

MRS. FLEURY.

No. 263 Broome street.

It was a favorite remark of a learned though mistaken philosopher of the older time, that "you can't make a whistle of a pig's tail." The philosopher died, but his saying was accepted by the world as an axiom—a bit of incontrovertible truth, eternal, godlike, fully up to par, worth a hundred per cent, with no possibility of discount. Time, however, which often demonstrates the fallibility of human wisdom, has not spared even this oft-quoted adage; and now there is not a collection of curiosities in the land which lacks a pig-tail whistle to proclaim in the shrillest tones the falsity of the wise man's proposition, and the triumph of Yankee ingenuity. Had this same philosopher been interrogated on the subject, he would undoubtedly have announced, and with an equal show of probability on his side of the argument, that "you can't make a star-reading prophetic out of a snuffy old woman;" but had he lived to the present day, our reporter would have taken great pleasure in exhibiting to him these two apparently irreconcilable characters combined in a single person, and that person Mrs. Fleury, who pays for the daily insertion of the following advertisement in *The Herald*:

"ASTROLOGY.—Mrs. FLEURY, from Paris, is the most celebrated lady of the present age in telling future events, true and certain. She answers questions on business, marriage, absent friends, &c., by magnetism. Office No. 263 Broome-st."

Our reporter resolved to visit this "most celebrated lady of the age," who had come all the way from Paris to tell his "future events true and certain," nothing daunted by the circumstance that she lives in the filthiest part of Broome street, which has never been swept clean since it was a very new Broome indeed. If our fancy farmers, who expend so much money upon the various foreign manures and fertilizing compounds, would but turn their eyes in the direction of Broome street, a single glance would convince them of the inexhaustible resources of their own country, while guano would instantly depreciate in value, and the Island of Ichnabo not be worth a quarrel. This prolific and valuable deposit bears perennial crops: in the Spring and Summer, dirty-faced children and mean-looking dogs seem to spring from it spontaneously; they are succeeded during the colder weather by a crop of tumble-down barrels, and cast-away broken carts; while the humbler and more insignificant things, the unweared for weeds, so to speak, of the abundant harvest, such as potato parings, and fish heads, and shreds of ragged dishcloths, and bits of broken crockery, and old bones, are in season all the year round. In the midst of this filth, with policy-shops adjacent, and pawnbrokers' offices close at hand, and rum shops convenient in the neighborhood—where the reeking streets and stagnant gutters, and the heaps of decomposing garbage, send up a stench so thick and heavy that it bedlimes everything it touches, and makes a man feel as if he were far past the saving powers of soap and soft water, and was fast dissolving into rancid lard oil—in this congenial atmosphere flourishes the prophetess, and here is found the mansion of Mrs. Fleury, "the most celebrated lady of the age in telling future events." The house, a three-story brick, originally intended to be something above the common, has been for so many years misused and badly treated by reckless tenants, that it has completely lost its good temper, as well as its good looks, and is now in a perpetual state of aggravated sulkiness. It vents the presence of a stranger as an impertinent intrusion, and avenges the personality in various disagreeable ways. It twitches its rickety stairways impatiently under his feet, as if to shake him off and damage him by the fall—it viciously attempts to pinch and jam his fingers with moody, dogged doors, which hold back as long as they can, and then close with a sudden snap, exceedingly dangerous to the unwary—it tears his clothes with ambushed rusty nails, and unsuspected hooks and sharp and jagged splinters—it creaks its floors under his tread with a doleful whine, and complains of his cruel treatment in sharp-pointed, many-cornered tears of plaster which it drops from the ceiling upon his head the instant he takes his hat off—it yawns its wide cellar doors open like a greedy mouth, evidently hoping that an unlucky step will pitch him headlong down—and it conducts itself in a thousand ill-natured ways like a sulky child that has been waked up too early in the morning, and not properly whipped into good behavior. Our reporter, however, entered the doors, unabashed by the malignant scowl which was visible all over the face of the unamiable mansion, and stumbled through a narrow, dirty hall, up two flights of groaning stairs before he discovered any sign of the whereabouts of Madame. At last he encountered a little tin sign upon which were these words: "Madame Fleury, Room No. 4." He pulled the knob and the door was instantly opened by the lady herself, so quickly that the bell had no time to ring until all necessity for it was over—she had evidently heard the advancing footsteps of her customer, and had stood ready to pounce upon him. She ushered him into the apartment, where he soon recovered his self-possession, and took an observation. The room was a small square one, shabbily furnished with very few articles of furniture, and these were dimly visible through the snuffy mist which filled the apartment; there was snuff everywhere: there was a snuffy dust on the chairs: there was a precipitate of snuff on the floor, and, if snuff was capable of crystallization, there would undoubtedly have been stalactitic formations of snuff depending from the ceiling; the Madame herself was snuff-colored, as if she had been boiled in a decoction of tobacco. She is a French woman, and has had about half a century's experience of her present fleecy tabernacle, which is somewhat the worse for wear, although from the fossil remains of bygone beauty still visible in her ancient countenance, our reporter inclines to the belief that in some remote age she was comely and pleasant to the eye. He found this by pothesis upon the brown hair and hazel eyes which time has spared. In respect to personal cleanliness, our delegate regrets to say that the Madame was not in every respect what a critical observer would wish to see; her hands and arms were in a condition which would naturally lead to the belief that the Croton Corporation had cut off the water; and under each of her finger-nails was a dark-colored deposit, which may have been snuff, but looked like something dirtier. She was dressed in a light striped calico dress, over which was a black velvet mantle trimmed with fur, and on her head was a portentous head-dress which was fearfully and wonderfully made of shabby black lace; her face was in the same condition as her hands and arms, as was also her neck, which was only visible to the upper edge of the collar-bone—further dependent saith not.

She seated herself behind a small stand, dusty with snuff, on which were a number of little books on astrology, written in French and German, and as dirty and as fragrant as if they had been some kind of clumsy vegetable which had been grown in a tobacco plantation. She asked her visitor if he spoke French or German, to which he replied that, had he been conversant with all the languages invented at the Babel smash-up, he would on this occasion, for particular reasons, prefer to confine himself to English. He also ventured an inquiry as to terms, upon which she produced a card containing a list of her charges, printed in English, French and German. He learned from this dingy document that the prices of telling fortunes by lines of the hand, by cards and by the stars varied in amount from one to five dollars. Our economical reporter concluded that one dollar's worth would suffice, and, approaching the little table, he announced the result of his cogitations. The enchantress, who was so saturated with snuff and tobacco that every time her customer looked her in the face, he sneezed, then brought a pack of very filthy cards, which were covered over with mysterious hieroglyphics done in black paint. She asked our reporter to "cut" them, which he reverently though dubiously did, whereupon she laid them on the table before her in four rows, and spoke as follows, having previously explained that she

used no witchcraft, but did all her workings by the signs of the zodiac:

"I will tell you first what these cards indicate, then I will look at the lines of your hand, and then I will answer three questions." Here she paused, while her agitated listener sneezed a couple of times, then she resumed, speaking with a strong foreign accent: "You are good di-position—have excellent memory, you don't have many enemy, but what you do is of your own sex—you are very frank person and you was born in the sign of the Crab. You have some lucky days which are Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays, whatever you do on these days is well, but you shall not wash your hair on Thursdays, if so, you will wash all your luck away. You must be very careful of fire and water, you will be in great danger of fire and water and you must be very careful. You may die by fire or water, I cannot say but you must certain be very careful of fire and water. You must also be very careful of dogs, very careful of dogs, you may die by a dog, but you must certain be very careful of dogs."

Here she paused again, and while our reporter was meditating upon the full force of what he had heard, and was inwardly resolving to go immediately home, about Juno and drown her as-yet-unoffending-but-in-after-days-dangerous-to-his-peace-of-mind-and-the-happiness-of-his-life pups, she prepared for the second portion of her discourse. Taking our reporter's hand in hers, a proceeding which made him feel as if he had put his fingers into a bladder of Macebooy, she made the following prediction: "You will be the father of five children, two of them will be boys, who will be a great comfort to you when you grow old."

She spoke no good of the girls, and our delegate foresaw feminine trouble in his household with those same young ladies. Having a few moments to himself before she resumed, he worked himself into a great passion with the ungrateful husies who were about to treat their kind old father in so scandalous a manner; but presently recollecting that they were as yet in the condition of "your sister Betsy Trotwood, who never was born," he felt that he was slightly premature in his wrath, so he cooled down, and resolved to make the best of it with his comfortable boys. The yellow soverress continued: "Your line of life is long, and you will live to a good old age. You have had much trouble in love affairs, and now your first love is entirely lost to you. You can never reclaim her, and you must never venture anything in lotteries." Whether Madame Fleury supposed that her visitor intended to spend his salary in lottery tickets, in the hope of winning back his early love, or whether she supposed that the woman now exhibiting herself as "Perham's Gift Lady," is the person, is not in evidence; but, from the peculiar construction of her last remark, something of the kind must have been in her thoughts. She had now reached the third part of her discourse, and come to the "three questions." She produced an old French Bible, dingy with age and snuff, and which she informed the observer had been in her family for three hundred years; an old iron key was tied between the leaves, with the ring and part of the shank of the key projecting, and the Bible was tightly bound round with many folds of black ribbon. Making our reporter hold one side of the ring of the key, while she held the other, she said: "Ask your three questions, and if they are to be answered in the affirmative the book will turn." Our reporter, who had been much impressed by her canine observation of a few minutes before, and whose thoughts were still running upon his pet Juno and her six innocent offspring, in a fit of absence of mind propounded this interrogatory: "Shall I marry the person of whom I am now thinking?" The potent Enchantress repeated the question aloud in French, and then, with pale lips and trembling voice, she addressed the book and key thus:

"Holy Bible, I ask you, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, will this man marry the person now in his mind?"—then she closed her eyes for a moment, placed one hand over her heart, and rapidly muttered something in so low a tone that it was inaudible to her listener. Immediately the Bible commenced to turn slowly toward her, and soon had made a complete revolution, thus expressing a very decided affirmative. Having started a matrimonial subject with so satisfactory a result, our anxious reporter thought he could do no better than to follow it up, and accordingly asked question No. 2: "If I marry this person, will the marriage be a happy one?" The same answer was given, in the same manner. Being now satisfied as to his own matrimonial prospects, he concluded to ascertain those of his children, and question No. 3 was asked, as follows: "Shall I live to see my children happily married?" There was a long delay, which was undoubtedly occasioned by difficulty of properly providing for those refractory girls, but at last there came a reluctant "Yes."

Having now got all that his dollar entitled him to, our reporter prepared to depart. The Madame informed him that in a few days she would have her "Magic Mirror" from Paris, with which she could do new wonders, and she hoped that he would soon call again, adding, "If I was ten year younger I would not admit gentlemen, but now I am old and I must."

Madame Fleury came from Paris to New-York about five years ago; she has a great many visitors. She asserts that many of the leading merchants of the city have been to see her, and that several of them come regularly once in six weeks to consult her about all their business affairs. Having ascertained all these important items, our reporter gave one tremendous sneeze as a parting salute, and went his way.

The next visit was to Mr. Grommer, a distinguished negro Seer, sojourning for the present in an eligible shanty at No. 34 North Second street, Williamsburgh, Long Island.