

STORIES OF THE NEWS.

XI.

THE MARRIAGE OF A CHILD.

Queer Story of a Little Italian Girl Who Was Wedded at Thirteen.

It All Came Out at the Tombs Police Court Yesterday, and Here Are the Details Simply Told.

This is a story of the loves of two children, as it was brought to light in the dingy Tombs Police Court yesterday.

A child-wife, who has just passed the age of fifteen, wants the bonds that bind her to her eighteen-year-old husband dissolved. He, on the other hand, loves her, and objects to any arrangement that will part him from his wee little wife.

"Tell your mother that she must come here herself if she wants her husband arrested," remarked Police Justice Andrew J. White, at the Tombs Police Court yesterday to a little freckled-faced Italian girl,

as she handed the magistrate an order of arrest from Supt. Blake, of the Commissioners of Charities and Correction, for John Jamino, of No. 123 Mulberry street, on complaint of his wife, Leah, for abandonment.

"It's not from my mother," lisped the little girl. "It's for myself. I am Leah."

"What? You married?" exclaimed the Justice.

No wonder that he was astonished. The girl before him, with her innocent, child-like countenance and wondering eyes, looked more fit to play with dolls than to take upon

her young shoulders the responsibilities of wifehood.

"How old are you?" asked the Court.

"Fifteen, sir," she answered, as she rested her large dark eyes on the kindly face of the Justice.

FIFTEEN AND MARRIED "A LONG TIME AGO."

"When were you married?"

"Oh," she responded, wearily, "a long time ago."

"Don't you know the date?" asked the Justice.

"No; but it was about fourteen months ago."

"How old were you when you were married?"

"Thirteen years."

"Step down and get a warrant," said the Court; but he could not help remarking that the man who had united this little girl in marriage had committed a criminal offense.

THE CHILD MARRIED BY AN ALDERMAN.

Here's a chance for President Elbridge T. Gerry, of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. They had been married by an Alderman. The child-wife could not remember the name of the City Father, but she distinctly recalls the fact that the marriage took place in the big white marble building in the City Hall Park.

A white-haired man has for many years located himself on the steps of the City Hall and has a watchful eye open for loving

couples. He can tell at a glance whether a young couple entering the park have come there with the intention of getting married. He makes it all plain sailing for them. He escorts them into the Governor's room in the City Hall and then hunts up a City Father. One can always be found discussing politics in the Clerk's office, and the ceremony takes place.

That is the way this girl and boy were made man and wife, with the exception that in this instance the parents of the bride were present at the ceremony. Other relatives and friends were also present.

Do you imagine that the old gentleman acts the part of the Good Samaritan for nothing? Oh, no; he pockets his fee of \$5 with a polite "thank you," and takes his place on the marble steps of City Hall, looking for more couples with \$5 tips.

There is scarcely a day in the week that a strange looking procession is not seen marching through Centre street. First in line is a happy looking young couple, who lovingly hold each other by the hand. Then come a dark whiskered man and matronly looking woman. Next in line is a retinue of olive skinned friends. At the end of the procession is a string of little children, who are as happy as can be. It is nothing more or less than a wedding party on the way home from the City Hall.

A LITTLE CHILD'S WEDDING.

Such was little Leah's wedding party fourteen months ago. She was then only

thirteen, and it was all child's play to her. She was too young to know exactly what it all meant, but she had been asked by her mother to play a part and she did so.

At the house of the bride's parents in Mulberry street a collation was spread and wine was drunk to the health of the bride.

The couple, however, were ill-mated. The husband, who worked in a pearl-button factory, did not earn enough to support a wife in comfort and so they resided with the parent's of the bride.

After Clerk Thomas Denian had made out the warrant for the arrest of the young husband it was given to Detective English, of Sergt. Delaney's court squad, to execute. He didn't know the husband from the man in the moon, and so he asked the child-wife for a description of her husband. This is how she described him: "He is good-looking, has handsome black eyes, splendid teeth, and he takes a great deal of care of his finger nails. You can also tell him by his walk. He says every one is stuck on his shape."

"There are thousands of young men who look like that," ejaculated the detective. "Where does he live?"

ARRRESTED AT A FUNERAL.

She told him that her lord and master could be found at 123 Mulberry street, and he proceeded at once to execute the warrant. The detective entered the apartments on the first floor, where he found a room filled with mourners. A dark-featured youth sat at the

head of a coffin in which lay an aged man. "Who is John Jamino?" asked the detective.

The dark-featured youth came forward. "Are you the undertaker's assistant?" he asked. "Please come out into the hallway. I want to tell you something."

The detective, not wishing to distress the mourners, complied with alacrity.

"You are a detective, are you not?" asked the youth.

English stared at him in astonishment.

"I knew you the moment you entered," hastily went on the boy, "but I didn't want to make my relatives in this room feel bad, and so I made the excuse and came out with you. Now, what do you want?"

In a few words he was informed that his wife had obtained a warrant for his arrest.

"All right," said the youth in his brisk manner, "I will be in court to-morrow morning."

"You must come with me now," declared the detective.

"But I can't," responded the young husband; "my grandfather lies dead in the next room and the funeral takes place this afternoon."

The detective told him that he could be back in time for the funeral. When the young husband entered the Tombs Police Court he looked around for his wife, whom he saw seated all alone in a corner.

MAKING LOVE TO HIS WIFE.

The detective had walked on ahead and

when he reached the Sergeant's room he looked around for his prisoner. There he was beside his wife, whom he was endeavoring to embrace. "She evaded him, however, and said she would get a divorce from him."

"Here, what are you doing?" exclaimed the detective; but the young husband had not heard him. The detective went over and took the boy aside.

"Why did you interfere?" he said, half crying. "I think she would have relented hadn't you come up."

"You'll have plenty of opportunity before the Justice," soothingly said the detective.

"You know what the charge against you is?" said the Justice.

"Yes, sir, and what I have to say is that I did not abandon her. I would do anything if she came to live with me and let me support her."

"But I don't want to live away from my mother," spoke up the young wife.

"I can't agree with your mother," angrily retorted the husband.

"She has been too good to you, and the thanks she gets is abuse," said the girl, standing up in defense of her mother.

"Whose fault is it that we are parted?" he asked.

"Yours, of course," she replied.

HOW THE SEPARATION HAPPENED.

"No, it was your fault," returned the husband. "On the day I quarrelled with my mother-in-law," he said to the Court, "I took my wife to a home I had fixed up for

her. I got furniture on the installment plan. I left my wife alone and went to the barber's and got shaved. During my absence my mother-in-law had been to my house and taken my wife away."

"He saw me after that, too, and then he struck me," said the girl.

"It was just a little slap. I didn't hurt you, Leah. It was about a month after our separation. I met my wife on the street and I wanted to kiss her. She wouldn't have it, and ran into her mother's house. I went after her and caught her. She didn't want to be kissed, and I was just as determined that she should be. She scratched me in the face and I became angry for the moment and gave her a slap. She screamed and it brought my mother-in-law with the broomstick. I scooted, and she didn't see me from that day to this."

The Justice then told the girl that unless she lived with her husband he could not compel him to support her. The case was adjourned, however, because of the absence of her husband's counsel, Blake and Sullivan.

The husband was paroled on his own recognizance, so that he could attend his grandfather's funeral.

There is a law making it a felony for any one to unite a couple under the age of sixteen. But no one seems to enforce it.

Such are the simple facts simply told of a true story of the police court.

Are there not a great many queer happenings and a great many kinds of human nature in this big town?