of a baboo office clerk, addressed to the head of the firm whose son, a confirmed doglover, had been recently put in charge, had less to justify its urgency—yet there are many who will sympathize. A puppy's presence does not conduce to mental concentration or spiritual calm.

"If this office will be continuously infested by sprightly canine with penchant for eating legs," he wrote, "how shall work be performed to honor's satisfaction? I beseech you will honor relegate the friend of man to house and home; where noxious behavior shall be suitably admired."

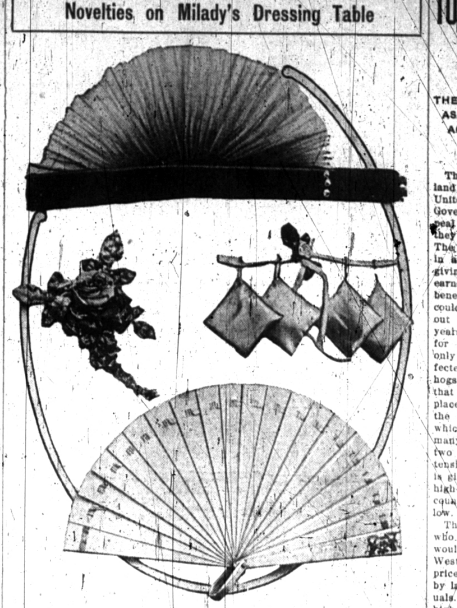
Mr. H. L. Poincet, who reports this choice gem, adds another, less recent, but equally characteristic, showing a tender-hearted baboo postmaster's consideration for that other domestic pet, less often reckoned the friend of man than of woman.

"Office cat, by reason of death of rats, daily growing lean," he notified his superior. "Will superintendent please increase the contingent allowance for her return to stoutness?"—Youth's Companion.

Stickler for Her Rights.

Lawyer—"You say you told the cook to get out of the house the minute you found it was on fire and she refused to go?" Mrs. Burns—"Yes, she said she must have a month's notice before she'd leave."—National Food Magazine.

Novelties on Milady's Dressing Table



NO one knows where all the pretty little fads and furbelows that hold a brief reign in the feminine world have their origin. But they blossom out like the flowers, and if their roots are in the soil of commercialism they are no less attractive and alluring fancies.

Just at the moment everyone wants a puff. One might almost conclude that it is illegal to appear on the street without a band of black velvet and a fan of white or black malines at the neck. The bands of velvet are fastened with snap fasteners under tiny cabochons of steel or rhinestones, or under small, brilliant ribbon roses. Altogether, this little bit of finery is very attractive and bright.

High collars bordered with dark fur form a background for satin roses made of ribbon and set in millinery foliage. The stems are wound with narrow ribbon or with tinfoil. Often the roses are scented. Sometimes small bunches of little flowers or brilliant fruits are worn in the same way. A puff and a rose are shown in the picture given here.

Little sachet bags, about two inches square, are made of satin in the light colors. An assortment of them, (including one each in pink, cream, blue, yellow, lavender, green, and white) makes a lovely gift. A very small safety pin is fastened in the side of each bag, for pinning it into the blouse. The little bags are piled together and tied with white baby ribbon, the bow finished with the tiniest of ribbon roses and rose foliage. They are shown in the picture strung on the baby ribbon.

One of the many fads, of imitation ivory, is in plain white, the splits strung together with gold ribbon. The end piece is decorated with a monogram and flower design in gold. These fans are made with an endless variety of decoration in flower and other designs in all colors. They are pretty and durable and a novelty worth considering.

Looped Up Skirts.

In spite of the dominant idea of flare in the winter skirt—and the flare of them is their most characteristic feature, whether they be fashioned of one layer or two, tunicwise—there are some evening frocks with skirts that are looped up about the hips, almost like bustles, one on each side. Usually these puffs are irregular—the one on the right side is higher or lower than that on the left. When the frock is made of tulle or lace, roses, artificial, of course, are used to accentuate the loop, where they are garlanded under the puff.

Tulle Trains.

Many of the new evening frocks have tulle trains. One white gown, veiled with deep rose tulle, has a tulle train that is gathered into a three-inch heading that is fastened straight across the back from one shoulder to the other. At the end the train is gathered into another full heading of the same sort, and is, therefore, square in outline.

For Comfort in Winter Weather

THE stores are displaying a great many knitted and crocheted garments, made for wear in the coldest weather, when one must face it, and also warm nightrobes of soft canton or elderdown flannel, and bed shoes for those who sleep in cold rooms or on sleeping porches. A whole line of specially designed things have been made for those courageous believers in fresh air who sleep out-of-doors all the year round. For them instructions are furnished for making up the outdoor bed with many cotton and woolen blankets, comforters and outside covering of waterproofed cloths.

Among the knitted clothes, vests to be worn under coats, and the short close-fitting underskirts have proved themselves most popular. Some of the vests are long sleeved, but many are sleeveless, like that shown in the picture. They are made in white and all colors, with gray leading in point of demand.

For daily wear the knitted vests, with sleeves and double breast, are delightfully cozy. As gray does not become quickly soiled it is very practical for the business woman or for anyone who is out every day. White and light-colored vests, some of them very attractively made, are worn under dress wraps of velvet, satin, or brocade. Vests of quilted satin are made for similar wear.

These close-knitted, snug-fitting bodies, worn under suit coats, with neckpiece and muff of fur, prove almost as comfortable as fur coats and are less bulky. They are washable and inexpensive and many of them possess style.

One of the heavy fleeced canton flannel nightgowns is shown at the right of the picture. These are made of striped patterns in combinations of tan and white, blue and white, etc. They are cut to set rather close to the figure without gatherings, and the sleeves are long and plain. Many of them are fastened with frogs of cotton braid that remind one of pajama designs. They are often bordered with plain sateen in a solid color matching that in the gown, and finished with narrow soutache braid.

Bed shoes are made of elderdown, and anyone who does not know of their comfort in the cold sleeping room should make haste to possess a pair. The feel of canton flannel and elderdown is very soft and soothing; they are ideal for winter sleeping robes.

JULIA BOTTOMLEY.

Oddity in Blouses.

Black bone buttons on white lingerie blouses! This is the latest development of the magpie color combination that seems to be playing an important part in the season's fashionable. One of these new blouses, made of sheer lawn and trimmed with piqué, was seen lately. The pique collar is one of the new high collars, high in back, but open in front. Hand embroidery trims the pique and crossing clusters of fine tucks finish the lawn of the body of the waist.

Two Shades of Velvet Scarfs.

It has been almost impossible to keep enough stock of velvets in such shades as rich Russian green and tete de negre. In fact, as in some instances the foreign supply is not forthcoming, stocks are suffering for these colors. It is likely that relief will not be possible this season.

Optimistic Thought.

We are not sent into this world to do anything into which we cannot put our hearts.

TO THE UNOCCUPIED CANADIAN LANDS

THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT ASKING FOR INCREASED ACREAGE IN GRAIN, TO MEET EUROPEAN DEMAND.

There are a number of holders of land in Western Canada, living in the United States, to whom the Canadian Government will shortly make an appeal to place the unoccupied areas they are holding under cultivation. The lands are highly productive, but in a state of idleness they are not giving any revenue beyond the unearned increment and are not of the benefit to Canada that these lands could easily be made. It is pointed out that the demand for grains for years to come will cause good prices for all that can be produced. Not only will the price of grains be affected, but also will that of cattle, hogs and horses, in fact everything that can be grown on the farms. When placed under proper cultivation, not the kind that is often resorted to, which lessens yield and land values, many farms will pay for themselves in two or three years. Careful and intensive work is required, and if this is given in the way it is given to the high priced lands of older settled countries, surprising results will follow.

There are those who are paying rent, who should not be doing so. They would do better to purchase lands in Western Canada at the present low price at which they are being offered by land companies or private individuals. These have been held for the high prices that many would have realized, but for the war and the financial stringency. Now is the time to buy; or if it is preferred advantage might be taken of the offer of 160 acres of land free that is made by the Dominion Government. The man who owns his farm has a life of independence. Then again there are those who are renting who might wish to continue as renters. They have some means as well as sufficient outfit to begin in a new country where all the advantages are favorable. Many of the owners of unoccupied lands would be willing to lease for such reasonable terms. Then again attention is drawn to the fact that Western Canada numbers amongst its most successful farmers, artisans, business men, lawyers, doctors and many other professions. Farming today is a profession. It is no longer accompanied by the drudgery that was were acquainted with a generation ago. The fact that a man is not following a farming life today does not preclude him from going on a Western Canada farm tomorrow, and making a success of it. If he is not in possession of Western Canada land that he can convert into a farm he should secure some, make it a farm by equipping it and working it himself. The man who has been holding his Western Canada land waiting for the profit he naturally expected has been justified in doing so. Its agricultural possibilities are certain and sure. It he has not realized immediately by making a sale, he should not worry. But to let it lie idle is not good business. By getting it placed under cultivation a greater profit will come to him. Have it cultivated by working it himself, or get some good representative to do it. Set about getting a purchaser, a renter or some one to operate on shares.

The Department of the Dominion Government having charge of the Immigration, through Mr. W. D. Scott, Superintendent at Ottawa, Canada, is directing the attention of non-resident owners of Western Canada lands to the fact that money will be made out of farming these lands. The agents of the Department, located at different points in the States, are rendering assistance to this end.—Advertisement.

To Mend Pipes.

When the pipes are rusted in spots and unsafe to use, by applying strips of wet asbestos paper on hot pipes the paper will adhere closely and so seal the pipes. This has been found a great economy, as the furnace pipes last a year longer without repairing them than they otherwise would.

If the kitchen range contains an ugly crack, you may fill it with a cement made by beating one egg, to which add sifted ashes and stove polish until thick enough to spread. Work the paste smooth over the top. This will harden almost like iron and still take a polish that will render the break unnoticeable.

GRANDMA USED SAGE TEA TO DARKEN HER GRAY HAIR

She Made Up a Mixture of Sage Tea and Sulphur to Bring Back Color, Gloss, Thickness.

Almost everyone knows that Sage Tea and Sulphur properly compounded, brings back the natural color and lustre to the hair when faded, streaked or gray; also ends dandruff, itching scalp and stops falling hair. Years ago the only way to get this mixture was to make it at home, which is musty and troublesome. Nowadays, by asking at any store for "Wyeth's Sage and Sulphur Hair Remedy," you will get a large bottle of the famous old recipe for about 50 cents.

Don't stay gray! Try it! No one can possibly tell that you darkened your hair, as it does it so naturally and evenly. You dampen a sponge or soft brush with it and draw this through your hair, taking one small strand at a time, by morning the gray hair disappears, and after another application or two, your hair becomes beautifully dark, thick and glossy.—Adv.

An Expensive Set.

"Mamma," exclaimed Benny as he rushed in from school, "our new teacher has such fine teeth!"

"Has she, dear?"

"Yes, indeed! They are nearly all gilt-edged."