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Library Edition

THE WIT AND HUMOR OF AMERICA

In Ten Volumes

VOL. IV

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

THE WIT AND HUMOR OF AMERICA

EDITED BY MARSHALL P. WILDER

Volume IV

Funk & Wagnalls Company
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THE BRIEFLESS BARRISTER

A Ballad

BY JOHN G. SAXE

An attorney was taking a turn,
In shabby habiliments drest;
His coat it was shockingly worn,
And the rust had invested his vest.

His breeches had suffered a breach,
His linen and worsted were worse;
He had scarce a whole crown in his hat,
And not half a crown in his purse.

And thus as he wandered along,
A cheerless and comfortless elf,
He sought for relief in a song,
Or complainingly talked to himself:—

"Unfortunate man that I am!
I've never a client but grief:
The case is, I've no case at all,
And in brief, I've ne'er had a brief!

"I've waited and waited in vain,
Expecting an 'opening' to find,
Where an honest young lawyer might gain
Some reward for toil of his mind.

"'Tis not that I'm wanting in law,
Or lack an intelligent face,
That others have cases to plead,
While I have to plead for a case.

[Pg 586]

"O, how can a modest young man
E'er hope for the smallest progression,—
The profession's already so full
Of lawyers so full of profession!"

While thus he was strolling around,
His eye accidentally fell
On a very deep hole in the ground,
And he sighed to himself, "It is well!"

To curb his emotions, he sat
On the curbstone the space of a minute,
Then cried, "Here's an opening at last!"
And in less than a jiffy was in it!

Next morning twelve citizens came
('Twas the coroner bade them attend),
To the end that it might be determined
How the man had determined his end!

"The man was a lawyer, I hear,"
Quoth the foreman who sat on the corse.
"A lawyer? Alas!" said another,
"Undoubtedly died of remorse!"

A third said, "He knew the deceased,
An attorney well versed in the laws,
And as to the cause of his death,
'Twas no doubt for the want of a cause."

The jury decided at length,
After solemnly weighing the matter,
That the lawyer was drown*d*ed, because
He could not keep his head above water!

[Pg 587]

THE TWO HUSBANDS

BY CAROLYN WELLS

Once on a Time there were Two Men, each of whom married the Woman of his Choice. One Man devoted all his Energies to Getting Rich.

He was so absorbed in Acquiring Wealth that he Worked Night and Day to Accomplish his End.

By this Means he lost his Health, he became a Nervous Wreck, and was so Irritable and Irascible that his Wife Ceased to live with him and Returned to her Parents' House.

The Other Man made no Efforts to Earn Money, and after he had Spent his own and his Wife's Fortunes, Poverty Stared them in the Face.

Although his Wife had loved him Fondly, she could not Continue her affection toward One who could not Support her, so she left him and Returned to her Childhood's Home.

MORALS:

This Fable teaches that the Love of Money is the Root of All Evil, and that When Poverty Comes In At the Door, Loves Flies Out Of the Window. [Pg 588]

THE STORY OF THE TWO FRIARS

BY EUGENE FIELD

It befell in the year 1662, in which same year were many witchcrafts and sorceries, such as never before had been seen and the like of which will never again, by grace of Heaven, afflict mankind —in this year it befell that the devil came upon earth to tempt an holy friar, named Friar Gonsol, being strictly minded to win that righteous vessel of piety unto his evil pleasance.

Now wit you well that this friar had grievously offended the devil, for of all men then on earth there was none more holier than he nor none surer to speak and to do sweet charity unto all his fellows in every place. Therefore it was that the devil was sore wroth at the Friar Gonsol, being mightily plagued not only by his teachings and his preachings, but also by the pious works which he continually did do. Right truly the devil knew that by no common temptations was this friar to be moved, for the which reason did the devil seek in dark and troublous cogitations to bethink him of some new instrument wherewith he might bedazzle the eyes and ensnare the understanding of the holy man. On a sudden it came unto the fiend that by no corporeal allurement would he be able to achieve his miserable end, for that by reason of an abstemious life and a frugal diet the Friar Gonsol had weaned his body from those frailties and lusts to which human flesh is by nature of the old Adam within it disposed, and by long-continued vigils and by [Pg 589] earnest devotion and by godly contemplations and by divers proper studies had fixed his mind and his soul with exceeding steadfastness upon things unto his eternal spiritual welfare appertaining. Therefore it beliked the devil to devise and to compound a certain little booke of mighty curious craft, wherewith he might be like to please the Friar Gonsol and, in the end, to ensnare him in his impious toils. Now this was the way of the devil's thinking, to wit: This friar shall suspect no evil in the booke, since never before hath the devil tempted mankind with such an instrument, the common things wherewith the devil tempteth man being (as all histories show and all theologies teach) fruit and women and other like things pleasing to the gross and perishable senses. Therefore, argueth the devil, when I shall tempt this friar with a booke he shall be taken off his guard and shall not know it to be a temptation. And thereat was the devil exceeding merry and he did laugh full merrily.

Now presently came this thing of evil unto the friar in the guise of another friar and made a proper low obeisance unto the same. But the Friar Gonsol was not blinded to the craft of the devil, for from under the cloak and hood that he wore there did issue the smell of sulphur and of brimstone which alone the devil hath.

"Beshrew me," quoth the Friar Gonsol, "if the odour in my nostrils be spikenard and not the fumes of the bottomless pit!"

"Nay, sweet friar," spake the devil full courteously, "the fragrance thou perceivest is of frankincense and myrrh, for I am of holy orders and I have brought thee a righteous booke, delectable to look upon and profitable unto the reading." [Pg 590]

Then were the eyes of that Friar Gonsol full of bright sparklings and his heart rejoiced with exceeding joy, for he did set most store, next to his spiritual welfare, by bookes wherein was food to his beneficial devouring.

"I do require thee," quoth the friar, "to shew me that booke that I may know the name thereof and discover whereof it treateth."

Then shewed the devil the booke unto the friar, and the friar saw it was an uncut unique of incalculable value; the height of it was half a cubit and the breadth of it the fourth part of a cubit

and the thickness of it five barleycorns lacking the space of three horsehairs. This booke contained, within its divers picturings, symbols and similitudes wrought with incomparable craft, the same being such as in human vanity are called proof before letters, and imprinted upon India paper; also the booke contained written upon its pages, divers names of them that had possessed it, all these having in their time been mighty and illustrious personages; but what seemed most delectable unto the friar was an autographic writing wherein 'twas shewn that the booke sometime had been given by Venus di Medici to Apollos at Rhodes.

When therefore the Friar Gonsol saw the booke how that it was intituled and imprinted and adorned and bounden, he knew it to be of vast worth and he was mightily moved to possess it; therefore he required of the other (that was the devil) that he give unto him an option upon the same for the space of seven days hence or until such a time as he could inquire concerning the booke in Lowndes and other such like authorities. But the devil, smiling, quoth: "The booke shall be yours without price provided only you shall bind yourself to do me a service as I shall hereafter specify and direct."

Now when the Friar Gonsol heard this compact, he knew for a verity that the devil was indeed the devil, and but that he sorely wanted the booke he would have driven that impious fiend straightway from his presence. Howbeit, the devil, promising to visit him again that night, departed, leaving the friar exceeding heavy in spirit, for he was both assotted upon the booke to comprehend it and assotted upon the devil to do violence unto him. [Pg 591]

It befell that in his doubtings he came unto the Friar Francis, another holy man that by continual fastings and devotions had made himself an ensample of piety unto all men, and to this sanctified brother did the Friar Gonsol straightway unfold the story of his temptation and speak fully of the wondrous booke and of its divers many richnesses.

When that he had heard this narration the Friar Francis made answer in this wise: "Of great subtility surely is the devil that he hath set this snare for thy feet. Have a care, my brother, that thou fallest not into the pit which he hath digged for thee! Happy art thou to have come to me with this thing, elsewise a great mischief might have befallen thee. Now listen to my words and do as I counsel thee. Have no more to do with this devil; send him to me, or appoint with him another meeting and I will go in thy stead."

"Nay, nay," cried the Friar Gonsol, "the saints forefend from thee the evil temptation provided for my especial proving! I should have been reckoned a weak and coward vessel were I to send thee in my stead to bear the mortifications designed for the trying of my virtues."

"But thou art a younger brother than I," reasoned the Friar Francis softly; "and, firm though thy resolution may be now, thou art more like than I to be wheedled and bedazzled by these diabolical wiles and artifices. So let me know where this devil abideth with the booke; I burn to meet him and to wrest his treasure from his impious possession." [Pg 592]

But the Friar Gonsol shook his head and would not hear unto this vicarious sacrifice whereon the good Friar Francis had set his heart.

"Ah, I see that thou hast little faith in my strength to combat the fiend," quoth the Friar Francis reproachfully. "Thy trust in me should be greater, for I have done thee full many a kindly office; or, now I do bethink me, thou art assorted on the booke! Unhappy brother, can it be that thou dost covet this vain toy, this frivolous bauble, that thou wouldst seek the devil's companionship anon to compound with Beelzelub? I charge thee, Brother Gonsol, open thine eyes and see in what a slippery place thou standest."

Now by these argumentations was the Friar Gonsol mightily confounded, and he knew not what to do.

"Come, now, hesitate no longer," quoth the Friar Francis, "but tell me where that devil may be found—I burn to see and to comprehend the booke—not that I care for the booke, but that I am grievously tormented to do that devil a sore despight!"

"Odds boddikins," quoth the other friar, "me-seemeth that the booke inciteth thee more than the devil."

"Thou speakest wrongly," cried the Friar Francis. "Thou mistakest pious zeal for sinful selfishness. Full wroth am I to hear how that this devil walketh to and fro, using a sweet and precious booke for the temptation of holy men. Shall so righteous an instrument be employed by the prince of heretics to so unrighteous an end?"

"Thou sayest wisely," quoth the Friar Gonsol, "and thy words convince me that a battaile must be made with this devil for that booke. So now I shall go to encounter the fiend!" [Pg 593]

"Then by the saints I shall go with thee!" cried the Friar Francis, and he gathered his gown about his loins right briskly.

But when the Friar Gonsol saw this he made great haste to go alone, and he ran out of the door full swiftly and fared him where the devil had appointed an appointment with him. Now wit you well that the Friar Francis did follow close upon his heels, for though his legs were not so long he was a mighty runner and he was right sound of wind. Therefore was it a pleasant sight to see these holy men vying with one another to do battle with the devil, and much it repenteth me that there be some ribald heretics that maintain full enviously that these two saintly friars did so run

not for the devil that they might belabor him, but for the booke that they might possess it.

It fortuned that the devil was already come to the place where he had appointed the appointment, and in his hand he had the booke aforesaid. Much marveled he when that he beheld the two friars faring thence.

"I adjure thee, thou devil," said the Friar Gonsol from afar off, "I adjure thee give me that booke else I will take thee by thy horns and hoofs and drub thy ribs together!"

"Heed him not, thou devil," said the Friar Francis, "for it is I that am coming to wrestle with thee and to overcome thee for that booke!"

With such words and many more the two holy friars bore down upon the devil; but the devil thinking verily that he was about to be beset by the whole church militant stayed not for their coming, but presently departed out of sight and bore the book with him.

Now many people at that time saw the devil fleeing before the two friars, so that, esteeming it to be a sign of special grace, these people did ever thereafter acknowledge the friars to be saints, and unto this day you shall hear of St. Gonsol and St. Francis. Unto this day, too, doth the devil, [Pg 594] with that same booke wherewith he tempted the friar of old, beset and ensnare men of every age and in all places. Against which devil may Heaven fortify us to do battle speedily and with successful issuance. [Pg 595]

THE GRECO-TROJAN GAME

BY CHARLES F. JOHNSON

First on the ground appeared the god-like Trojan Eleven,
Shining in purple and black, with tight and well-fitting sweaters,
Woven by Andromache in the well-ordered palace of Priam.
After them came, in goodly array, the players of Hellas,
Skilled in kicking and blocking and tackling and fooling the umpire.
All advanced on the field, marked off with white alabaster,
Level and square and true, at the ends two goal posts erected,
Richly adorned with silver and gold and carved at the corners,
Bearing a legend which read, "Don't talk back at the umpire"—
Rule first given by Zeus, for the guidance of voluble mortals.
All the rules of the game were deeply cut in the crossbars,
So that the players might know exactly how to evade them.

On one side of the field were ranged the Trojan spectators,
Yelling in composite language their ancient Phrygian war-cry;
"*Ho-hay-toe, Tou-tais-ton, Ton-tain-to; Boomerah Boomerah, Trojans!*"
And on the other, the Greeks, fair-haired, and ready to halloo, [Pg 596]
If occasion should offer and Zeus should grant them a touch-down,
"*Breck-ek kek-kek-koax, Anax andron, Agamemnon*!"

First they agreed on an umpire, the silver-tongued Nestor.
Long years ago he played end-rush on the Argive eleven;
He was admitted by all to be an excellent umpire
Save for the habit he had of making public addresses,
Tedious, long-winded and dull, and full of minute explanations,
How they used to play in the days when Cadmus was half-back,
Or how Hermes could dodge, and Ares and Phœbus could tackle;
Couched in rhythmical language but not one whit to the purpose.
On his white hair they carefully placed the sacred tiara,
Worn by the foot-ball umpires of old as a badge of their office,
Also to save their heads, in case the players should slug them.
Then they gave him a spear wherewith to enforce his decisions,
And to stick in the ground to mark the place to line up to.
He advanced to the thirty-yard line and began an oration:

"Listen, Trojans and Greeks! For thirty-five seasons,
I played foot-ball in Greece with Peleus for half-back and captain.
Those were the days of old when men played the game as they'd orter.
Once, I remember, Æacus, the god-like son of Poseidon,
Kicked the ball from a drop, clean over the city of Argos. [Pg 597]
That was the game when Peleus, our captain, lost all his front teeth;
Little we cared for teeth or eyes when once we were warmed up.
Why, I remember that Æacus ran so that no one could see him,
There was just a long hole in the air and a man at the end on't.
Hercules umpired that game, and I noticed there wasn't much back-talk."

Him interrupting, sternly addressed the King Agamemnon:

"Cease, old man; come off your antediluvian boasting;
Doubtless our grandpas could all play the game as well as they knew how.
They are all dead, and have long lined up in the fields of elysium;
If they were here we would wipe up the ground with the rusty old duffers.
You call the game, and keep your eye fixed on the helmeted Hector.
He'll play off-side all the while, if he thinks the umpire don't see him!"
Then the old man threw the lots, but sore was his heart in his bosom.
"Troy has the kick-off," he said, "the ball is yours, noble Hector."
Then he gave him the ball, a prolate spheroid of leather,
Much like the world in its shape, if the world were lengthened, not flattened,
Covered with well-sewed leather, the well-seasoned hide of a bison,
Killed by Lakon, the hunter, ere bisons were exterminated. [Pg 598]
On it was painted a battle, a market, a piece of the ocean,
Horses and cows and nymphs and things too many to mention.

Then the heroes peeled off their sweaters and put on their nose-guards,
Also the fiendish expressions the great occasion demanded.
Ajax stood on the right; in the center the great Agamemnon;
Diomed crouched on the left, the god-like rusher and tackler,
Crouched as a panther crouches, if sculptors do justice to panthers.
Crafty Ulysses played back, for none of the Trojans could pass him,
All the best Greeks were in line, but Podas Okus Achilleus,
Who though an excellent kicker stayed all day in his section.

Hector dribbled the ball, then seized it and putting his head down,
And, as a lion carries a lamb and jumps over fences—
Dodging this way and that the shepherds who wish to remonstrate—
So did the son of Priam carry the ball through the rush line,
Till he was tackled fair by the full-back, the crafty Ulysses.
Even then he carried the ball and the son of Laertes
Full five yards till they fell to the ground with a deep indentation [Pg 599]
Where one might hide three men so that no man could see them—
Men of the present day, degenerate sons of the heroes—

Now, when Pallas Athene discovered the Greeks would be beaten,
She slid down from the steep of Olympus upon a toboggan.
Sudden she came before crafty Ulysses in guise like a maiden;
Not that she thought to fool him, but since Olympian fashion
Made the form of a woman good form for a goddess' assumption.
She then spoke to him quickly, and said, "O son of Laertes,
Seize thou the ball; I will pass it to thee and trip up the Trojan."
Her replying, slowly re-worded the son of Laertes—
"That will I do, O goddess divine, for he can outrun me."
Then when the ball was in play, she cast thick darkness around it.
Also around Ulysses she poured invisible darkness.
Under this cover, taking the ball he passed down the middle,
Silent and swift, unseen, unnoticed, unblocked, and untackled.
Meanwhile she piled the Greeks and the Trojans in conglomeration,
Much like a tangle of pine-trees where lightning has frequently fallen,
Or like a basket of lobsters and crabs which the provident housewife [Pg 600]
Dumps on the kitchen floor and vainly endeavors to count them,
So seemed the legs and the arms and the heads of the twenty-one players.
Sudden a shout arose, for under the crossbar, Ulysses,
Visible, sat on the ball, quietly making a touch-down;
On the tip of his nose were his thumb and fingers extended,
Curved and vibrating slow in the sign of the blameless Egyptians.
Violent language came to the lips of the helmeted Hector,
Under his breath he murmured a few familiar quotations,
Scraps of Phrygian folk-lore about the kingdom of Hades;
Then he called loud as a trumpet, "I claim foul, Mr. Umpire!"
"Touch-down for Greece," said Hector; "'twixt you and me and the goal-post
I lost sight of the ball in a very singular manner."

Then they carried the sphere back to the twenty-five yard line,
Prone on the ground lay a Greek, the leather was poised in his fingers—
Thrice Agamemnon adjusted the sphere with deliberation;
Then he drew back as a ram draws back for deadly encounter.
Then he tripped lightly ahead, and brought his sandal in contact
Right at the point; straight flew the ball right over the crossbar,
While like the cries of pygmies and cranes the race-yell resounded: [Pg 601]
"*Breck-ek kek-kek-koax, Anax andron, Agamemnon*!"

[Pg 602]

THE ECONOMICAL PAIR

BY CAROLYN WELLS

Once on a Time there was a Man and his Wife who had Different Ideas concerning Family Expenditures.

The Man said: "I am Exceedingly Economical; although I spend Small Sums here and there for Cigars, Wines, Theater Tickets, and Little Dinners, yet I do not buy me a Yacht or a Villa at Newport."

But even with these Praiseworthy Principles, it soon Came About that the Man was Bankrupt.

Whereupon he Reproached his Wife, who Answered his Accusations with Surprise.

"Me! My dear!" she exclaimed. "Why, I am Exceedingly Economical. True, I Occasionally buy me a Set of Sables or a Diamond Tiara, but I am Scrupulously Careful about Small Sums; I Diligently unknot all Strings that come around Parcels, and Save Them, and I use the Backs of old Envelopes for Scribbling-Paper. Yet, somehow, my Bank-Account is also Exhausted."

MORALS:

This Fable teaches to Takes Care of the Pence and the Pounds will Take Care of Themselves, and that we Should Not Be Penny-Wise and Pound-Foolish. [Pg 603]

THE TWO PEDESTRIANS

BY CAROLYN WELLS

Once on a time there were two Men, one of whom was a Good Man and the other a Rogue.

The Good Man one day saw a Wretched Drunkard endeavoring to find his way Home.

Being most kind-hearted, the Good Man assisted the Wretched Drunkard to his feet and accompanied him along the Highway toward his Home.

The Good Man held fast the arm of the Wretched Drunkard, and the result of this was that when the Wretched Drunkard lurched giddily the Good Man perforce lurched too.

Whereupon, as the Passing Populace saw the pair, they said: "Aha! Another good man gone wrong," and they Wisely Wagged their Heads.

Now the Bad Man of this tale, being withal of a shrewd and canny Nature, stood often on a street corner, and engaged in grave conversation with the Magnates of the town.

To be sure, the Magnates shook him as soon as possible, but in no wise discouraged he cheerfully sauntered up to another Magnate. Thus did he gain a Reputation of being a friend of the Great.

MORALS:

This Fable teaches us that A Man is known by the Company he Keeps, and that We Must not Judge by Appearances. [Pg 604]

A COMPLAINT OF FRIENDS

BY GAIL HAMILTON

If things would not run into each other so, it would be a thousand times easier and a million times pleasanter to get on in the world. Let the sheepiness be set on one side and the goatiness on the other, and immediately you know where you are. It is not necessary to ask that there be any increase of the one or any diminution of the other, but only that each shall preëmpt its own territory and stay there. Milk is good, and water is good, but don't set the milk-pail under the pump. Pleasure softens pain, but pain embitters pleasure; and who would not rather have his happiness concentrated into one memorable day, that shall gleam and glow through a lifetime, than have it spread out over a dozen comfortable, commonplace, humdrum forenoons and afternoons, each one as like the others as two peas in a pod? Since the law of compensation obtains, I suppose it is the best law for us; but if it had been left with me, I should have made the clever people rich and handsome, and left poverty and ugliness to the stupid people; because—don't you see?—the stupid people won't know they are ugly, and won't care if they are poor, but the clever people will be hampered and tortured. I would have given the good wives to the good husbands, and made drunken men marry drunken women. Then there would have been one

family exquisitely happy instead of two struggling against misery. I would have made the rose stem downy, and put all the thorns on the thistles. I would have gouged out the jewel from the [Pg 605] toad's head, and given the peacock the nightingale's voice, and not set everything so at half and half.

But that is the way it is. We find the world made to our hand. The wise men marry the foolish virgins, and the splendid virgins marry dolts, and matters in general are so mixed up, that the choice lies between nice things about spoiled, and vile things that are not so bad after all, and it is hard to tell sometimes which you like the best, or which you loathe least.

I expect to lose every friend I have in the world by the publication of this paper—except the dunces who are impaled in it. They will never read it, and if they do, will never suspect I mean them; while the sensible and true friends, who do me good and not evil all the days of their lives, will think I am driving at their noble hearts, and will at once fall off and leave me inconsolable. Still I am going to write it. You must open the safety-valve once in a while, even if the steam does whiz and shriek, or there will be an explosion, which is fatal, while the whizzing and shrieking are only disagreeable.

Doubtless friendship has its advantages and its pleasures; doubtless hostility has its isolations and its revenges; still, if called upon to choose once for all between friends and foes, I think, on the whole, I should cast my vote for the foes. Twenty enemies will not do you the mischief of one friend. Enemies you always know where to find. They are in fair and square perpetual hostility, and you keep your armor on and your sentinels posted; but with friends you are inveigled into a false security, and, before you know it, your honor, your modesty, your delicacy are scudding before the gales. Moreover, with your friend you can never make reprisals. If your enemy attacks you, you can always strike back and hit hard. You are expected to defend yourself against him to [Pg 606] the top of your bent. He is your legal opponent in honorable warfare. You can pour hot-shot into him with murderous vigor; and the more he writhes, the better you feel. In fact, it is rather refreshing to measure swords once in a while with such a one. You like to exert your power and keep yourself in practice. You do not rejoice so much in overcoming your enemy as in overcoming. If a marble statue could show fight you would just as soon fight it; but as it can not, you take something that can, and something, besides, that has had the temerity to attack you, and so has made a lawful target of itself. But against your friend your hands are tied. He has injured you. He has disgusted you. He has infuriated you. But it was most Christianly done. You can not hurl a thunderbolt, or pull a trigger, or lisp a syllable against those amiable monsters who, with tenderest fingers, are sticking pins all over you. So you shut fast the doors of your lips, and inwardly sigh for a good, stout, brawny, malignant foe, who, under any and every circumstance, will design you harm, and on whom you can lavish your lusty blows with a hearty will and a clear conscience.

Your enemy keeps clear of you. He neither grants nor claims favors. He awards you your rights,—no more, no less,—and demands the same from you. Consequently there is no friction. Your friend, on the contrary, is continually getting himself tangled up with you "because he is your friend." I have heard that Shelley was never better pleased than when his associates made free with his coats, boots, and hats for their own use, and that he appropriated their property in the same way. Shelley was a poet, and perhaps idealized his friends. He saw them, probably, in a state of pure intellect. I am not a poet; I look at people in the concrete. The most obvious thing [Pg 607] about my friends is their avoirdupois; and I prefer that they should wear their own cloaks and suffer me to wear mine. There is no neck in the world that I want my collar to span except my own. It is very exasperating to me to go to my bookcase and miss a book of which I am in immediate and pressing need, because an intimate friend has carried it off without asking leave, on the score of his intimacy. I have not, and do not wish to have, any alliance that shall abrogate the eighth commandment. A great mistake is lying round loose hereabouts,—a mistake fatal to many friendships that did run well. The common fallacy is that intimacy dispenses with the necessity of politeness. The truth is just the opposite of this. The more points of contact there are, the more danger of friction there is, and the more carefully should people guard against it. If you see a man only once a month, it is not of so vital importance that you do not trench on his rights, tastes, or whims. He can bear to be crossed or annoyed occasionally. If he does not have a very high regard for you, it is comparatively unimportant, because your paths are generally so diverse. But you and the man with whom you dine every day have it in your power to make each other exceedingly uncomfortable. A very little dropping will wear away rock, if it only keep at it. The thing that you would not think of, if it occurred only twice a year, becomes an intolerable burden when it happens twice a day. This is where husbands and wives run aground. They take too much for granted. If they would but see that they have something to gain, something to save, as well as something to enjoy, it would be better for them; but they proceed on the assumption that their love is an inexhaustible tank, and not a fountain depending for its supply on the stream that trickles into it. So, for every little annoying habit, or weakness, or fault, they draw on the [Pg 608] tank, without being careful to keep the supply open, till they awake one morning to find the pump dry, and, instead of love, at best, nothing but a cold habit of complacence. On the contrary, the more intimate friends become, whether married or unmarried, the more scrupulously should they strive to repress in themselves everything annoying, and to cherish both in themselves and each other everything pleasing. While each should draw on his love to neutralize the faults of his friend, it is suicidal to draw on his friend's love to neutralize his own faults. Love should be cumulative, since it can not be stationary. If it does not increase, it decreases. Love, like confidence, is a plant of slow growth, and of most exotic fragility. It must be constantly and tenderly cherished. Every noxious and foreign element must be carefully removed from it. All

sunshine, and sweet airs, and morning dews, and evening showers must breathe upon it perpetual fragrance, or it dies into a hideous and repulsive deformity, fit only to be cast out and trodden under foot of men, while, properly cultivated, it is a Tree of Life.

Your enemy keeps clear of you, not only in business, but in society. If circumstances thrust him into contact with you, he is curt and centrifugal. But your friend breaks in upon your "saintly solitude" with perfect equanimity. He never for a moment harbors a suspicion that he can intrude, "because he is your friend." So he drops in on his way to the office to chat half an hour over the latest news. The half-hour isn't much in itself. If it were after dinner, you wouldn't mind it; but after breakfast every moment "runs itself in golden sands," and the break in your time crashes a worse break in your temper. "Are you busy?" asks the considerate wretch, adding insult to injury. What can you do? Say yes, and wound his self-love forever? But he has a wife and [Pg 609] family. You respect their feelings, smile and smile, and are villain enough to be civil with your lips, and hide the poison of asps under your tongue, till you have a chance to relieve your o'ercharged heart by shaking your fist in impotent wrath at his retreating form. You will receive the reward of your hypocrisy, as you richly deserve, for ten to one he will drop in again when he comes back from his office, and arrest you wandering in Dreamland in the beautiful twilight. Delighted to find that you are neither reading nor writing,—the absurd dolt! as if a man weren't at work unless he be wielding a sledge-hammer!—he will preach out, and prose out, and twaddle out another hour of your golden eventide, "because he is your friend." You don't care whether he is judge or jury,—whether he talks sense or nonsense; you don't want him to talk at all. You don't want him there anyway. You want to be alone. If you don't, why are you sitting there in the deepening twilight? If you wanted him, couldn't you send for him? Why don't you go out into the drawing-room, where are music and lights, and gay people? What right have I to suppose, that, because you are not using your eyes, you are not using your brain? What right have I to set myself up as a judge of the value of your time, and so rob you of perhaps the most delicious hour in all your day, on pretense that it is of no use to you?—take a pound of flesh clean out of your heart, and trip on my smiling way as if I had not earned the gallows?

And what in Heaven's name is the good of all this ceaseless talk? To what purpose are you wearied, exhausted, dragged out and out to the very extreme of tenuity? A sprightly badinage,—a running fire of nonsense for half an hour,—a tramp over unfamiliar ground with a familiar guide, [Pg 610] —a discussion of something with somebody who knows all about it, or who, not knowing, wants to learn from you,—a pleasant interchange of commonplaces with a circle of friends around the fire, at such hours as you give to society: all this is not only tolerable, but agreeable,—often positively delightful; but to have an indifferent person, on no score but that of friendship, break into your sacred presence, and suck your blood through indefinite cycles of time, is an abomination. If he clatters on an indifferent subject, you can do well enough for fifteen minutes, buoyed up by the hope that he will presently have a fit, or be sent for, or come to some kind of an end. But when you gradually open to the conviction that *vis inertiæ* rules the hour, and the thing which has been is that which shall be, you wax listless; your chariot-wheels drive heavily; your end of the pole drags in the mud, and you speedily wallow in unmitigated disgust. If he broaches a subject on which you have a real and deep living interest, you shrink from unbosoming yourself to him. You feel that it would be sacrilege. He feels nothing of the sort. He treads over your heart-strings in his cowhide brogans, and does not see that they are not whip-cords. He pokes his gold-headed cane in among your treasures, blind to the fact that you are clutching both arms around them, that no gleam of flashing gold may reveal their whereabouts to him. You draw yourself up in your shell, projecting a monosyllabic claw occasionally as a sign of continued vitality; but the pachyderm does not withdraw, and you gradually lower into an indignation,—smothered, fierce, intense.

Why, *why*, WHY will people inundate their unfortunate victims with such "weak, washy, everlasting floods?" Why will they haul everything out into the open day? Why will they make the Holy of [Pg 611] Holies common and unclean? Why will they be so ineffably stupid as not to see that there is that which speech profanes? Why will they lower their drag-nets into the unfathomable waters, in the vain attempt to bring up your pearls and gems, whose luster would pale to ashes in the garish light, whose only sparkle is in the deep sea-soundings? *Procul, O procul este, profani!*

O, the matchless power of silence! There are words that concentrate in themselves the glory of a lifetime; but there is a silence that is more precious than they. Speech ripples over the surface of life, but silence sinks into its depths. Airy pleasantnesses bubble up in airy, pleasant words. Weak sorrows quaver out their shallow being, and are not. When the heart is cleft to its core, there is no speech nor language.

Do not now, Messrs. Bores, think to retrieve your character by coming into my house and sitting mute for two hours. Heaven forbid that your blood should be found on my skirts! but I believe I shall kill you, if you do. The only reason why I have not laid violent hands on you heretofore is that your vapid talk has operated as a wire to conduct my electricity to the receptive and kindly earth; but if you intrude upon my magnetisms without any such life-preserver, your future in this world is not worth a crossed sixpence. Your silence would break the reed that your talk but bruised. The only people with whom it is a joy to sit silent are the people with whom it is a joy to talk. Clear out!

Friendship plays the mischief in the false ideas of constancy which are generated and cherished in its name, if not by its agency. Your enemies are intense, but temporary. Time wears off the edge of hostility. It is the alembic in which offenses are dissolved into thin air, and a calm [Pg 612] indifference reigns in their stead. But your friends are expected to be a permanent arrangement.

They are not only a sore evil, but of long continuance. Adhesiveness seems to be the head and front, the bones and the blood, of their creed. It is not the direction of the quality, but the quality itself, which they swear by. Only stick, it is no matter what you stick to. Fall out with a man, and you can kiss and be friends as soon as you like; the recording angel will set it down on the credit side of his books. Fall in, and you are expected to stay in, *ad infinitum, ad nauseam*. No matter what combination of laws got you there, there you are, and there you must stay, for better, for worse, till merciful death you do part,—or you are—"fickle." You find a man entertaining for an hour, a week, a concert, a journey, and presto! you are saddled with him forever. What preposterous absurdity! Do but look at it calmly. You are thrown into contact with a person, and, as in duty bound, you proceed to fathom him: for every man is a possible revelation. In the deeps of his soul there may lie unknown worlds for you. Consequently you proceed at once to experiment on him. It takes a little while to get your tackle in order. Then the line begins to run off rapidly, and your eager soul cries out, "Ah! what depth! What perpetual calmness must be down below! What rest is here for all my tumult! What a grand, vast nature is this!" Surely, surely, you are on the high seas. Surely, you will not float serenely down the eternities! But by and by there is a kink. You find that, though the line runs off so fast, it does not go down,—it only floats out. A current has caught it and bears it on horizontally. It does not sink plumb. You have been deceived. Your grand Pacific Ocean is nothing but a shallow little brook, that you can ford all the year round, if it does not utterly dry up in the summer heats, when you want it most; or, at [Pg 613] best, it is a fussy little tormenting river, that won't and can't sail a sloop. What are you going to do about it? You are going to wind up your lead and line, shoulder your birch canoe, as the old sea-kings used, and thrid the deep forests, and scale the purple hills, till you come to water again, when you will unroll your lead and line for another essay. Is that fickleness? What else can you do? Must you launch your bark on the unquiet stream, against whose pebbly bottom the keel continually grates and rasps your nerves—simply that your reputation suffer no detriment? Fickleness? There is no fickleness about it. You were trying an experiment which you had every right to try. As soon as you were satisfied, you stopped. If you had stopped sooner, you would have been unsatisfied. If you had stopped later, you would have been dissatisfied. It is a criminal contempt of the magnificent possibilities of life not to lay hold of "God's occasions floating by." It is an equally criminal perversion of them to cling tenaciously to what was only the *simulacrum* of an occasion. A man will toil many days and nights among the mountains to find an ingot of gold, which, found, he bears home with infinite pains and just rejoicing; but he would be a fool who should lade his mules with iron-pyrites to justify his labors, however severe.

Fickleness! what is it, that we make such an ado about it? And what is constancy, that it commands such usurious interest? The one is a foible only in its relations. The other is only thus a virtue. "Fickle as the winds" is our death-seal upon a man; but should we like our winds unfickle? Would a perpetual northeaster lay us open to perpetual gratitude? or is a soft south gale to be orisoned and vespered forevermore? [Pg 614]

I am tired of this eternal prating of devotion and constancy. It is senseless in itself and harmful in its tendencies. The dictate of reason is to treat men and women as we do oranges. Suck all the juice out and then let them go. Where is the good of keeping the peel and pulp-cells till they get old, dry, and mouldy? Let them go, and they will help feed the earth-worms and bugs and beetles who can hardly find existence a continued banquet, and fertilize the earth, which will have you give before you receive. Thus they will ultimately spring up in new and beautiful shapes. Clung to with constancy, they stain your knife and napkin, impart a bad odor to your dining-room, and degenerate into something that is neither pleasant to the eye nor good for food. I believe in a rotation of crops, morally and socially, as well as agriculturally. When you have taken the measure of a man, when you have sounded him and know that you can not wade in him more than ankle-deep, when you have got out of him all that he has to yield for your soul's sustenance and strength, what is the next thing to be done? Obviously, pass him on; and turn you "to fresh woods and pastures new." Do you work him an injury? By no means. Friends that are simply glued on, and don't grow out of, are little worth. He has nothing more for you, nor you for him; but he may be rich in juices wherewithal to nourish the heart of another man, and their two lives, set together, may have an endosmose and exosmose whose result shall be richness of soil, grandeur of growth, beauty of foliage, and perfectness of fruit, while you and he would only have languished into aridity and a stunted crab-tree.

For my part, I desire to sweep off my old friends with the old year, and begin the new with a clean record. It is a measure absolutely necessary. The snake does not put on his new skin over [Pg 615] the old one. He sloughs off the first, before he dons the second. He would be a very clumsy serpent, if he did not. One can not have successive layers of friendships any more than the snake has successive layers of skins. One must adopt some system to guard against a congestion of the heart from plethora of loves. I go in for the much-abused, fair-weather, skin-deep, April-shower friends,—the friends who will drop off, if let alone,—who must be kept awake to be kept at all,—who will talk and laugh with you as long as it suits your respective humors and you are prosperous and happy,—the blessed butterfly-race, who flutter about your June mornings, and when the clouds lower, and the drops patter, and the rains descend, and the winds blow, will spread their gay wings and float gracefully away to sunny, southern lands, where the skies are yet blue and the breezes violet-scented. They are not only agreeable, but deeply wise. So long as a man keeps his streamer flying, his sails set, and his hull above water, it is pleasant to paddle alongside; but when the sails split, the yards crack, and the keel goes staggering down, by all means paddle off. Why should you be submerged in his whirlpool? Will he drown any more easily because you are drowning with him? Lung is lung. He dies from want of air, not from want of sympathy. When a poor fellow sits down among the ashes, the best thing his friends can do is to

stand afar off. Job bore the loss of property, children, health, with equanimity. Satan himself found his match there; and for all his buffeting, Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. But Job's three friends must needs make an appointment together to come and mourn with him and to comfort him, and after this Job opened his mouth, and cursed his day,—and no wonder.

Your friends have an intimate knowledge of you that is astonishing to contemplate. It is not that [Pg 616]
they know your affairs, which he who runs may read, but they know you. From a bit of bone, Cuvier could predicate a whole animal, even to the hide and hair. Such moral naturalists are your dear five hundred friends. It seems to yourself that you are immeasurably reticent. You know, of a certainty, that you project only the smallest possible fragment of yourself. You yield your universality to the bond of common brotherhood; but your individualism—what it is that makes you you—withdraws itself naturally, involuntarily, inevitably into the background,—the dim distance which their eyes can not penetrate. But, from the fraction which you do project, they construct another you, call it by your name, and pass it around for the real, the actual you. You bristle with jest and laughter and wild whims, to keep them at a distance; and they fancy this to be your every-day equipment. They think your life holds constant carnival. It is astonishing what ideas spring up in the heads of sensible people. There are those who assume that a person can never have had any grief, unless somebody has died, or he has been disappointed in love,—not knowing that every avenue of joy lies open to the tramp of pain. They see the flashing coronet on the queen's brow, and they infer a diamond woman, not recking of the human heart that throbs wildly out of sight. They see the foam-crest on the wave, and picture an Atlantic Ocean of froth, and not the solemn sea that stands below in eternal equipoise. You turn to them the luminous crescent of your life, and they call it the whole round globe; and so they love you with a love that is agate, not pearl, because what they love in you is something infinitely below the highest. They love you level: they have never scaled your heights nor fathomed your depths. And when they talk
of you as familiarly as if they had taken out your auricles and ventricles, and turned them inside [Pg 617]
out, and wrung them, and shaken them,—when they prate of your transparency and openness, the abandonment with which you draw aside the curtain and reveal the inmost thoughts of your heart,—you, who are to yourself a miracle and a mystery, you smile inwardly, and are content. They are on the wrong scent, and you may pursue your plans in peace. They are indiscriminate and satisfied. They do not know the relation of what appears to what is. If they chance to skirt along the coasts of your Purple Island, it will be only chance, and they will not know it. You may close your port-holes, lower your drawbridge, and make merry, for they will never come within gunshot of the "round tower of your heart."

There is no such thing as knowing a man intimately. Every soul is, for the greater part of its mortal life, isolated from every other. Whether it dwell in the Garden of Eden or the Desert of Sahara, it dwells alone. Not only do we jostle against the street crowd unknowing and unknown, but we go out and come in, we lie down and rise up, with strangers. Jupiter and Neptune sweep the heavens not more unfamiliar to us than the worlds that circle our own hearthstone. Day after day, and year after year a person moves by your side; he sits at the same table; he reads the same books; he kneels in the same church. You know every hair of his head, every trick of his lips, every tone of his voice; you can tell him far off by his gait. Without seeing him, you recognize his step, his knock, his laugh. "Know him? Yes, I have known him these twenty years." No, you don't know him. You know his gait, and hair, and voice. You know what preacher he hears, what
ticket he voted, and what were his last year's expenses; but you don't know him. He sits quietly in [Pg 618]
his chair, but he is in the temple. You speak to him; his soul comes out into the vestibule to answer you, and returns,—and the gates are shut; therein you can not enter. You were discussing the state of the country; but when you ceased, he opened a postern-gate, went down a bank, and launched on a sea over whose waters you have no boat to sail, no star to guide. You have loved and reverenced him. He has been your concrete of truth and nobleness. Unwittingly you touch a secret spring, and a Blue-Beard chamber stands revealed. You give no sign; you meet and part as usual; but a Dead Sea rolls between you two forevermore.

It must be so. Not even to the nearest and dearest can one unveil the secret place where his soul abideth, so that there shall be no more any winding ways or hidden chambers; but to your indifferent neighbor, what blind alleys, and deep caverns, and inaccessible mountains! To him who "touches the electric chain wherewith you're darkly bound," your soul sends back an answering thrill. One little window is opened, and there is short parley. Your ships speak each other now and then in welcome, though imperfect communication; but immediately you strike out again into the great, shoreless sea, over which you must sail forever alone. You may shrink from the far-reaching solitudes of your heart, but no other foot than yours can tread them, save those

> "That, eighteen hundred years ago, were nailed,
> For our advantage, to the bitter cross."

Be thankful that it is so,—that only His eye sees whose hand formed. If we could look in, we should be appalled at the vision. The worlds that glide around us are mysteries too high for us. We can not attain to them. The naked soul is a sight too awful for man to look at and live. There [Pg 619]
are individuals whose topography we would like to know a little better, and there is danger that we crash against each other while roaming around in the dark; but for all that, would we not have the constitution broken up. Somebody says, "In Heaven there will be no secrets," which, it seems to me, would be intolerable. (If that were a revelation from the King of Heaven, of course I would not speak flippantly of it; but though towards Heaven we look with reverence and humble hope, I do not know that Tom, Dick and Harry's notions of it have any special claim to our respect.) Such publicity would destroy all individuality, and undermine the foundations of society. Clairvoyance

—if there be any such thing—always seemed to me a stupid impertinence. When people pay visits to me, I wish them to come to the front door, and ring the bell, and send up their names. I don't wish them to climb in at the window, or creep through the pantry, or, worst of all, float through the key-hole, and catch me in undress. So I believe that in all worlds thoughts will be the subjects of volition,—more accurately expressed when expression is desired, but just as entirely suppressed when we will suppression.

After all, perhaps the chief trouble arises from a prevalent confusion of ideas as to what constitutes a man your friend. Friendship may stand for that peaceful complacence which you feel towards all well-behaved people who wear clean collars and use tolerable grammar. This is a very good meaning, if everybody will subscribe to it. But sundry of these well-behaved people will mistake your civility and complacence for a recognition of special affinity, and proceed at once to frame an alliance offensive and defensive while the sun and the moon shall endure. O, the barnacles that cling to your keel in such waters! The inevitable result is, that they win your [Pg 620] intense rancor. You would feel a genial kindliness toward them, if they would be satisfied with that; but they lay out to be your specialty. They infer your innocent little inch to be the standard-bearer of twenty ells, and goad you to frenzy. I mean you, you desperate little horror, who nearly dethroned my reason six years ago! I always meant to have my revenge, and here I impale you before the public. For three months, you fastened yourself upon me, and I could not shake you off. What availed it me, that you were an honest and excellent man? Did I not, twenty times a day, wish you had been a villain, who had insulted me, and I a Kentucky giant, that I might have the unspeakable satisfaction of knocking you down? But you added to your crimes virtue. Villainy had no part or lot in you. You were a member of a church, in good and regular standing; you had graduated with all the honors worth mentioning; you had not a sin, a vice, or a fault that I knew of; and you were so thoroughly good and repulsive that you were a great grief to me. Do you think, you dear, disinterested wretch, that I have forgotten how you were continually putting yourself to horrible inconveniences on my account? Do you think I am not now filled with remorse for the aversion that rooted itself ineradicably in my soul, and which now gloats over you, as you stand in the pillory where my own hands have fastened you? But can nature be crushed forever? Did I not ruin my nerves, and seriously injure my temper, by the overpowering pressure I laid upon them to keep them quiet when you were by? Could I not, by the sense of coming ill through all my quivering frame, presage your advent as exactly as the barometer heralds the approaching storm? Those three months of agony are little atoned for by this late vengeance; but go in peace! [Pg 621]

Mysterious are the ways of friendship. It is not a matter of reason or of choice, but of magnetisms. You can not always give the premises nor the argument, but the conclusion is a palpable and stubborn fact. Abana and Pharpar may be broad, and deep, and blue, and grand; but only in Jordan shall your soul wash and be clean. A thousand brooks are born of the sunshine and the mountains: very, very few are they whose flow can mingle with yours, and not disturb, but only deepen and broaden the current.

Your friend! Who shall describe him, or worthily paint what he is to you? No merchant, nor lawyer, nor farmer, nor statesman claims your suffrage, but a kingly soul. He comes to you from God,—a prophet, a seer, a revealer. He has a clear vision. His love is reverence. He goes into the *penetralia* of your life,—not presumptuously, but with uncovered head, unsandaled feet, and pours libations at the innermost shrine. His incense is grateful. For him the sunlight brightens, the skies grow rosy, and all the days are Junes. Wrapped in his love, you float in a delicious rest, rocked in the bosom of purple, scented waves. Nameless melodies sing themselves through your heart. A golden glow suffices your atmosphere. A vague, fine ecstasy thrills to the sources of life, and earth lays hold on Heaven. Such friendship is worship. It elevates the most trifling services into rites. The humblest offices are sanctified. All things are baptized into a new name. Duty is lost in joy. Care veils itself in caresses. Drudgery becomes delight. There is no longer anything menial, small, or servile. All is transformed

> "Into something rich and strange."

The homely household-ways lead through beds of spices and orchards of pomegranates. The daily [Pg 622] toil among your parsnips and carrots is plucking May violets with the dew upon them to meet the eyes you love upon their first awaking. In the burden and heat of the day you hear the rustling of summer showers and the whispering of summer winds. Everything is lifted up from the plane of labor to the plane of love, and a glory spans your life. With your friend, speech and silence are one; for a communion mysterious and intangible reaches across from heart to heart. The many dig and delve in your nature with fruitless toil to find the spring of living water: he only raises his wand, and, obedient to the hidden power, it bends at once to your secret. Your friendship, though independent of language, gives to it life and light. The mystic spirit stirs even in commonplaces, and the merest question is an endearment. You are quiet because your heart is over-full. You talk because it is pleasant, not because you have anything to say. You weary of terms that are already love-laden, and you go out into the highways and hedges, and gather up the rough, wild, wilful words, heavy with the hatreds of men, and fill them to the brim with honey-dew. All things great and small, grand or humble, you press into your service, force them to do soldier's duty, and your banner over them is love.

With such a friendship, presence alone is happiness; nor is absence wholly void,—for memories, and hopes, and pleasing fancies, sparkle through the hours, and you know the sunshine will come back.

For such friendship one is grateful. No matter that it comes unsought, and comes not for the

seeking. You do not discuss the reasonableness of your gratitude. You only know that your whole being bows with humility and utter thankfulness to him who thus crowns you monarch of all realms. [Pg 623]

And the kingdom is everlasting. A weak love dies weakly with the occasion that gave it birth; but such friendship is born of the gods, and immortal. Clouds and darkness may sweep around it, but within the cloud the glory lives undimmed. Death has no power over it. Time can not diminish, nor even dishonor annul it. Its direction may have been earthly, but itself is divine. You go back into your solitudes: all is silent as aforetime, but you can not forget that a Voice once resounded there. A Presence filled the valleys and gilded the mountain-tops,—breathed upon the plains, and they sprang up in lilies and roses,—flashed upon the waters, and they flowed to spheral melody,—swept through the forests, and they, too, trembled into song. And though now the warmth has faded out, though the ruddy tints and amber clearness have paled to ashen hues, though the murmuring melodies are dead, and forest, vale, and hill look hard and angular in the sharp air, you know that it is not death. The fire is unquenched beneath. You go your way not disconsolate. There needs but the Victorious Voice. At the touch of the prince's lips, life shall rise again and be perfected forevermore. [Pg 624]

PONCHUS PILUT

BY JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

Ponchus Pilut *used* to be
1st a *Slave*, an' now he's *free*.
Slaves wuz on'y ist before
The War wuz—an' *ain't* no more.

He works on our place fer us,—
An' comes here—*sometimes* he does.
He shocks corn an' shucks it.—An'
He makes hominy "by han'!"—

Wunst he bringed us some, one trip,
Tied up in a piller-slip:
Pa says, when Ma cooked it, "MY!
This-here's gooder'n you *buy*!"

Ponchus *pats* fer me an' sings;
An' he says most *funny* things!
Ponchus calls a dish a "*deesh*"—
Yes, an' *he* calls fishes "*feesh*"!

When Ma want him eat wiv us
He says, "'Skuse me—'deed you mus'!—
Ponchus know good manners, Miss.—
He aint eat wher' White-folks is!"

[Pg 625]

'Lindy takes *his* dinner out
Wher' he's workin'—roun' about.—
Wunst he et his dinner, spread
In our ole wheel-borry-bed.

Ponchus Pilut says "*'at's* not
His *right* name,—an' done fergot
What his *sho'-nuff* name is now—
An' don' matter none *no*how!"

Yes, an' Ponchus he'ps Pa, too,
When our *butcherin's* to do,
An' scalds hogs—an' says "Take care
'Bout it, er you'll *set the hair*!"

Yes, an' out in our back-yard
He he'ps 'Lindy rendur lard;
An', wite in the fire there, he
Roast' a pig-tail wunst fer me.—

An' ist nen th'ole tavurn-bell
Rung, down town, an' he says "Well!—
Hear dat! *Lan' o' Canaan*, Son,
Aint dat bell say '*Pig-tail done!*'

—'*Pig-tail done!*

Go call Son!—
Tell dat
Chile dat
Pig-tail done!'"

[Pg 626]

THE WOLF AT SUSAN'S DOOR

BY ANNE WARNER

"Well, Lucy has got Hiram!"

There was such a strong inflection of triumphant joy in Miss Clegg's voice as she called the momentous news to her friend that it would have been at once—and most truthfully—surmised that the getting of Hiram had been a more than slight labor.

Mrs. Lathrop was waiting by the fence, impatience written with a wandering reflection all over the serenity of her every-day expression. Susan only waited to lay aside her bonnet and mitts and then hastened to the fence herself.

"Mrs. Lathrop, you never saw nor heard the like of this weddin' day in all your own days to be or to come, and I don't suppose there ever will be anything like it again, for Lucy Dill didn't cut no figger in her own weddin' a-*tall*,—the whole thing was Gran'ma Mullins first, last and forever hereafter. I tell you it looked once or twice as if it wouldn't be a earthly possibility to marry Hiram away from his mother, and now that it's all over people can't do anything but say as after all Lucy ought to consider herself very lucky as things turned out, for if things hadn't turned out as they did turn out I don't believe anything on earth could have unhooked that son, and I'm willin' to swear that anywhere to any one.

"Do you know, Mrs. Lathrop, that Gran'ma Mullins was so bad off last night as they had to put a mustard plaster onto her while Hiram went to see Lucy for the last time, an' Mrs. Macy says as [Pg 627] she never hear the beat o' her memory, for she says she'll take her Bible oath as Gran'ma Mullins told her what Hiram said and done every minute o' his life while he was gone to see Lucy Dill. And she cried, too, and took on the whole time she was talkin' an' said Heaven help her, for nobody else could, an' she just knowed Lucy'd get tired o' Hiram's story an' he can't be happy a whole day without he tells it, an' she's most sure Lucy won't like his singin' 'Marchin' Through Georgia' after the first month or two, an' it's the only tune as Hiram has ever really took to. Mrs. Macy says she soon found she couldn't do nothin' to stem the tide except to drink tea an' listen, so she drank an' listened till Hiram come home about eleven. Oh, my, but she says they had the time then! Gran'ma Mullins let him in herself, and just as soon as he was in she bu'st into floods of tears an' wouldn't let him loose under no consideration. She says Hiram managed to get his back to the wall for a brace 'cause Gran'ma Mullins nigh to upset him every fresh time as Lucy come over her, an' Mrs. Macy says she couldn't but wonder what the end was goin' to be when, toward midnight, Hiram just lost patience and dodged out under her arm and run up the ladder to the roof-room an' they couldn't get him to come down again. She says when Gran'ma Mullins realized as he wouldn't come down she most went mad over the notion of her only son's spendin' the Christmas Eve to his own weddin' sleepin' on the floor o' the attic and she wanted to poke the cot up to him but Mrs. Macy says she drew the line at cot-pokin' when the cot was all she'd have to sleep on herself, and in the end they poked quilts up, an' pillows an' doughnuts an' cider an' blankets, an' Hiram made a bed on the floor an' they all got to sleep about three o'clock. [Pg 628]

"Well, Mrs. Lathrop, what do you think? What *do* you think? They was so awful tired that none of 'em woke till Mrs. Sperrit come at eleven next day to take 'em to the weddin'! Mrs. Macy says she hopes she'll be put forward all her back-slidin's if she ever gets such a start again. She says when she peeked out between the blinds an' see Mrs. Sperrit's Sunday bonnet an' realized her own state she nearly had a fit. Mrs. Sperrit had to come in an' be explained to, an' the worst of it was as Hiram couldn't be woke nohow. He'd pulled the ladder up after him an' put the lid on the hole so's to feel safe, an' there he was snug as a bug in a rug an' where no human bein' could get at him. They hollered an' banged doors an' sharpened the carvin' knife an' poured grease on the stove an' did anything they could think of, but he never budged. Mrs. Macy says she never was so close beside herself in all her life before, for Gran'ma Mullins cried worse 'n ever each minute an' Hiram seemed like the very dead couldn't wake him.

"They was all hoppin' around half crazy when Mr. Sperrit come along on his way to the weddin' an' his wife run out an' told him what was the matter an' he come right in an' looked up at the matter. It didn't take long for him to unsettle Hiram, Mrs. Macy says. He got a sulphur candle an' tied it to a stick an' h'isted the lid with another stick, an' in less 'n two minutes they could all hear Hiram sneezin' an' comin' to. An' Mrs. Macy says when they hollered what time it was she wishes the whole town might have been there to see Hiram Mullins come down to earth. Mr. Sperrit didn't hardly have time to get out o' the way an' he didn't give his mother no show for one single grab,—he just bounced into his room and you could have heard him gettin' dressed on the far side o' the far bridge. [Pg 629]

"O' course, us at Lucy's didn't know anythin' a-*tall* about Mrs. Macy's troubles. We had our own, Heaven help us, an' they was enough, for the very first thing of all Mr. Dill caught his pocket on

the corner of Mrs. Dill an' come within a ace of pullin' her off her easel. That would have been a pretty beginnin' to Lucy's weddin' day if her father had smashed her mother to bits, I guess, but it couldn't have made Lucy any worse; for I will say, Mrs. Lathrop, as I never see no one in all my born life act foolisher than Lucy Dill this day. First she'd laugh an' then she'd cry an' then she'd lose suthin' as we'd got to have to work with. An' when it come to dressin' her!—well, if she'd known as Hiram was sleepin' a sleep as next to knowed no wakin' she couldn't have put on more things wrong side out an' hind side before! She wasn't dressed till most every one was there an' I was gettin' pretty anxious, for Hiram wasn't there neither, an' the more fidgety people got the more they caught their corners on Mrs. Dill. I just saved her from Mr. Kimball, an' Amelia saw her goin' as a result o' Judge Fitch an' hardly had time for a jump. The minister himself was beginnin' to cough when, all of a sudden, some one cried as the Sperrits was there.

"Well, we all squeezed to the window, an' such a sight you never saw. They was gettin' Gran'ma Mullins out an' Hiram was tryin' to keep her from runnin' the color of his cravat all down his shirt while she was sobbin' 'Hi-i-i-i-ram, Hi-i-i-i-i-ram,' in a voice as would wring your very heart dry. They got her out an' got her in an' got her upstairs, an' we all sat down an' begin to get ready while Amelia played 'Lead, Kindly Light' and 'The Joyous Farmer' alternate, 'cause she'd mislaid her Weddin' March.

"Well, Mrs. Lathrop, you never knowed nothin' like it!—we waited, *an'* we waited, *an'* we waited, [Pg 630]
an' the minister most coughed himself into consumption, an' Mrs. Dill got caught on so often that Mr. Kimball told Ed to stand back of her an' hold her to the easel every minute. Amelia was just beginning over again for the seventeenth time when at last we heard 'em bumpin' along downstairs. Seems as all the delay come from Lucy's idea o' wantin' to walk with her father an' have a weddin' procession, instid o' her an' Hiram comin' in together like Christians an' lettin' Mr. Dill hold Gran'ma Mullins up anywhere. Polly says she never see such a time as they had of it; she says fightin' wolves was layin' lambs beside the way they talked. Hiram said frank an' open as the reason he didn't want to walk in with his mother was he was sure she wouldn't let him out to get married, but Lucy was dead set on the procession idea. So in the end they done it so, an' Gran'ma Mullins's sobs fairly shook the house as they come through the dinin'-room door. Lucy was first with her father an' they both had their heads turned backward lookin' at Hiram an' his mother.

"Well, Mrs. Lathrop, it was certainly a sight worth seem'! The way that Gran'ma Mullins was glued on! All I can say is as octopuses has got their backs turned in comparison to the way that Hiram seemed to be all wrapped up in her. It looked like wild horses, not to speak of Lucy Dill, wouldn't never be able to get him loose enough to marry him. The minister was scared; we was all scared. I never see a worse situation to be in.

"They come along through the back parlor, Lucy lookin' back, Mr. Dill white as a sheet, an' Hiram walkin' like a snow-plough as isn't sure how long it can keep on makin' it. It seemed like a month as they was under way before they finally got stopped in front o' the minister. An' then come *the* time! Hiram had to step beside Lucy an' take her hand an' he couldn't! We all just gasped. There [Pg 631]
was Hiram tryin' to get loose and Mr. Dill tryin' to help him. Gran'ma Mullins's tears dripped till you could hear 'em, but she hung on to Hiram like he'd paid for it. They worked like Trojan beavers, but as fast as they'd get one side of him uncovered she'd take a fresh wind-round. I tell you, we all just held our breath, and I bet Lucy was sorry she persisted in havin' a procession when she see the perspiration runnin' off her father an' Hiram.

"Finally Polly got frightened and begun to cry, an' at that the deacon put his arm around her an' give her a hug, an' Gran'ma Mullins looked up just in time to see the arm an' the hug. It seemed like it was the last hay in the donkey, for she give a weak screech an' went right over on Mr. Dill. She had such a grip on Hiram that if it hadn't been for Lucy he'd have gone over, too, but Lucy just hung on herself that time, an' Hiram was rescued without nothin' worse than his hair mussed an' one sleeve a little tore. Mr. Sperrit an' Mr. Jilkins carried Gran'ma Mullins into the dinin'-room, an' I said to just leave her fainted till after we'd got Hiram well an' truly married; so they did.

"I never see the minister rattle nothin' through like that marriage-service. Every one was on whole papers of pins an' needles, an' the minute it was over every one just felt like sittin' right straight down.

"Mrs. Macy an' me went up an' watered Gran'ma Mullins till we brought her to, and when she learned as it was all done she picked up wonderful and felt as hungry as any one, an' come downstairs an' kissed Lucy an' caught a corner on Mrs. Dill just like she'd never been no trouble to no one from first to last. I never seen such a sudden change in all my life; it was like some miracle had come out all over her and there wasn't no one there as wasn't rejoiced to death over [Pg 632]
the change.

"We all went out in the dinin'-room and the sun shone in and every one laughed over nothin' a-*tall*. Mrs. Sperrit pinned Hiram up from inside so his tear didn't show, and Lucy and he set side by side and looked like no one was ever goin' to ever be married again. Polly an' the deacon set opposite and the minister an' his wife an' Mr. Dill an' Gran'ma Mullins made up the table. The rest stood around, and we was all as lively as words can tell. The cake was one o' the handsomest as I ever see, two pigeons peckin' a bell on top and Hiram an' Lucy runnin' around below in pink. There was a dime inside an' a ring, an' I got the dime, an' they must have forgot to put in the ring for no one got it."

Susan paused and panted.

"It was—" commented Mrs. Lathrop, thoughtfully.

"Nice that I got the dime?—yes, I should say. There certainly wasn't no one there as needed it worse, an', although I'd never be one to call a dime a fortune, still it *is* a dime, an' no one can't deny it the honor, no matter how they feel. But, Mrs. Lathrop, what you'd ought to have seen was Hiram and Lucy ready to go off. I bet no one knows they're brides—I bet no one knows *what* they are,—you never saw the like in all your worst dreams. Hiram wore spectacles an' carpet-slippers an' that old umbrella as Mr. Shores keeps at the store to keep from bein' stole, and Lucy wore clothes she'd found in trunks an' her hair in curl-papers, an' her cold-cream gloves. They certainly was a sight, an' Gran'ma Mullins laughed as hard as any one over them. Mr. Sperrit drove 'em to the train, an' Hiram says he's goin' to spend two dollars a day right along till he comes back; so I guess Lucy'll have a good time for once in her life. An' Gran'ma Mullins walked [Pg 633] back with me an' not one word o' Hiram did she speak. She was all Polly an' the deacon. She said it wa'n't in reason as Polly could imagine him with hair, an' she said she was thinkin' very seriously o' givin' her a piece o' his hair as she's got, for a weddin' present. She said Polly 'd never know what he was like the night he give her that hair. She said the moon was shinin' an' the frogs were croakin', an' she kind o' choked; she says she can't smell a marsh to this day without seein' the deacon givin' her that piece of hair. I cheered her up all I could—I told her anyhow he couldn't give Polly a piece of his hair if he died for it. She smiled a weak smile an' went on up to Mrs. Brown's. Mrs. Brown asked her to stay with her a day or two. Mrs. Brown has her faults, but nobody can't deny as she's got a good heart,—in fact, sometimes I think Mrs. Brown's good heart is about the worst fault she's got. I've knowed it lead her to do very foolish things time an' again—things as I thank my star I'd never think o' doin'—not in this world."

Mrs. Lathrop shifted her elbows a little; Susan withdrew at once from the fence.

"I must go in," she said, "to-morrow is goin' to be a more 'n full day. There's Polly's weddin' an' then in the evenin' Mr. Weskin is comin' up. You needn't look surprised, Mrs. Lathrop, because I've thought the subject over up an' down an' hind end foremost an' there ain't nothin' left for me to do. I can't sell nothin' else an' I've got to have money, so I'm goin' to let go of one of those bonds as father left me. There ain't no way out of it; I told Mr. Weskin I'd expect him at sharp eight on sharp business an' he'll come. An' I must go as a consequence. Good night."

Polly Allen's wedding took place the next day, and Mrs. Lathrop came out on her front piazza [Pg 634] about half past five to wait for her share in the event.

The sight of Mrs. Brown going by with her head bound up in a white cloth, accompanied by Gran'ma Mullins with both hands similarly treated, was the first inkling the stay-at-home had that strange doings had been lately done.

Susan came next and Susan was a sight!

Not only did her ears stand up with a size and conspicuousness never inherited from either her father or her mother, but also her right eye was completely closed and she walked lame.

"The Lord have mercy!" cried Mrs. Lathrop, when the full force of her friend's affliction effected its complete entrance into her brain,—"Why, Susan, what—"

"Mrs. Lathrop," said Miss Clegg, "all I can say is I come out better than the most of 'em, an' if you could see Sam Duruy or Mr. Kimball or the minister you'd know I spoke the truth. The deacon an' Polly is both in bed an' can't see how each other looks, an' them as has a eye is goin' to tend them as can't see at all, an' God help 'em all if young Dr. Brown an' the mud run dry!" with which pious ejaculation Susan painfully mounted the steps and sat down with exceeding gentleness upon a chair.

Mrs. Lathrop stared at her in dumb and wholly bewildered amazement. After a while Miss Clegg continued.

"It was all the deacon's fault. Him an' Polly was so dead set on bein' fashionable an' bein' a contrast to Hiram an' Lucy, an' I hope to-night as they lay there all puffed up as they'll reflect on their folly an' think a little on how the rest of us as didn't care rhyme or reason for folly is got no choice but to puff up, too. Mrs. Jilkins is awful mad; she says Mr. Jilkins wanted to wear his straw [Pg 635] hat anyhow and, she says she always has hated his silk hat 'cause it reminds her o' when she was young and foolish enough to be willin' to go and marry into a family as was foolish enough to marry into Deacon White. Mrs. Jilkins is extra hot because she got one in the neck, but my own idea is as Polly Allen's weddin' was the silliest doin's as I ever see from the beginnin', an' the end wan't no more than might o' been expected—all things considered.

"When I got to the church, what do you think was the first thing as I see, Mrs. Lathrop? Well, you'd never guess till kingdom come, so I may as well tell you. It was Ed an' Sam Duruy an' Henry Ward Beecher an' Johnny standin' there waitin' to show us to our pews like we didn't know our own pews after sittin' in 'em for all our life-times! I just shook my head an' walked to my pew, an' there, if it wasn't looped shut with a daisy-chain! Well, Mrs. Lathrop, I wish you could have been there to have felt for me, for I may remark as a cyclone is a caterpillar wove up in hisself beside my face when I see myself daisy-chained out o' my own pew by Polly Allen. Ed was behind me an'

he whispered 'That's reserved for the family.' I give him one look an' I will state, Mrs. Lathrop, as he wilted. It didn't take me long to break that daisy-chain an' sit down in that pew, an' I can assure you as no one asked me to get up again. Mrs. Jilkins's cousins from Meadville come an' looked at me sittin' there, but I give them jus' one look back an' they went an' sat with Mrs. Macy themselves. A good many other folks was as surprised as me over where they had to sit, but we soon had other surprises as took the taste o' the first clean out o' our mouths.

"Just as Mrs. Davison begin to play the organ, Ed an' Johnny come down with two clothes-lines wound 'round with clematis an' tied us all in where we sat. Then they went back an' we all stayed [Pg 636] still an' couldn't but wonder what under the sun was to be done to us next. But we didn't have long to wait, an' I will say as anythin' to beat Polly's ideas I never see—no—nor no one else neither.

"'Long down the aisle, two an' two, an' hand in hand, like they thought they was suthin' pretty to look at, come Ed an' Johnny an' Henry Ward Beecher an' Sam Duruy, an' I vow an' declare, Mrs. Lathrop, I never was so nigh to laughin' in church in all my life. They knowed they was funny, too, an' their mouths an' eyes was tight set sober, but some one in the back just *had* to giggle, an' when we heard it we knew as things as wasn't much any other day would use us up this day, sure. They stopped in front an' lined up, two on a side, an' then, for all the world like it was a machine-play, the little door opened an' out come the minister an' solemnly walked down to between them. I must say we was all more than a little disappointed at its only bein' the minister, an' he must have felt our feelin's, for he began to cough an' clear up his throat an' his little desk all at once. Then Mrs. Davison jerked out the loud stop an' began to play for all she was worth, an' the door behind banged an' every one turned aroun' to see.

"Well, Mrs. Lathrop, we saw,—an' I will in truth remark as such a sawin' we'll never probably get a chance to do again! Mrs. Sweet says they practised it over four times at the church, so they can't deny as they meant it all, an' you might lay me crossways an' cut me into chipped beef an' still I would declare as I wouldn't have the face to own to havin' had any hand in plannin' any such weddin'.

"First come 'Liza Em'ly an' Rachel Rebecca hand in hand carryin' daisies—of all things in the [Pg 637] world to take to a weddin'—an' then come Brunhilde Susan, with a daisy-chain around her neck an' her belt stuck full o' daisies an'—you can believe me or not, jus' as you please, Mrs. Lathrop, an' still it won't help matters any—an' a daisy stuck in every button down her back, an' daisies tangled up in her hair, an' a bunch o' daisies under one arm.

"Well, we was nigh to overcome by Brunhilde Susan, but we drawed some fresh breath an' kept on lookin', an' next come Polly an' Mr. Allen. I will say for Mr. Allen as he seemed to feel the ridiculousness of it all, for a redder man I never see, nor one as looked more uncomfortable. He was daisied, too—had three in his button-hole;—but what took us all was the way him an' Polly walked. I bet no people gettin' married ever zig-zagged like that before, an' Mrs. Sweet says they practised it by countin' two an' then swingin' out to one side, an' then countin' two an' swingin' out to the other—she watched 'em out of her attic window down through the broke blind to the church. Well, all I can say is, that to my order o' thinkin' countin' an' swingin' is a pretty frame o' mind to get a husband in, but so it was, an' we was all starin' our eyes off to beat the band when the little door opened an', to crown everythin' else, out come the deacon an' Mr. Jilkins, each with a daisy an' a silk hat, an' I will remark, Mrs. Lathrop, as new-born kittens is blood-red murderers compared to how innocent that hat o' Mr. Jilkins' looked. Any one could see as it wasn't new, but he wasn't new either, as far as that goes, an' that was what struck me in particular about the whole thing—nothin' an' nobody wasn't any different only for Polly's foolishness and the daisies.

"Well, they sorted out an' begun to get married, an' us all sittin' lookin' on an' no more guessin' [Pg 638] what was comin' next than a ant looks for a mornin' paper. The minister was gettin' most through an' the deacon was gettin' out the ring, an' we was lookin' to get up an' out pretty quick, when—my heavens alive, Mrs. Lathrop, I never will forget that minute—when Mr. Jilkins—poor man, he's sufferin' enough for it, Lord knows!—when Mr. Jilkins dropped his hat!

"That very next second him an' Ed an' Brunhilde Susan all hopped an' yelled at once, an' the next thing we see was the minister droppin' his book an' grabbin' his arm an' the deacon tryin' madly to do hisself up in Polly's veil. We would 'a' all been glum petrified at such goin's on any other day, only by that time the last one of us was feelin' to hop and grab an' yell on his own account. Gran'ma Mullins was tryin' to slap herself with the seat cushion, an' the way the daisies flew as folks went over an' under that clematis rope was a caution. I got out as quick as I—"

"But what—" interrupted Mrs. Lathrop, her eyes fairly marble-like in their redundant curiosity.

"It was wasps!" said Susan, "it was a young wasps' nest in Mr. Jilkins's hat. Seems they carried their hats to church in their hands 'cause Polly didn't want no red rings around 'em, an' so he never suspected nothin' till he dropped it. An' oh, poor little Brunhilde Susan in them short skirts of hers—she might as well have wore a bee hive as to be like she is now. I got off easy, an' you can look at me an' figure on what them as got it hard has got on them. Young Dr. Brown went right to work with mud an' Polly's veil an' plastered 'em over as fast as they could get into Mrs. Sweet's. Mrs. Sweet was mighty obligin' an' turned two flower-beds inside out an' let every one scoop with her kitchen spoons, besides runnin' aroun' herself like she was a slave gettin' paid. [Pg 639] They took the deacon an' Polly right to their own house. They can't see one another anyhow, an' they was most all married anyway, so it didn't seem worth while to wait till the minister gets the use of his upper lip again."

"Why—" interrogated Mrs. Lathrop.

"Young Dr. Brown wanted to," said Susan, "he wanted to fill my ears with mud, an' my eye, too, but I didn't feel to have it done. You can't die o' wasps' bills, an' you can o' young Dr. Brown's—leastways when you ain't got no money to pay 'em, like I ain't got just at present."

"It's—" said Mrs. Lathrop.

"Yes," said Susan, "it struck me that way, too. This seems to be a very unlucky town. Anything as comes seems to catch us all in a bunch. The cow most lamed the whole community an' the automobile most broke its back; time'll tell what'll be the result o' these wasps, but there won't be no church Sunday for one thing, I know.

"An' it ain't the least o' my woes, Mrs. Lathrop, to think as I've got to sit an' smile on Mr. Weskin to-night from between two such ears as I've got, for a man is a man, an' it can't be denied as a woman as is mainly ears ain't beguilin'. Besides, I may in confidence state to you, Mrs. Lathrop, as the one as buzzed aroun' my head wan't really no wasp a-*tall* in comparison to the one as got under my skirts."

Mrs. Lathrop's eyes were full of sincere condolence; she did not even imagine a smile as she gazed upon her afflicted friend.

"I must go," said the latter, rising with a groan, "seems like I never will reach the bottom o' my troubles this year. I keep thinkin' there's nothin' left an' then I get a wasp at each end at once. Well, I'll come over when Mr. Weskin goes—if I have strength." [Pg 640]

Then she limped home.

It was about nine that night that she returned and pounded vigorously on her friend's window-pane. Mrs. Lathrop woke from her rocker-nap, went to the window and opened it. Susan stood below and the moon illuminated her smile and her ears with its most silvery beams.

"He's just gone!" she announced.

"Yes," said Mrs. Lathrop, rubbing her eyes.

"He's gone; I come over to tell you."

"What—" said Mrs. Lathrop.

"I wouldn't care if my ears was as big as a elephant's now."

"Why—" asked Mrs. Lathrop.

"Mrs. Lathrop, you know as I took them bonds straight after father died an' locked 'em up an' I ain't never unlocked 'em since?"

Mrs. Lathrop assented with a single rapt nod.

"Well, when I explained to Mr. Weskin as I'd got to have money an' how was the best way to sell a bond, he just looked at me, an' what do you think he said—what *do* you think he said, Mrs. Lathrop?"

Mrs. Lathrop hung far out over the window-sill—her gaze was the gaze of the ever earnest and interested.

Susan stood below. Her face was aglow with the joy of the affluent—her very voice might have been for once entitled as silvery.

"He said, Mrs. Lathrop, he said, 'Miss Clegg, why don't you go down to the bank and cut your coupons?'" [Pg 641]

THE TWO PRISONERS

BY CAROLYN WELLS

Once upon a time there were two Prisoners at the bar, who endeavored to plead for themselves with Tact and Wisdom.

One concealed certain Facts prejudicial to his Cause; upon which the Judge said: "If you had Confessed the Truth it would have Biased me in your Favor; as it is, I Condemn you to Punishment."

The other stated his Case with absolute Truth and Sincerity, concealing Nothing; and the result was that he was Condemned for his Misdemeanors.

MORALS:

This Fable teaches that Honesty is the Best Policy, and that the Truth should not Be spoken at All Times. [Pg 642]

A MODERN ADVANTAGE

BY CHARLOTTE BECKER

One morning, when the sun shone bright
And all the earth was fair,
I met a little city child,
Whose ravings rent the air.

"I lucidly can penetrate
The Which," I heard him say,—
"The How is, wonderfully, come
To clear the limpid way.

"The sentence, rarely, rose and fell
From ceiling to the floor;
Her words were spotlessly arranged,
She gave me, strangely, more."

"What troubles you, my little man?"
I dared to ask him then,—
He fixed me with a subtle stare,
And said, "Most clearly, when

"You see I'm occupied, it's rude
To question of my aims—
I'm going to the adverb school
Of Mr. Henry James!"

[Pg 643]

THE RAGGEDY MAN

BY JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

O the Raggedy Man! He works fer Pa;
An' he's the goodest man ever you saw!
He comes to our house every day,
An' waters the horses, an' feeds 'em hay;
An' he opens the shed—an' we all ist laugh
When he drives out our little old wobble-ly calf;
An' nen—ef our hired girl says he can—
He milks the cow fer 'Lizabuth Ann.—
Aint he a' awful good Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

W'y, The Raggedy Man—he's ist so good
He splits the kindlin' an' chops the wood;
An' nen he spades in our garden, too,
An' does most things 'at *boys* can't do!—
He clumbed clean up in our big tree
An' shooked a' apple down fer me—
An' nother'n, too, fer 'Lizabuth Ann—
An' nother'n, too, fer The Raggedy Man.—
Aint he a' awful kind Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' The Raggedy Man, he knows most rhymes
An' tells 'em, ef I be good, sometimes:
Knows 'bout Giunts, an' Griffuns, an' Elves,
An' the Squidgicum-Squees 'at swallers therselves!
An', wite by the pump in our pasture-lot, [Pg 644]
He showed me the hole 'at the Wunks is got,
'At lives 'way deep in the ground, an' can
Turn into me, er 'Lizabuth Ann!
Aint he a funny old Raggedy Man?

Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

The Raggedy Man—one time when he
Wuz makin' a little bow-'n'-orry fer me,
Says "When *you're* big like your Pa is,
Air you go' to keep a fine store like his—
An' be a rich merchunt—an' wear fine clothes?—
Er what *air* you go' to be, goodness knows!"
An' nen he laughed at 'Lizabuth Ann,
An' I says "'M go' to be a Raggedy Man!—
I'm ist go' to be a nice Raggedy Man!"
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

[Pg 645]

A MODERN ECLOGUE

BY BLISS CARMAN

SHE

If you were ferryman at Charon's ford,
And I came down the bank and called to you,
Waved you my hand and asked to come aboard,
And threw you kisses there, what would you do?

Would there be such a crowd of other girls,
Pleading and pale and lonely as the sea,
You'd growl in your old beard, and shake your curls,
And say there was no room for little me?

Would you remember each of them in turn?
Put all your faded fancies in the bow,
And all the rest before you in the stern,
And row them out with panic on your brow?

If I came down and offered you my fare
And more beside, could you refuse me there?

HE

If I were ferryman in Charon's place,
And ran that crazy scow with perilous skill,
I should be so worn out with keeping trace
Of gibbering ghosts and bidding them sit still,

[Pg 646]

If you should come with daisies in your hands,
Strewing their petals on the sombre stream,—
"He will come," and "He won't come," down the lands
Of pallid reverie and ghostly dream,—

I would let every clamouring shape stand there,
And give its shadowy lungs free vent in vain,
While you with earthly roses in your hair,
And I grown young at sight of you again,

Went down the stream once more at half-past seven
To find some brand-new continent of heaven.

[Pg 647]

A CABLE-CAR PREACHER

BY SAM WALTER FOSS

I

"'Tis strange how thoughtless people are,"
A man said in a cable-car,
"How careless and how thoughtless," said
The Loud Man in the cable-car;
And then the Man with One Lame Leg
Said softly, "Pardon me, I beg,

For your valise is on my knee;
It's sore," said he of One Lame Leg.

II

A woman then came in with twins
And stumbled o'er the Loud Man's shins;
And she was tired half to death,
This Woman Who Came in with Twins;
And then the Man with One Lame Leg
Said, "Madam, take my seat, I beg."
She sat, with her vociferant Twins,
And thanked the man of One Lame Leg.

[Pg 648]

III

"'Tis strange how selfish people are,
They carry boorishness so far;
How selfish, careless, thoughtless," said
The Loud Man of the cable-car.
A Man then with the Lung Complaint
Grew dizzy and began to faint;
He reeled and swayed from side to side,
This poor Man with the Lung Complaint.

IV

The Woman Who Came in with Twins
Said, "You can hardly keep your pins;
Pray, take my seat." He sat, and thanked
The Woman Who Came in with Twins.
The Loud Man once again began
To curse the selfishness of man;
Our lack of manners he bewailed
With vigor, did this Loud, Loud Man.

V

But still the Loud Man kept his seat;
A Blind Man stumbled o'er his feet;
The Loud Man preached on selfishness,
And preached, and preached, and kept his seat.
The poor Man with the Lung Complaint
Stood up—a brave, heroic saint—
And to the Blind Man, "Take my seat,"
Said he who had the Lung Complaint.

[Pg 649]

VI

The Loud Man preached on selfish sins;
The Woman Who Came in with Twins;
The poor Man with the Lung Complaint,
Stood, while he preached on selfish sins.
And still the Man with One Lame Leg
Stood there on his imperfect peg
And heard the screed on selfish sins—
This patient Man with One Lame Leg.

VII

The Loud Man of the cable-car
Sat still and preached and traveled far;
The Blind Man spake no word unto
The Loud Man of the cable-car.
The Lame-Legged Man looked reconciled,
And she with Twins her grief beguiled,
The poor Man with the Lung Complaint—
All stood, and sweetly, sadly smiled.

[Pg 650]

HOW TO KNOW THE WILD ANIMALS

BY CAROLYN WELLS

If ever you should go by chance
To jungles in the East,
And if there should to you advance
A large and tawny beast—
If he roar at you as you're dyin',
You'll know it is the Asian Lion.

If, when in India loafing round,
A noble wild beast meets you,
With dark stripes on a yellow ground,
Just notice if he eats you.
This simple rule may help you learn
The Bengal Tiger to discern.

When strolling forth, a beast you view
Whose hide with spots is peppered;
As soon as it has leapt on you,
You'll know it is the Leopard.
'T will do no good to roar with pain,
He'll only lep and lep again.

If you are sauntering round your yard,
And meet a creature there
Who hugs you very, very hard,
You'll know it is the Bear.
If you have any doubt, I guess
He'll give you just one more caress.

[Pg 651]

Whene'er a quadruped you view
Attached to any tree,
It may be 'tis the Wanderoo,
Or yet the Chimpanzee.
If right side up it may be both,
If upside down it is the Sloth.

Though to distinguish beasts of prey
A novice might nonplus;
Yet from the Crocodile you may
Tell the Hyena, thus:
'Tis the Hyena if it smile;
If weeping, 'tis the Crocodile.

The true Chameleon is small—
A lizard sort of thing;
He hasn't any ears at all
And not a single wing.
If there is nothing on the tree
'Tis the Chameleon you see.

[Pg 652]

I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER

BY PHŒBE CARY

I remember, I remember,
The house where I was wed,
And the little room from which that night,
My smiling bride was led.
She didn't come a wink too soon,
Nor make too long a stay;
But now I often wish her folks
Had kept the girl away!

I remember, I remember,
Her dresses, red and white,
Her bonnets and her caps and cloaks,—
They cost an awful sight!
The "corner lot" on which I built,
And where my brother met
At first my wife, one washing-day,—
That man is single yet!

I remember, I remember,
    Where I was used to court,
And thought that all of married life
    Was just such pleasant sport:—
My spirit flew in feathers then,
    No care was on my brow;
I scarce could wait to shut the gate,—
    I'm not so anxious now!

[Pg 653]

I remember, I remember,
    My dear one's smile and sigh;
I used to think her tender heart
    Was close against the sky.
It was a childish ignorance,
    But now it soothes me not
To know I'm farther off from Heaven
    Then when she wasn't got.

[Pg 654]

THE COUPON BONDS

BY J.T. TROWBRIDGE

(Mr. and Mrs. Ducklow have secretly purchased bonds with money that should have been given to their adopted son Reuben, who has sacrificed his health in serving his country as a soldier, and, going to visit Reuben on the morning of his return home, they hide the bonds under the carpet of the sitting-room, and leave the house in charge of Taddy, another adopted son.)

Mr. Ducklow had scarcely turned the corner of the street, when, looking anxiously in the direction of his homestead, he saw a column of smoke. It was directly over the spot where he knew his house to be situated. He guessed at a glance what had happened. The frightful catastrophe he foreboded had befallen. Taddy had set the house afire.

"Them bonds! them bonds!" he exclaimed, distractedly. He did not think so much of the house: house and furniture were insured; if they were burned the inconvenience would be great indeed, and at any other time the thought of such an event would have been a sufficient cause for trepidation; but now his chief, his only anxiety was the bonds. They were not insured. They would be a dead loss. And, what added sharpness to his pangs, they would be a loss which he must keep a secret, as he had kept their existence a secret,—a loss which he could not confess, and of which he could not complain. Had he not just given his neighbors to understand that he had no such property? And his wife,—was she not at that very moment, if not serving up a lie upon the subject, at least paring the truth very thin indeed?

[Pg 655]

"A man would think," observed Ferring, "that Ducklow had some o' them bonds on his hands, and got scaret, he took such a sudden start. He has, hasn't he, Mrs. Ducklow?"

"Has what?" said Mrs. Ducklow, pretending ignorance.

"Some o' them cowpon bonds. I rather guess he's got some."

"You mean Gov'ment bonds? Ducklow got some? 'Tain't at all likely he'd spec'late in them without saying something to *me* about it. No, he couldn't have any without my knowing it, I'm sure."

How demure, how innocent she looked, plying her knitting-needle, and stopping to take up a stitch! How little at that moment she knew of Ducklow's trouble and its terrible cause!

Ducklow's first impulse was to drive on and endeavor at all hazards to snatch the bonds from the flames. His next was to return and alarm his neighbors and obtain their assistance. But a minute's delay might be fatal: so he drove on, screaming, "Fire! fire!" at the top of his voice.

But the old mare was a slow-footed animal; and Ducklow had no whip. He reached forward and struck her with the reins.

"Git up! git up!—Fire! fire!" screamed Ducklow. "Oh, them bonds! them bonds! Why didn't I give the money to Reuben? Fire! fire! fire!"

By dint of screaming and slapping, he urged her from a trot into a gallop, which was scarcely an improvement as to speed, and certainly not as to grace. It was like the gallop of an old cow. "Why don't ye go 'long?" he cried, despairingly.

[Pg 656]

Slap! slap! He knocked his own hat off with the loose end of the reins. It fell under the wheels. He cast one look behind, to satisfy himself that it had been very thoroughly run over and crushed into the dirt, and left it to its fate.

Slap! slap! "Fire! fire!" Canter, canter, canter! Neighbors looked out of their windows, and, recognizing Ducklow's wagon and old mare in such an astonishing plight, and Ducklow himself, without his hat, rising from his seat and reaching forward in wild attitudes, brandishing the reins, and at the same time rending the azure with yells, thought he must be insane.

He drove to the top of the hill, and, looking beyond, in expectation of seeing his house wrapped in flames, discovered that the smoke proceeded from a brush-heap which his neighbor Atkins was burning in a field near by.

The revulsion of feeling that ensued was almost too much for the excitable Ducklow. His strength went out of him. For a little while there seemed to be nothing left of him but tremor and cold sweat. Difficult as it had been to get the old mare in motion, it was now even more difficult to stop her.

"Why, what has got into Ducklow's old mare? She's running away with him! Who ever heard of such a thing!" And Atkins, watching the ludicrous spectacle from his field, became almost as weak from laughter as Ducklow was from the effects of fear.

At length Ducklow succeeded in checking the old mare's speed and in turning her about. It was necessary to drive back for his hat. By this time he could hear a chorus of shouts, "Fire! fire! fire!" over the hill. He had aroused the neighbors as he passed, and now they were flocking to [Pg 657] extinguish the flames.

"A false alarm! a false alarm!" said Ducklow, looking marvelously sheepish, as he met them. "Nothing but Atkins's brush-heap!"

"Seems to me you ought to have found that out 'fore you raised all creation with your yells!" said one hyperbolical fellow. "You looked like the Flying Dutchman! This your hat? I thought 'twas a dead cat in the road. No fire! no fire!"—turning back to his comrades,—"only one of Ducklow's jokes."

Nevertheless, two or three boys there were who would not be convinced, but continued to leap up, swing their caps, and scream "Fire!" against all remonstrance. Ducklow did not wait to enter his explanations, but, turning the old mare about again, drove home amid the laughter of the by-standers and the screams of the misguided youngsters. As he approached the house, he met Taddy rushing wildly up the street.

"Thaddeus! Thaddeus! Where ye goin', Thaddeus?"

"Goin' to the fire!" cried Taddy.

"There isn't any fire, boy."

"Yes, there is! Didn't ye hear 'em? They've been yellin' like fury."

"It's nothin' but Atkins's brush."

"That all?" And Taddy appeared very much disappointed. "I thought there was goin' to be some fun. I wonder who was such a fool as to yell fire just for a darned old brush-heap!"

Ducklow did not inform him.

"I've got to drive over to town and get Reuben's trunk. You stand by the mare while I step in and brush my hat."

Instead of applying himself at once to the restoration of his beaver, he hastened to the sitting-room, to see that the bonds were safe. [Pg 658]

"Heavens and 'arth!" said Ducklow.

The chair, which had been carefully planted in the spot where they were concealed, had been removed. Three or four tacks had been taken out, and the carpet pushed from the wall. There was straw scattered about. Evidently Taddy had been interrupted, in the midst of his ransacking, by the alarm of fire. Indeed, he was even now creeping into the house to see what notice Ducklow would take of these evidences of his mischief.

In great trepidation the farmer thrust in his hand here and there, and groped, until he found the envelope precisely where it had been placed the night before, with the tape tied around it, which his wife had put on to prevent its contents from slipping out and losing themselves. Great was the joy of Ducklow. Great also was the wrath of him when he turned and discovered Taddy.

"Didn't I tell you to stand by the old mare?"

"She won't stir," said Taddy, shrinking away again.

"Come here!" And Ducklow grasped him by the collar.

"What have you been doin'? Look at that!"

"'Twan't me!" beginning to whimper and ram his fists into his eyes.

"Don't tell me 'twan't you!" Ducklow shook him till his teeth chattered. "What was you pullin' up the carpet for?"

"Lost a marble!" sniveled Taddy.

"Lost a marble! Ye didn't lose it under the carpet, did ye? Look at all that straw pulled out!" shaking him again.

"Didn't know but it might 'a' got under the carpet, marbles roll so," explained Taddy, as soon as he could get his breath.

"Wal, sir,"—Ducklow administered a resounding box on his ear,—"don't you do such a thing again, if you lose a million marbles!" [Pg 659]

"Hain't got a million!" Taddy wept, rubbing his cheek. "Hain't got but four! Won't ye buy me some to-day?"

"Go to that mare, and don't you leave her again till I come, or I'll *marble* ye in a way you won't like."

Understanding, by this somewhat equivocal form of expression, that flagellation was threatened, Taddy obeyed, still feeling his smarting and burning ear.

Ducklow was in trouble. What should he do with the bonds? The floor was no place for them after what had happened; and he remembered too well the experience of yesterday to think for a moment of carrying them about his person. With unreasonable impatience, his mind reverted to Mrs. Ducklow.

"Why ain't she to home? These women are forever a-gaddin'! I wish Reuben's trunk was in Jericho!"

Thinking of the trunk reminded him of one in the garret, filled with old papers of all sorts,—newspapers, letters, bills of sale, children's writing-books,—accumulations of the past quarter of a century. Neither fire nor burglar nor ransacking youngster had ever molested those ancient records during all those five-and-twenty years. A bright thought struck him.

"I'll slip the bonds down into that worthless heap o' rubbish, where no one 'ull ever think o' lookin' for 'em, and resk 'em."

Having assured himself that Taddy was standing by the wagon, he paid a hasty visit to the trunk in the garret, and concealed the envelope, still bound in its band of tape, among the papers. He then drove away, giving Taddy a final charge to beware of setting anything afire.

He had driven about half a mile, when he met a peddler. There was nothing unusual or alarming in such a circumstance, surely; but, as Ducklow kept on, it troubled him. [Pg 660]

"He'll stop to the house, now, most likely, and want to trade. Findin' nobody but Taddy, there's no knowin' what he'll be tempted to do. But I ain't a-goin' to worry. I'll defy anybody to find them bonds. Besides, she may be home by this time. I guess she'll hear of the fire-alarm and hurry home: it'll be jest like her. She'll be there, and trade with the peddler!" thought Ducklow, uneasily. Then a frightful fancy possessed him. "She has threatened two or three times to sell that old trunkful of papers. He'll offer a big price for 'em, and ten to one she'll let him have 'em. Why *didn't* I think on't? What a stupid blunderbuss I be!"

As Ducklow thought of it, he felt almost certain that Mrs. Ducklow had returned home, and that she was bargaining with the peddler at that moment. He fancied her smilingly receiving bright tin-ware for the old papers; and he could see the tape-tied envelope going into the bag with the rest. The result was that he turned about and whipped his old mare home again in terrific haste, to catch the departing peddler.

Arriving, he found the house as he had left it, and Taddy occupied in making a kite-frame.

"Did that peddler stop here?"

"I hain't seen no peddler."

"And hain't yer Ma Ducklow been home, nuther?"

"No."

And, with a guilty look, Taddy put the kite-frame behind him.

Ducklow considered. The peddler had turned up a cross-street: he would probably turn down again and stop at the house, after all: Mrs. Ducklow might by that time be at home: then the sale of old papers would be very likely to take place. Ducklow thought of leaving word that he did not wish any old papers in the house to be sold, but feared lest the request might excite Taddy's suspicions. [Pg 661]

"I don't see no way but for me to take the bonds with me," thought he, with an inward groan.

He accordingly went to the garret, took the envelope out of the trunk, and placed it in the breast-pocket of his overcoat, to which he pinned it, to prevent it by any chance from getting out. He used six large, strong pins for the purpose, and was afterwards sorry he did not use seven.

"There's suthin' losin' out o' yer pocket!" bawled Taddy, as he was once more mounting the wagon.

Quick as lightning, Ducklow clapped his hand to his breast. In doing so he loosed his hold of the wagon-box and fell, raking his shin badly on the wheel.

"Yer side-pocket! It's one o' yer mittens!" said Taddy.

"You rascal! How you scared me!"

Seating himself in the wagon, Ducklow gently pulled up his trousers-leg to look at the bruised part.

"Got anything in your boot-leg to-day, Pa Ducklow?" asked Taddy, innocently.

"Yes,—a barked shin!—all on your account, too! Go and put that straw back, and fix the carpet; and don't ye let me hear ye speak of my boot-leg again, or I'll boot-leg ye!"

So saying, Ducklow departed.

Instead of repairing the mischief he had done in the sitting-room, Taddy devoted his time and talents to the more interesting occupation of constructing his kite-frame. He worked at that until Mr. Grantly, the minister, driving by, stopped to inquire how the folks were. [Pg 662]

"Ain't to home: may I ride?" cried Taddy, all in a breath.

Mr. Grantly was an indulgent old gentleman, fond of children: so he said, "Jump in;" and in a minute Taddy had scrambled to a seat by his side.

And now occurred a circumstance which Ducklow had foreseen. The alarm of fire had reached Reuben's; and, although the report of its falseness followed immediately, Mrs. Ducklow's inflammable fancy was so kindled by it that she could find no comfort in prolonging her visit.

"Mr. Ducklow'll be going for the trunk, and I *must* go home and see to things, Taddy's *such* a fellow for mischief. I can foot it; I shan't mind it."

And off she started, walking herself out of breath in anxiety.

She reached the brow of the hill just in time to see a chaise drive away from her own door.

"Who *can* that be? I wonder if Taddy's ther' to guard the house! If anything should happen to them bonds!"

Out of breath as she was, she quickened her pace, and trudged on, flushed, perspiring, panting, until she reached the house.

"Thaddeus!" she called.

No Taddy answered. She went in. The house was deserted. And, lo! the carpet torn up, and the bonds abstracted!

Mr. Ducklow never would have made such work, removing the bonds. Then somebody else must have taken them, she reasoned.

"The man in the chaise!" she exclaimed, or rather made an effort to exclaim, succeeding only in bringing forth a hoarse, gasping sound. Fear dried up articulation. *Vox faucibus hæsit.* [Pg 663]

And Taddy? He had disappeared, been murdered, perhaps,—or gagged and carried away by the man in the chaise.

Mrs. Ducklow flew hither and thither (to use a favorite phrase of her own), "like a hen with her head cut off;" then rushed out of the house and up the street, screaming after the chaise,—

"Murder! murder! Stop thief! stop thief!"

She waved her hands aloft in the air frantically. If she had trudged before, now she trotted, now she cantered; but, if the cantering of the old mare was fitly likened to that of a cow, to what thing, to what manner of motion under the sun, shall we liken the cantering of Mrs. Ducklow? It was original; it was unique; it was prodigious. Now, with her frantically waving hands, and all her undulating and flapping skirts, she seemed a species of huge, unwieldy bird, attempting to fly. Then she sank down into a heavy, dragging walk,—breath and strength all gone,—no voice left even to scream "murder!" Then, the awful realization of the loss of the bonds once more rushing over her, she started up again. "Half running, half flying, what progress she made!" Then Atkins's dog saw her, and, naturally mistaking her for a prodigy, came out at her, bristling up and bounding and barking terrifically.

"Come here!" cried Atkins, following the dog. "What's the matter? What's to pay, Mrs. Ducklow?"

Attempting to speak, the good woman could only pant and wheeze.

"Robbed!" she at last managed to whisper, amid the yelpings of the cur that refused to be silenced.

"Robbed? How? Who?"

"The chaise. Ketch it."

Her gestures expressed more than her words; and, Atkins's horse and wagon, with which he had [Pg 664]

been drawing out brush, being in the yard near-by, he ran to them, leaped to the seat, drove into the road, took Mrs. Ducklow aboard, and set out in vigorous pursuit of the slow two-wheeled vehicle.

"Stop, you, sir! Stop, you, sir!" shrieked Mrs. Ducklow, having recovered her breath by the time they came up with the chaise.

It stopped, and Mr. Grantly, the minister, put out his good-natured, surprised face.

"You've robbed my house! You've took—"

Mrs. Ducklow was going on in wild, accusatory accents, when she recognized the benign countenance.

"What do you say? I have robbed you?" he exclaimed, very much astonished.

"No, no! not you! You wouldn't do such a thing!" she stammered forth, while Atkins, who had laughed himself weak at Mr. Ducklow's plight earlier in the morning, now laughed himself into a side-ache at Mrs. Ducklow's ludicrous mistake. "But did you—did you stop at my house? Have you seen our Thaddeus?"

"Here I be, Ma Ducklow!" piped a small voice; and Taddy, who had till then remained hidden, fearing punishment, peeped out of the chaise from behind the broad back of the minister.

"Taddy! Taddy! how came the carpet—"

"I pulled it up, huntin' for a marble," said Taddy, as she paused, overmastered by her emotions.

"And the—the thing tied up in a brown wrapper?"

"Pa Ducklow took it."

"Ye sure?"

"Yes; I seen him."

"Oh, dear!" said Mrs. Ducklow, "I never was so beat! Mr. Grantly, I hope—excuse me—I didn't know what I was about! Taddy, you notty boy, what did you leave the house for? Be ye quite sure yer Pa Ducklow—" [Pg 665]

Taddy replied that he was quite sure, as he climbed from the chaise into Atkins's wagon. The minister smilingly remarked that he hoped she would find no robbery had been committed, and went his way. Atkins, driving back, and setting her and Taddy down at the Ducklow gate, answered her embarrassed "Much obleeged to ye," with a sincere "Not at all," considering the fun he had had a sufficient compensation for his trouble. And thus ended the morning adventures, with the exception of an unimportant episode, in which Taddy, Mrs. Ducklow, and Mrs. Ducklow's rattan were the principal actors. [Pg 666]

THE SHOOTING-MATCH

BY A.B. LONGSTREET

Shooting-matches are probably nearly coeval with the colonization of Georgia. They are still common throughout the Southern States, though they are not as common as they were twenty-five or thirty years ago. Chance led me to one about a year ago. I was traveling in one of the northeastern counties, when I overtook a swarthy, bright-eyed, smirky little fellow, riding a small pony, and bearing on his shoulder a long, heavy rifle, which, judging from its looks, I should say had done service in Morgan's corps.

"Good morning, sir!" said I, reining up my horse as I came beside him.

"How goes it, stranger?" said he, with a tone of independence and self-confidence that awakened my curiosity to know a little of his character.

"Going driving?" inquired I.

"Not exactly," replied he, surveying my horse with a quizzical smile; "I haven't been a driving *by myself* for a year or two; and my nose has got so bad lately, I can't carry a cold trail *without hounds to help me*."

Alone, and without hounds as he was, the question was rather a silly one; but it answered the purpose for which it was put, which was only to draw him into conversation, and I proceeded to make as decent a retreat as I could.

"I didn't know," said I, "but that you were going to meet the huntsmen, or going to your stand." [Pg 667]

"Ah, sure enough," rejoined he, "that *mout* be a bee, as the old woman said when she killed a wasp. It seems to me I ought to know you."

"Well, if you *ought*, why *don't* you?"

"What *mout* your name be?"

"It *might* be anything," said I, with a borrowed wit, for I knew my man and knew what kind of conversation would please him most.

"Well, what *is* it, then?"

"It *is* Hall," said I; "but you know it might as well have been anything else."

"Pretty digging!" said he. "I find you're not the fool I took you to be; so here's to a better acquaintance with you."

"With all my heart," returned I; "but you must be as clever as I've been, and give me your name."

"To be sure I will, my old coon; take it, take it, and welcome. Anything else about me you'd like to have?"

"No," said I, "there's nothing else about you worth having."

"Oh, yes there is, stranger! Do you see this?" holding up his ponderous rifle with an ease that astonished me. "If you will go with me to the shooting-match, and see me knock out the *bull's-eye* with her a few times, you'll agree the old *Soap-stick's* worth something when Billy Curlew puts his shoulder to her."

This short sentence was replete with information to me. It taught me that my companion was *Billy Curlew*; that he was going to a *shooting-match*; that he called his rifle the *Soap-stick*, and that he was very confident of winning beef with her; or, which is nearly, but not quite the same thing, *driving the cross with her*.

"Well," said I, "if the shooting-match is not too far out of my way, I'll go to it with pleasure." [Pg 668]

"Unless your way lies through the woods from here," said Billy, "it'll not be much out of your way; for it's only a mile ahead of us, and there is no other road for you to take till you get there; and as that thing you're riding in ain't well suited to fast traveling among brushy knobs, I reckon you won't lose much by going by. I reckon you hardly ever was at a shooting-match, stranger, from the cut of your coat?"

"Oh, yes," returned I, "many a time. I won beef at one when I was hardly old enough to hold a shot-gun off-hand."

"*Children* don't go to shooting-matches about here," said he, with a smile of incredulity. "I never heard of but one that did, and he was a little *swinge* cat. He was born a shooting, and killed squirrels before he was weaned."

"Nor did *I* ever hear of but one," replied I, "and that one was myself."

"And where did you win beef so young, stranger?"

"At Berry Adams's."

"Why, stop, stranger, let me look at you good! Is your name *Lyman* Hall?"

"The very same," said I.

"Well, dang my buttons, if you ain't the very boy my daddy used to tell me about. I was too young to recollect you myself; but I've heard daddy talk about you many a time. I believe mammy's got a neck-handkerchief now that daddy won on your shooting at Collen Reid's store, when you were hardly knee high. Come along, Lyman, and I'll go my death upon you at the shooting-match, with the old Soap-stick at your shoulder."

"Ah, Billy," said I, "the old Soap-stick will do much better at your own shoulder. It was my mother's notion that sent me to the shooting-match at Berry Adams's; and, to tell the honest [Pg 669] truth, it was altogether a chance shot that made me win beef; but that wasn't generally known; and most everybody believed that I was carried there on account of my skill in shooting; and my fame was spread far and wide, I well remember. I remember, too, perfectly well, your father's bet on me at the store. *He* was at the shooting-match, and nothing could make him believe but that I was a great shot with a rifle as well as a shot-gun. Bet he would on me, in spite of all I could say, though I assured him that I had never shot a rifle in my life. It so happened, too, that there were but two bullets, or, rather, a bullet and a half; and so confident was your father in my skill, that he made me shoot the half bullet; and, strange to tell, by another chance shot, I like to have drove the cross and won his bet."

"Now I know you're the very chap, for I heard daddy tell that very thing about the half bullet. Don't say anything about it, Lyman, and darn my old shoes, if I don't tare the lint off the boys with you at the shooting-match. They'll never 'spect such a looking man as you are of knowing anything about a rifle. I'll risk your *chance* shots."

I soon discovered that the father had eaten sour grapes, and the son's teeth were on edge; for Billy was just as incorrigibly obstinate in his belief of my dexterity with a rifle as his father had been before him.

We soon reached the place appointed for the shooting-match. It went by the name of Sims's Cross Roads, because here two roads intersected each other; and because, from the time that the first

had been laid out, Archibald Sims had resided there. Archibald had been a justice of the peace in his day (and where is the man of his age in Georgia who has not?); consequently, he was called 'Squire Sims. It is the custom in this state, when a man has once acquired a title, civil or military, [Pg 670] to force it upon him as long as he lives; hence the countless number of titled personages who are introduced in these sketches.

We stopped at the 'squire's door. Billy hastily dismounted, gave me the shake of the hand which he had been reluctantly reserving for a mile back, and, leading me up to the 'squire, thus introduced me: "Uncle Archy, this is Lyman Hall; and for all you see him in these fine clothes, he's a *swinge* cat; a darn sight cleverer fellow than he looks to be. Wait till you see him lift the old Soap-stick, and draw a bead upon the bull's-eye. You *gwine* to see fun here to-day. Don't say nothing about it."

"Well, Mr. Swinge-cat," said the 'squire, "here's to a better acquaintance with you," offering me his hand.

"How goes it, Uncle Archy?" said I, taking his hand warmly (for I am always free and easy with those who are so with me; and in this course I rarely fail to please). "How's the old woman?"

"Egad," said the 'squire, chuckling, "there you're too hard for me; for she died two-and-twenty years ago, and I haven't heard a word from her since."

"What! and you never married again?"

"Never, as God's my judge!" (a solemn asseveration, truly, upon so light a subject.)

"Well, that's not my fault."

"No, nor it's not mine, *ni*ther," said the 'squire.

Here we were interrupted by the cry of another Rancey Sniffle. "Hello, here! All you as wish to put in for the shoot'n'-match, come on here! for the putt'n' in's *riddy* to begin."

About sixty persons, including mere spectators, had collected; the most of whom were more or less obedient to the call of Mealy Whitecotton, for that was the name of the self-constituted commander-in-chief. Some hastened and some loitered, as they desired to be first or last on the [Pg 671] list; for they shoot in the order in which their names are entered.

The beef was not present, nor is it ever upon such occasions; but several of the company had seen it, who all concurred in the opinion that it was a good beef, and well worth the price that was set upon it—eleven dollars. A general inquiry ran around, in order to form some opinion as to the number of shots that would be taken; for, of course, the price of a shot is cheapened in proportion to the increase of that number. It was soon ascertained that not more than twenty persons would take chances; but these twenty agreed to take the number of shots, at twenty-five cents each.

The competitors now began to give in their names; some for one, some for two, three, and a few for as many as four shots.

Billy Curlew hung back to the last; and when the list was offered him, five shots remained undisposed of.

"How many shots left?" inquired Billy.

"Five," was the reply.

"Well, I take 'em all. Put down four shots to me, and one to Lyman Hall, paid for by William Curlew."

I was thunder-struck, not at his proposition to pay for my shot, because I knew that Billy meant it as a token of friendship, and he would have been hurt if I had refused to let him do me this favor; but at the unexpected announcement of my name as a competitor for beef, at least one hundred miles from the place of my residence. I was prepared for a challenge from Billy to some of his neighbors for a *private* match upon me; but not for this.

I therefore protested against his putting in for me, and urged every reason to dissuade him from it that I could, without wounding his feelings. [Pg 672]

"Put it down!" said Billy, with the authority of an emperor, and with a look that spoke volumes intelligible to every by-stander. "Reckon I don't know what I'm about?" Then wheeling off, and muttering in an under, self-confident tone, "Dang old Roper," continued he, "if he don't knock that cross to the north corner of creation and back again before a cat can lick her foot."

Had I been king of the cat tribe, they could not have regarded me with more curious attention than did the whole company from this moment. Every inch of me was examined with the nicest scrutiny; and some plainly expressed by their looks that they never would have taken me for such a bite. I saw no alternative but to throw myself upon a third chance shot; for though, by the rules of the sport, I would have been allowed to shoot by proxy, by all the rules of good breeding I was bound to shoot in person. It would have been unpardonable to disappoint the expectations which had been raised on me. Unfortunately, too, for me, the match differed in one respect from those which I had been in the habit of attending in my younger days. In olden times the contest was carried on chiefly with *shot-guns*, a generic term which, in those days, embraced three

descriptions of firearms: *Indian-traders* (a long, cheap, but sometimes excellent kind of gun, that mother Britain used to send hither for traffic with the Indians), *the large musket*, and the *shot-gun*, properly so-called. Rifles were, however, always permitted to compete with them, under equitable restrictions. These were, that they should be fired off-hand, while the shot-guns were allowed a rest, the distance being equal; or that the distance should be one hundred yards for a rifle, to sixty for the shot-gun, the mode of firing being equal.

But this was a match of rifles exclusively; and these are by far the most common at this time. [Pg 673]

Most of the competitors fire at the same target; which is usually a board from nine inches to a foot wide, charred on one side as black as it can be made by fire, without impairing materially the uniformity of its surface; on the darkened side of which is *pegged* a square piece of white paper, which is larger or smaller, according to the distance at which it is to be placed from the marksmen. This is almost invariably sixty yards, and for it the paper is reduced to about two and a half inches square. Out of the center of it is cut a rhombus of about the width of an inch, measured diagonally; this is the *bull's-eye*, or *diamond*, as the marksmen choose to call it; in the center of this is the cross. But every man is permitted to fix his target to his own taste; and accordingly, some remove one-fourth of the paper, cutting from the center of the square to the two lower corners, so as to leave a large angle opening from the center downward; while others reduce the angle more or less: but it is rarely the case that all are not satisfied with one of these figures.

The beef is divided into five prizes, or, as they are commonly termed, five *quarters*—the hide and tallow counting as one. For several years after the revolutionary war, a sixth was added: the *lead* which was shot in the match. This was the prize of the sixth best shot; and it used to be carefully extracted from the board or tree in which it was lodged, and afterward remoulded. But this grew out of the exigency of the times, and has, I believe, been long since abandoned everywhere.

The three master shots and rivals were Moses Firmby, Larkin Spivey and Billy Curlew; to whom was added, upon this occasion, by common consent and with awful forebodings, your humble servant.

The target was fixed at an elevation of about three feet from the ground; and the judges (Captain Turner and 'Squire Porter) took their stands by it, joined by about half the spectators. [Pg 674]

The first name on the catalogue was Mealy Whitecotton. Mealy stepped out, rifle in hand, and toed the mark. His rifle was about three inches longer than himself, and near enough his own thickness to make the remark of Darby Chislom, as he stepped out, tolerably appropriate: "Here comes the corn-stalk and the sucker!" said Darby.

"Kiss my foot!" said Mealy. "The way I'll creep into that bull's-eye's a fact."

"You'd better creep into your hind sight," said Darby. Mealy raised and fired.

"A pretty good shot, Mealy!" said one.

"Yes, a blamed good shot!" said a second.

"Well done, Meal!" said a third.

I was rejoiced when one of the company inquired, "Where is it?" for I could hardly believe they were founding these remarks upon the evidence of their senses.

"Just on the right-hand side of the bull's-eye," was the reply.

I looked with all the power of my eyes, but was unable to discover the least change in the surface of the paper. Their report, however, was true; so much keener is the vision of a practiced than an unpracticed eye.

The next in order was Hiram Baugh. Hiram was like some race-horses which I have seen; he was too good not to contend for every prize, and too good for nothing ever to win one.

"Gentlemen," said he, as he came to the mark, "I don't say that I'll win beef; but if my piece don't blow, I'll eat the paper, or be mighty apt to do it, if you'll b'lieve my racket. My powder are not good powder, gentlemen; I bought it *thum* (from) Zeb Daggett, and gin him three-quarters of a dollar a pound for it; but it are not what I call good powder, gentlemen; but if old Buck-killer [Pg 675] burns it clear, the boy you call Hiram Baugh eat's paper, or comes mighty near it."

"Well, blaze away," said Mealy, "and be d——d to you, and Zeb Daggett, and your powder, and Buck-killer, and your powder-horn and shot-pouch to boot! How long you gwine stand thar talking 'fore you shoot?"

"Never mind," said Hiram, "I can talk a little and shoot a little, too, but that's nothin'. Here goes!"

Hiram assumed the figure of a note of interrogation, took a long sight, and fired.

"I've eat paper," said he, at the crack of the gun, without looking, or seeming to look, toward the target. "Buck-killer made a clear racket. Where am I, gentlemen?"

"You're just between Mealy and the diamond," was the reply.

"I said I'd eat paper, and I've done it; haven't I, gentlemen?"

"And 'spose you have!" said Mealy, "what do that 'mount to? You'll not win beef, and never did."

"Be that as it mout be, I've beat Meal 'Cotton mighty easy; and the boy you call Hiram Baugh are able to do it."

"And what do that 'mount to? Who the devil an't able to beat Meal 'Cotton! I don't make no pretense of bein' nothin' great, no how; but you always makes out as if you were gwine to keep 'em makin' crosses for you constant, and then do nothin' but '*eat paper*' at last; and that's a long way from *eatin' beef*, 'cordin' to Meal 'Cotton's notions, as you call him."

Simon Stow was now called on.

"Oh, Lord!" exclaimed two or three: "now we have it. It'll take him as long to shoot as it would take 'Squire Dobbins to run round a *track* o' land." [Pg 676]

"Good-by, boys," said Bob Martin.

"Where are you going, Bob?"

"Going to gather in my crop; I'll be back again though by the time Sime Stow shoots."

Simon was used to all this, and therefore it did not disconcert him in the least. He went off and brought his own target, and set it up with his own hand.

He then wiped out his rifle, rubbed the pan with his hat, drew a piece of tow through the touch-hole with his wiper, filled his charger with great care, poured the powder into the rifle with equal caution, shoved in with his finger the two or three vagrant grains that lodged round the mouth of his piece, took out a handful of bullets, looked them all over carefully, selected one without flaw or wrinkle, drew out his patching, found the most even part of it, sprung open the grease-box in the breech of his rifle; took up just so much grease, distributed it with great equality over the chosen part of his patching, laid it over the muzzle of his rifle, grease side down, placed his ball upon it, pressed it a little, then took it up and turned the neck a little more perpendicularly downward, placed his knife handle on it, just buried it in the mouth of the rifle, cut off the redundant patching just above the bullet, looked at it, and shook his head in token that he had cut off too much or too little, no one knew which, sent down the ball, measured the contents of his gun with his first and second fingers on the protruding part of the ramrod, shook his head again, to signify there was too much or too little powder, primed carefully, placed an arched piece of tin over the hind sight to shade it, took his place, got a friend to hold his hat over the foresight to shade it, took a very long sight, fired, and didn't even eat the paper.

"My piece was badly *loadned*," said Simon, when he learned the place of his ball. [Pg 677]

"Oh, you didn't take time," said Mealy. "No man can shoot that's in such a hurry as you is. I'd hardly got to sleep 'fore I heard the crack o' the gun."

The next was Moses Firmby. He was a tall, slim man, of rather sallow complexion; and it is a singular fact, that though probably no part of the world is more healthy than the mountainous parts of Georgia, the mountaineers have not generally robust frames or fine complexions: they are, however, almost inexhaustible by toil.

Moses kept us not long in suspense. His rifle was already charged, and he fixed it upon the target with a steadiness of nerve and aim that was astonishing to me and alarming to all the rest. A few seconds, and the report of his rifle broke the deathlike silence which prevailed.

"No great harm done yet," said Spivey, manifestly relieved from anxiety by an event which seemed to me better calculated to produce despair. Firmby's ball had cut out the lower angle of the diamond, directly on a right line with the cross.

Three or four followed him without bettering his shot; all of whom, however, with one exception, "eat the paper."

It now came to Spivey's turn. There was nothing remarkable in his person or manner. He took his place, lowered his rifle slowly from a perpendicular until it came on a line with the mark, held it there like a vice for a moment and fired.

"Pretty *sevigrous*, but nothing killing yet," said Billy Curlew, as he learned the place of Spivey's ball.

Spivey's ball had just broken the upper angle of the diamond; beating Firmby about half its width.

A few more shots, in which there was nothing remarkable, brought us to Billy Curlew. Billy stepped out with much confidence, and brought the Soap-stick to an order, while he deliberately [Pg 678] rolled up his shirt sleeves. Had I judged Billy's chance of success from the looks of his gun, I should have said it was hopeless. The stock of Soap-stick seemed to have been made with a case-knife; and had it been, the tool would have been but a poor apology for its clumsy appearance. An auger-hole in the breech served for a grease-box; a cotton string assisted a single screw in holding on the lock; and the thimbles were made, one of brass, one of iron, and one of tin.

"Where's Lark Spivey's bullet?" called out Billy to the judges, as he finished rolling up his sleeves.

"About three-quarters of an inch from the cross," was the reply.

"Well, clear the way! the Soap-stick's coming, and she'll be along in there among 'em presently."

Billy now planted himself astraddle, like an inverted V; shot forward his left hip, drew his body back to an angle of about forty-five degrees with the plane of the horizon, brought his cheek down close to the breech of old Soap-stick, and fixed her upon the mark with untrembling hand. His sight was long, and the swelling muscles of his left arm led me to believe that he was lessening his chance of success with every half second that he kept it burdened with his ponderous rifle; but it neither flagged nor wavered until Soap-stick made her report.

"Where am I?" said Billy, as the smoke rose from before his eye.

"You've jist touched the cross on the lower side," was the reply of one of the judges.

"I was afraid I was drawing my bead a *leetle* too fine," said Billy. "Now, Lyman, you see what the Soap-stick can do. Take her, and show the boys how you used to do when you was a baby."

I begged to reserve my shot to the last; pleading, rather sophistically, that it was, in point of fact, [Pg 679] one of the Billy's shots. My plea was rather indulged than sustained, and the marksmen who had taken more than one shot commenced the second round. This round was a manifest improvement upon the first. The cross was driven three times: once by Spivey, once by Firmby, and once by no less a personage than Mealy Whitecotton, whom chance seemed to favor for this time, merely that he might retaliate upon Hiram Baugh; and the bull's-eye was disfigured out of all shape.

The third and fourth rounds were shot. Billy discharged his last shot, which left the rights of parties thus: Billy Curlew first and fourth choice, Spivey second, Firmby third and Whitecotton fifth. Some of my readers may perhaps be curious to learn how a distinction comes to be made between several, all of whom drive the cross. The distinction is perfectly natural and equitable. Threads are stretched from the uneffaced parts of the once intersecting lines, by means of which the original position of the cross is precisely ascertained. Each bullet-hole being nicely pegged up as it is made, it is easy to ascertain its circumference. To this I believe they usually, if not invariably, measure, where none of the balls touch the cross; but if the cross be driven, they measure from it to the center of the bullet-hole. To make a draw shot, therefore, between two who drive the cross, it is necessary that the center of both balls should pass directly through the cross; a thing that very rarely happens.

The Bite alone remained to shoot. Billy wiped out his rifle carefully, loaded her to the top of his skill, and handed her to me. "Now," said he, "Lyman, draw a fine bead, but not too fine; for Soap-stick bears up her ball well. Take care and don't touch the trigger until you've got your bead; for she's spring-trigger'd and goes mighty easy: but you hold her to the place you want her, and if [Pg 680] she don't go there, dang old Roper."

I took hold of Soap-stick, and lapsed immediately into the most hopeless despair. I am sure I never handled as heavy a gun in all my life. "Why, Billy," said I, "you little mortal, you! what do you use such a gun as this for?"

"Look at the bull's-eye yonder!" said he.

"True," said I, "but *I* can't shoot her; it is impossible."

"Go 'long, you old coon!" said Billy; "I see what you're at;" intimating that all this was merely to make the coming shot the more remarkable. "Daddy's little boy don't shoot anything but the old Soap-stick here to-day, I know."

The judges, I knew, were becoming impatient, and, withal, my situation was growing more embarrassing every second; so I e'en resolved to try the Soap-stick without further parley.

I stepped out, and the most intense interest was excited all around me, and it flashed like electricity around the target, as I judged from the anxious gaze of all in that direction.

Policy dictated that I should fire with a falling rifle, and I adopted this mode; determining to fire as soon as the sights came on a line with the diamond, *bead* or no *bead*. Accordingly, I commenced lowering old Soap-stick; but, in spite of all my muscular powers, she was strictly obedient to the laws of gravitation, and came down with a uniformly accelerated velocity. Before I could arrest her downward flight, she had not only passed the target, but was making rapid encroachments on my own toes.

"Why, he's the weakest man in the arms I ever seed," said one, in a half whisper. [Pg 681]

"It's only his fun," said Billy; "I know him."

"It may be fun," said the other, "but it looks mightily like yearnest to a man up a tree."

I now, of course, determined to reverse the mode of firing, and put forth all my physical energies to raise Soap-stick to the mark. The effort silenced Billy, and gave tongue to all his companions. I had just strength enough to master Soap-stick's obstinate proclivity, and, consequently, my nerves began to exhibit palpable signs of distress with her first imperceptible movement upward. A trembling commenced in my arms; increased, and extended rapidly to my body and lower extremities; so that, by the time that I had brought Soap-stick up to the mark, I was shaking from head to foot, exactly like a man under the continued action of a strong galvanic battery. In the meantime my friends gave vent to their feelings freely.

"I swear poin' blank," said one, "that man can't shoot."

"He used to shoot well," said another; "but can't now, nor never could."

"You better git away from 'bout that mark!" bawled a third, "for I'll be dod darned if Broadcloth don't give some of you the dry gripes if you stand too close thare."

"The stranger's got the peedoddles," said a fourth, with humorous gravity.

"If he had bullets enough in his gun, he'd shoot a ring round the bull's-eye big as a spinning wheel," said a fifth.

As soon as I found that Soap-stick was high enough (for I made no farther use of the sights than to ascertain this fact), I pulled trigger, and off she went. I have always found that the most creditable way of relieving myself of derision was to heighten it myself as much as possible. It is a good plan in all circles, but by far the best which can be adopted among the plain, rough farmers of the country. Accordingly, I brought old Soap-stick to an order with an air of triumph; tipped [Pg 682] Billy a wink, and observed, "Now, Billy, 's your time to make your fortune. Bet 'em two to one that I've knocked out the cross."

"No, I'll be dod blamed if I do," said Billy; "but I'll bet you two to one that you hain't hit the plank."

"Ah, Billy," said I, "I was joking about *betting*, for I never bet; nor would I have you to bet: indeed, I do not feel exactly right in shooting for beef; for it is a species of gaming at last: but I'll say this much: if that cross isn't knocked out, I'll never shoot for beef again as long as I live."

"By dod," said Mealy Whitecotton, "you'll lose no great things at that."

"Well," said I, "I reckon I know a little about wabbling. Is it possible, Billy, a man who shoots as well as you do, never practiced shooting with the double wabble? It's the greatest take in the world when you learn to drive the cross with it. Another sort for getting bets upon, to the drop-sight, with a single wabble! And the Soap-stick's the very yarn for it."

"Tell you what, stranger," said one, "you're too hard for us all here. We never *hearn* o' that sort o' shoot'n' in these parts."

"Well," returned I, "you've seen it now, and I'm the boy that can do it."

The judges were now approaching with the target, and a singular combination of circumstances had kept all my party in utter ignorance of the result of my shot. Those about the target had been prepared by Billy Curlew for a great shot from me; their expectations had received assurance from the courtesy which had been extended to me; and nothing had happened to disappoint them but the single caution to them against the "dry gripes," which was as likely to have been given in irony as in earnest; for my agonies under the weight of the Soap-stick were either imperceptible [Pg 683] to them at the distance of sixty yards, or, being visible, were taken as the flourishes of an expert who wished to "astonish the natives." The other party did not think the direction of my ball worth the trouble of a question; or if they did, my airs and harangue had put the thought to flight before it was delivered. Consequently, they were all transfixed with astonishment when the judges presented the target to them, and gravely observed, "It's only second best, after all the fuss."

"Second best!" exclaimed I, with uncontrollable transports.

The whole of my party rushed to the target to have the evidence of their senses before they would believe the report; but most marvelous fortune decreed that it should be true. Their incredulity and astonishment were most fortunate for me; for they blinded my hearers to the real feelings with which the exclamation was uttered, and allowed me sufficient time to prepare myself for making the best use of what I had said before with a very different object.

"Second best!" reiterated I, with an air of despondency, as the company turned from the target to me. "Second best, only? Here, Billy, my son, take the old Soap-stick; she's a good piece, but I'm getting too old and dim-sighted to shoot a rifle, especially with the drop-sight and double wabbles."

"Why, good Lord a'mighty!" said Billy, with a look that baffles all description, "an't you *driv* the cross?"

"Oh, driv the cross!" rejoined I, carelessly. "What's that! Just look where my ball is! I do believe in my soul its center is a full quarter of an inch from the cross. I wanted to lay the center of the bullet upon the cross, just as if you'd put it there with your fingers." [Pg 684]

Several received this palaver with a contemptuous but very appropriate curl of the nose; and Mealy Whitecotton offered to bet a half pint "that I couldn't do the like again with no sort o' wabbles, he didn't care what." But I had already fortified myself on this quarter of my morality. A decided majority, however, were clearly of opinion that I was serious; and they regarded me as one of the wonders of the world. Billy increased the majority by now coming out fully with my history, as he had received it from his father; to which I listened with quite as much astonishment as any other one of his hearers. He begged me to go home with him for the night, or, as he expressed it, "to go home with him and swap lies that night, and it shouldn't cost me a cent;" the true reading of which is, that if I would go home with him, and give him the pleasure of an evening's chat about old times, his house should be as free to me as my own. But I could not accept his hospitality without retracing five or six miles of the road which I had already passed, and therefore I declined it.

"Well, if you won't go, what must I tell the old woman for you, for she'll be mighty glad to hear from the boy that won the silk handkerchief for her, and I expect she'll lick me for not bringing you home with me."

"Tell her," said I, "that I send her a quarter of beef which I won, as I did the handkerchief, by nothing in the world but mere good luck."

"Hold your jaw, Lyman!" said Billy; "I an't a gwine to tell the old woman any such lies; for she's a reg'lar built Meth'dist."

As I turned to depart, "Stop a minute, stranger!" said one: then lowering his voice to a confidential but distinctly audible tone, "What you offering for?" continued he. I assured him I was not a candidate for anything; that I had accidentally fallen in with Billy Curlew, who begged [Pg 685] me to come with him to the shooting-match, and, as it lay right on my road, I had stopped. "Oh," said he, with a conciliatory nod, "if you're up for anything, you needn't be mealy-mouthed about it 'fore us boys; for we'll all go in for you here up to the handle."

"Yes," said Billy, "dang old Roper if we don't go our death for you, no matter who offers. If ever you come out for anything, Lyman, jist let the boys of Upper Hogthief know it, and they'll go for you to the hilt, against creation, tit or no tit, that's the *tatur*."

I thanked them, kindly, but repeated my assurances. The reader will not suppose that the district took its name from the character of the inhabitants. In almost every county in the state there is some spot or district which bears a contemptuous appellation, usually derived from local rivalships, or from a single accidental circumstance. [Pg 686]

DESOLATION[1]

BY TOM MASSON

Somewhat back from the village street
Stands the old-fashioned country seat.
Across its antique portico
Tall poplar trees their shadows throw.
And there throughout the livelong day,
Jemima plays the pi-a-na.
Do, re, mi,
Mi, re, do.

In the front parlor, there it stands,
And there Jemima plies her hands,
While her papa beneath his cloak,
Mutters and groans: "This is no joke!"
And swears to himself and sighs, alas!
With sorrowful voice to all who pass.
Do, re, mi,
Mi, re, do.

Through days of death and days of birth
She plays as if she owned the earth.
Through every swift vicissitude
She drums as if it did her good,
And still she sits from morn till night
And plunks away with main and might,
Do, re, mi,
Mi, re, do.

In that mansion used to be [Pg 687]
Free-hearted hospitality;
But that was many years before
Jemima monkeyed with the score.
When she began her daily plunk,
Into their graves the neighbors sunk.
Do, re, mi,
Mi, re, do.

To other worlds they've long since fled,
All thankful that they're safely dead.
They stood the racket while alive
Until Jemima rose at five.
And then they laid their burdens down,
And one and all they skipped the town.
Do, re, mi,
Mi, re, do.

CRANKIDOXOLOGY[2]

BY WALLACE IRWIN

(*Being a Mental Attitude from Bernard Pshaw*)

It's wrong to be thoroughly human,
It's stupid alone to be good,
And why should the "virtuous" woman
Continue to do as she should?
(It's stupid to do as you should!)

For I'd rather be famous than pleasant,
I'd rather be rude than polite;
It's easy to sneer
When you're witty and queer,
And I'd rather be Clever than Right.

I'm bored by mere Shakespeare and Milton,
Though Hubbard compels me to rave;
If *I* should lay laurels to wilt on
That foggy Shakespearean grave,
How William would squirm in his grave!

For I'd rather be Pshaw than be Shakespeare,
I'd rather be Candid than Wise;
And the way I amuse
Is to roundly abuse
The Public I feign to despise.

I'm a Socialist, loving my brother
In quite an original way,
With my maxim, "Detest One Another"—
Though, faith, I don't mean what I say.
(It's beastly to mean what you say!)

For I'm fonder of talk than of Husbands,
And I'm fonder of fads than of Wives,
So I say unto you,
If you don't as you do
You will do as you don't all your lives.

My "Candida's" ruddy as coral,
With thoughts quite too awfully plain—
If folks would just call me Immoral
I'd feel that I'd not lived in vain.
(It's nasty, this living in vain!)

For I'd rather be Martyred than Married,
I'd rather be tempted than tamed,
And if *I* had my way
(At least, so I say)
All Babes would be labeled, "Unclaimed."

I'm an epigrammatical Moses,
Whose humorous tablets of stone
Condemn affectations and poses—
Excepting a few of my own.
(I dote on a few of my own.)

For my method of booming the market
When Managers ask for a play
Is to say on a bluff,
"I'm so fond of my stuff
That I don't want it acted—go 'way!"

I'm the club-ladies' Topic of Topics,
Where solemn discussions are spent
In struggles as hot as the tropics,
Attempting to find what I meant.
(*I* never can tell what I meant!)

For it's fun to make bosh of the Gospel,

And it's sport to make gospel of Bosh,
While divorcées hurrah
For the Sayings of Pshaw
And his sub-psychological Josh.

[Pg 691]

MY HONEY, MY LOVE

BY JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

Hit's a mighty fur ways up de Far'well Lane,
My honey, my love!
You may ax Mister Crow, you may ax Mr. Crane,
My honey, my love!
Dey'll make you a bow, en dey'll tell you de same,
My honey, my love!
Hit's a mighty fur ways fer ter go in de night,
My honey, my love!
My honey, my love, my heart's delight—
My honey, my love!

Mister Mink, he creeps twel he wake up de snipe,
My honey, my love!
Mister Bull-Frog holler, Come alight my pipe!
My honey, my love!
En de Pa'tridge ax, Ain't yo' peas ripe?
My honey, my love!
Better not walk erlong dar much atter night,
My honey, my love!
My honey, my love, my heart's delight—
My honey, my love!

De Bully-Bat fly mighty close ter de groun',
My honey, my love!
Mister Fox, he coax 'er, Do come down!
My honey, my love!

[Pg 692]

Mister Coon, he rack all 'roun' en 'roun',
My honey, my love!
In de darkes' night, oh, de nigger, he's a sight!
My honey, my love!
My honey, my love, my heart's delight—
My honey, my love!

Oh, flee, Miss Nancy, flee ter my knee,
My honey, my love!
'Lev'n big, fat coons liv' in one tree,
My honey, my love!
Oh, ladies all, won't you marry me?
My honey, my love!
Tu'n lef, tu'n right, we'll dance all night,
My honey, my love!
My honey, my love, my heart's delight—
My honey, my love!

De big Owl holler en cry fer his mate,
My honey, my love!
Oh, don't stay long! Oh, don't stay late!
My honey, my love!
Hit ain't so mighty fur ter de Good-by Gate,
My honey, my love!
Whar we all got ter go w'en we sing out de night,
My honey, my love!
My honey, my love, my heart's delight—
My honey, my love!

[Pg 693]

THE GRAND OPERA

BY BILLY BAXTER

Well, I decided to get into my class, so I started for the smoking-room. I hadn't gone three feet till some woman held me up and began telling me how she adored Grand Opera. I didn't even reply. I fled madly, and remained hidden in the tall grasses of the smoking-room until it was time to go home. Jim, should any one ever tell you that Grand Opera is all right, he is either trying to even up or he is not a true friend. I was over in New York with the family last winter, and they made me go with them to *Die Walkure* at the Metropolitan Opera House. When I got the tickets I asked the man's advice as to the best location. He said that all true lovers of music occupied the dress-circle and balconies, and that he had some good center dress-circle seats at three bones per. Here's a tip, Jim. If the box man ever hands you that true-lover game, just reach in through the little hole and soak him in the solar for me. It's coming to him. I'll give you my word of honor we were a quarter of a mile from the stage. We went up in an elevator, were shown to our seats, and who was right behind us but my old pal, Bud Hathaway, from Chicago. Bud had his two sisters with him, and he gave me one sad look, which said plainer than words, "So you're up against it, too, eh!" We introduced all hands around, and about nine o'clock the curtain went up. After we had waited fully ten minutes, out came a big, fat, greasy looking Dago with nothing on but a bear [Pg 694] robe. He went over to the side of the stage and sat down on a bum rock. It was plainly to be seen, even from my true lovers' seat, that his bearlets was sorer than a dog about something. Presently in came a woman, and none of the true lovers seemed to know who she was. Some said it was Melba, others Nordica. Bud and I decided that it was May Irwin. We were mistaken, though, as Irwin has this woman lashed to the mast at any time or place. As soon as Mike the Dago espied the dame it was all off. He rushed and drove a straight-arm jab, which had it reached would have given him the purse. But shifty Sadie wasn't there. She ducked, side-stepped, and landed a clever half-arm hook, which seemed to stun the big fellow. They clinched, and swayed back and forth, growling continually, while the orchestra played this trembly Eliza-crossing-the-ice music. Jim, I'm not swelling this a bit. On the level, it happened just as I write it. All of a sudden some one seemed to win. They broke away, and ran wildly to the front of the stage with their arms outstretched, yelling to beat three of a kind. The band cut loose something fierce. The leader tore out about $9.00 worth of hair, and acted generally as though he had bats in his belfry. I thought sure the place would be pinched. It reminded me of Thirsty Thornton's dance-hall out in Merrill, Wisconsin, when the Silent Swede used to start a general survival of the fittest every time Mamie the Mink danced twice in succession with the young fellow from Albany, whose father owned the big mill up Rough River. Of course, this audience was perfectly orderly, and showed no intention whatever of cutting in, and there were no chairs or glasses in the air, but I am forced to admit that the opera had Thornton's faded for noise. I asked Bud what the trouble was, and he answered that I could search him. The audience apparently went wild. Everybody said "Simply [Pg 695] sublime!" "Isn't it grand?" "Perfectly superb!" "Bravo!" etc.; not because they really enjoyed it, but merely because they thought it was the proper thing to do. After that for three solid hours Rough House Mike and Shifty Sadie seemed to be apologizing to the audience for their disgraceful street brawl, which was honestly the only good thing in the show. Along about twelve o'clock I thought I would talk over old times with Bud, but when I turned his way I found my tired and trusty comrade "Asleep at the Switch."

At the finish, the woman next to me, who seemed to be on, said that the main lady was dying. After it was too late, Mike seemed kind of sorry. He must have give her the knife or the drops, because there wasn't a minute that he could look in on her according to the rules. He laid her out on the bum rock, they set off a lot of red fire for some unknown reason, and the curtain dropped at 12:25. Never again for my money. Far be it from me knocking, but any time I want noise I'll take to a boiler-shop or a Union Station, where I can understand what's coming off. I'm for a good-mother show. Do you remember *The White Slave*, Jim? Well, that's me. Wasn't it immense where the main lady spurned the leering villain's gold and exclaimed with flashing eye, "Rags are royal raiment when worn for virtue's sake." Great! *The White Slave* had *Die Walkure* beaten to a pulp, and they don't get to you for three cases gate-money, either. [Pg 696]

IN A STATE OF SIN[3]

BY OWEN WISTER

Judge and Mrs. Henry, Molly Wood, and two strangers, a lady and a gentleman, were the party which had been driving in the large three-seated wagon. They had seemed a merry party. But as I came within hearing of their talk, it was a fragment of the minister's sonority which reached me first:

"... more opportunity for them to have the benefit of hearing frequent sermons," was the sentence I heard him bring to completion.

"Yes, to be sure, sir." Judge Henry gave me (it almost seemed) additional warmth of welcome for arriving to break up the present discourse. "Let me introduce you to the Rev. Dr. Alexander MacBride. Doctor, another guest we have been hoping for about this time," was my host's cordial explanation to him of me. There remained the gentleman with his wife from New York, and to these I made my final bows. But I had not broken up the discourse.

"We may be said to have met already." Dr. MacBride had fixed upon me his full, mastering eye; and it occurred to me that if they had policemen in heaven, he would be at least a centurion in

the force. But he did not mean to be unpleasant; it was only that in a mind full of matters less worldly, pleasure was left out. "I observed your friend was a skilful horseman," he continued. "I was saying to Judge Henry that I could wish such skilful horsemen might ride to a church upon [Pg 697] the Sabbath. A church, that is, of right doctrine, where they would have opportunity to hear frequent sermons."

"Yes," said Judge Henry, "yes. It would be a good thing."

Mrs. Henry, with some murmur about the kitchen, here went into the house.

"I was informed," Dr. MacBride held the rest of us, "before undertaking my journey that I should find a desolate and mainly godless country. But nobody gave me to understand that from Medicine Bow I was to drive three hundred miles and pass no church of any faith."

The Judge explained that there had been a few a long way to the right and left of him. "Still," he conceded, "you are quite right. But don't forget that this is the newest part of a new world."

"Judge," said his wife, coming to the door, "how can you keep them standing in the dust with your talking?"

This most efficiently did break up the discourse. As our little party, with the smiles and the polite holdings back of new acquaintanceship, moved into the house, the Judge detained me behind all of them long enough to whisper dolorously, "He's going to stay a whole week."

I had hopes that he would not stay a whole week when I presently learned of the crowded arrangements which our hosts, with many hospitable apologies, disclosed to us. They were delighted to have us, but they hadn't foreseen that we should all be simultaneous. The foreman's house had been prepared for two of us, and did we mind? The two of us were Dr. MacBride and myself; and I expected him to mind. But I wronged him grossly. It would be much better, he assured Mrs. Henry, than straw in a stable, which he had tried several times, and was quite ready for. So I saw that though he kept his vigorous body clean when he could, he cared nothing for it [Pg 698] in the face of his mission. How the foreman and his wife relished being turned out during a week for a missionary and myself was not my concern, although while he and I made ready for supper over there, it struck me as hard on them. The room with its two cots and furniture was as nice as possible; and we closed the door upon the adjoining room, which, however, seemed also untenanted.

Mrs. Henry gave us a meal so good that I have remembered it, and her husband, the Judge, strove his best that we should eat it in merriment. He poured out his anecdotes like wine, and we should have quickly warmed to them; but Dr. MacBride sat among us, giving occasional heavy ha-ha's, which produced, as Miss Molly Wood whispered to me, a "dreadfully cavernous effect." Was it his sermon, we wondered, that he was thinking over? I told her of the copious sheaf of them I had seen him pull from his wallet over at the foreman's. "Goodness!" said she. "Then are we to hear one every evening?" This I doubted; he had probably been picking one out suitable for the occasion. "Putting his best foot foremost," was her comment; "I suppose they have best feet, like the rest of us." Then she grew delightfully sharp. "Do you know, when I first heard him I thought his voice was hearty. But if you listen, you'll find it's merely militant. He never really meets you with it. He's off on his hill watching the battle-field the whole time."

"He will find a hardened pagan here."

"Judge Henry?"

"Oh, no! The wild man you're taming. He's brought you *Kenilworth* safe back."

She was smooth. "Oh, as for taming him! But don't you find him intelligent?"

Suddenly I somehow knew that she didn't want to tame him. But what did she want to do? The [Pg 699] thought of her had made him blush this afternoon. No thought of him made her blush this evening.

A great laugh from the rest of the company made me aware that the Judge had consummated his tale of the "Sole Survivor."

"And so," he finished, "they all went off as mad as hops because it hadn't been a massacre." Mr. and Mrs. Ogden—they were the New Yorkers—gave this story much applause, and Dr. MacBride half a minute later laid his "ha-ha," like a heavy stone, upon the gaiety.

"I'll never be able to stand seven sermons," said Miss Wood to me.

"Do you often have these visitations?" Ogden inquired of Judge Henry. Our host was giving us whisky in his office, and Dr. MacBride, while we smoked apart from the ladies, had repaired to his quarters in the foreman's house previous to the service which he was shortly to hold.

The Judge laughed. "They come now and then through the year. I like the bishop to come. And the men always like it. But I fear our friend will scarcely please them so well."

"You don't mean they'll—"

"Oh, no. They'll keep quiet. The fact is, they have a good deal better manners than he has, if he only knew it. They'll be able to bear him. But as for any good he'll do—"

"I doubt if he knows a word of science," said I, musing about the Doctor.

"Science! He doesn't know what Christianity is yet. I've entertained many guests, but none—The whole secret," broke off Judge Henry, "lies in the way you treat people. As soon as you treat men as your brothers, they are ready to acknowledge you—if you deserve it—as their superior. That's the whole bottom of Christianity, and that's what our missionary will never know." [Pg 700]

Thunder sat imminent upon the missionary's brow. Many were to be at his mercy soon. But for us he had sunshine still. "I am truly sorry to be turning you upside down," he said importantly. "But it seems the best place for my service." He spoke of the table pushed back and the chairs gathered in the hall, where the storm would presently break upon the congregation. "Eight-thirty?" he inquired.

This was the hour appointed, and it was only twenty minutes off. We threw the unsmoked fractions of our cigars away, and returned to offer our services to the ladies. This amused the ladies. They had done without us. All was ready in the hall.

"We got the cook to help us," Mrs. Ogden told me, "so as not to disturb your cigars. In spite of the cow-boys, I still recognize my own country."

"In the cook?" I rather densely asked.

"Oh, no! I don't have a Chinaman. It's in the length of after-dinner cigars."

"Had you been smoking," I returned, "you would have found them short this evening."

"You make it worse," said the lady; "we have had nothing but Dr. MacBride."

"We'll share him with you now," I exclaimed.

"Has he announced his text? I've got one for him," said Molly Wood, joining us. She stood on tiptoe and spoke it comically in our ears. "'I said in my haste, All men are liars.'" This made us merry as we stood among the chairs in the congested hall. [Pg 701]

I left the ladies, and sought the bunk house. I had heard the cheers, but I was curious also to see the men, and how they were taking it. There was but little for the eye. There was much noise in the room. They were getting ready to come to church,—brushing their hair, shaving, and making themselves clean, amid talk occasionally profane and continuously diverting.

"Well, I'm a Christian, anyway," one declared.

"I'm a Mormon, I guess," said another.

"I belong to the Knights of Pythias," said a third.

"I'm a Mohammedist," said a fourth; "I hope I ain't goin' to hear nothin' to shock me."

What with my feelings at Scipio's discretion, and my human curiosity, I was not in that mood which best profits from a sermon. Yet even though my expectations had been cruelly left quivering in mid air, I was not sure how much I really wanted to "keep around." You will therefore understand how Dr. MacBride was able to make a prayer and to read Scripture without my being conscious of a word that he had uttered. It was when I saw him opening the manuscript of his sermon that I suddenly remembered I was sitting, so to speak, in church, and began once more to think of the preacher and his congregation. Our chairs were in the front line, of course; but, being next the wall, I could easily see the cow-boys behind me. They were perfectly decorous. If Mrs. Ogden had looked for pistols, dare-devil attitudes, and so forth, she must have been greatly disappointed. Except for their weather-beaten cheeks and eyes, they were simply American young men with mustaches and without, and might have been sitting, say, in Danbury, Connecticut. Even Trampas merged quietly with the general placidity. The Virginian did not, to be sure, look like Danbury, and his frame and his features showed out of the mass; but his eyes were upon Dr. MacBride with a creamlike propriety. [Pg 702]

Our missionary did not choose Miss Wood's text. He made his selection from another of the Psalms; and when it came, I did not dare to look at anybody; I was much nearer unseemly conduct than the cow-boys. Dr. MacBride gave us his text sonorously, "'They are altogether become filthy; There is none of them that doeth good, no, not one.'" His eye showed us plainly that present company was not excepted from this. He repeated the text once more, then, launching upon his discourse, gave none of us a ray of hope.

I had heard it all often before; but preached to cow-boys it took on a new glare of untimeliness, of grotesque obsoleteness—as if some one should say, "Let me persuade you to admire woman," and forthwith hold out her bleached bones to you. The cow-boys were told that not only they could do no good, but that if they did contrive to, it would not help them. Nay, more: not only honest deeds availed them nothing, but even if they accepted this especial creed which was being explained to them as necessary for salvation, still it might not save them. Their sin was indeed the cause of their damnation, yet, keeping from sin, they might nevertheless be lost. It had all been settled for

them not only before they were born, but before Adam was shaped. Having told them this, he invited them to glorify the Creator of the scheme. Even if damned, they must praise the person who had made them expressly for damnation. That is what I heard him prove by logic to these cow-boys. Stone upon stone he built the black cellar of his theology, leaving out its beautiful park and the sunshine of its garden. He did not tell them the splendor of its past, the noble fortress for good that it had been, how its tonic had strengthened generations of their fathers. No; wrath he [Pg 703] spoke of, and never once of love. It was the bishop's way, I knew well, to hold cow-boys by homely talk of their special hardships and temptations. And when they fell he spoke to them of forgiveness and brought them encouragement. But Dr. MacBride never thought once of the lives of these waifs. Like himself, like all mankind, they were invisible dots in creation; like him, they were to feel as nothing, to be swept up in the potent heat of his faith. So he thrust out to them none of the sweet but all the bitter of his creed, naked and stern as iron. Dogma was his all in all, and poor humanity was nothing but flesh for its canons.

Thus to kill what chance he had for being of use seemed to me more deplorable than it did evidently to them. Their attention merely wandered. Three hundred years ago they would have been frightened; but not in this electric day. I saw Scipio stifling a smile when it came to the doctrine of original sin. "We know of its truth," said Dr. MacBride, "from the severe troubles and distresses to which infants are liable, and from death passing upon them before they are capable of sinning." Yet I knew he was a good man; and I also knew that if a missionary is to be tactless, he might almost as well be bad.

I said their attention wandered, but I forgot the Virginian. At first his attitude might have been mere propriety. One can look respectfully at a preacher and be internally breaking all the commandments. But even with the text I saw real attention light in the Virginian's eye. And keeping track of the concentration that grew on him with each minute made the sermon short for me. He missed nothing. Before the end his gaze at the preacher had become swerveless. Was he convert or critic? Convert was incredible. Thus was an hour passed before I had thought of time. [Pg 704]

When it was over we took it variously. The preacher was genial and spoke of having now broken ground for the lessons that he hoped to instil. He discoursed for a while about trout-fishing and about the rumored uneasiness of the Indians northward where he was going. It was plain that his personal safety never gave him a thought. He soon bade us good night. The Ogdens shrugged their shoulders and were amused. That was their way of taking it. Dr. MacBride sat too heavily on the Judge's shoulders for him to shrug them. As a leading citizen in the Territory he kept open house for all comers. Policy and good nature made him bid welcome a wide variety of travelers. The cow-boy out of employment found bed and a meal for himself and his horse, and missionaries had before now been well received at Sunk Creek Ranch.

"I suppose I'll have to take him fishing," said the Judge ruefully.

"Yes, my dear," said his wife, "you will. And I shall have to make his tea for six days."

"Otherwise," Ogden suggested, "it might be reported that you were enemies of religion."

"That's about it," said the Judge. "I can get on with most people. But elephants depress me."

So we named the Doctor "Jumbo," and I departed to my quarters.

At the bunk house, the comments were similar but more highly salted. The men were going to bed. In spite of their outward decorum at the service, they had not liked to be told that they were "altogether become filthy." It was easy to call names; they could do that themselves. And they appealed to me, several speaking at once, like a concerted piece at the opera: "Say, do you believe babies go to hell?"—"Ah, of course he don't."—"There ain't no hereafter, anyway."—"Ain't [Pg 705] there?"—"Who told y'u?"—"Same man as told the preacher we were all a sifted set of sons-of-guns."—"Well, I'm going to stay a Mormon."—"Well, I'm going to quit fleeing from temptation."—"That's so! Better get it in the neck after a good time than a poor one." And so forth. Their wit was not extreme, yet I should like Dr. MacBride to have heard it. One fellow put his natural soul pretty well into words, "If I happened to learn what they had predestinated me to do, I'd do the other thing, just to show 'em!"

And Trampas? And the Virginian? They were out of it. The Virginian had gone straight to his new abode. Trampas lay in his bed, not asleep, and sullen as ever.

"He ain't got religion this trip," said Scipio to me.

"Did his new foreman get it?" I asked.

"Huh! It would spoil him. You keep around, that's all. Keep around."

Scipio was not to be probed; and I went, still baffled, to my repose.

No light burned in the cabin as I approached its door.

The Virginian's room was quiet and dark; and that Dr. MacBride slumbered was plainly audible to me, even before I entered. Go fishing with him! I thought, as I undressed. And I selfishly decided that the Judge might have this privilege entirely to himself. Sleep came to me fairly soon, in spite of the Doctor. I was wakened from it by my bed's being jolted—not a pleasant thing that night. I must have started. And it was the quiet voice of the Virginian that told me he was sorry to have accidentally disturbed me. This disturbed me a good deal more. But his steps did not go to the

bunk house, as my sensational mind had suggested. He was not wearing much, and in the dimness he seemed taller than common. I next made out that he was bending over Dr. MacBride. [Pg 706] The divine at last sprang upright.

"I am armed," he said. "Take care. Who are you?"

"You can lay down your gun, seh. I feel like my spirit was going to bear witness. I feel like I might get an enlightening."

He was using some of the missionary's own language. The baffling I had been treated to by Scipio melted to nothing in this. Did living men petrify, I should have changed to mineral between the sheets. The Doctor got out of bed, lighted his lamp, and found a book; and the two retired into the Virginian's room, where I could hear the exhortations as I lay amazed. In time the Doctor returned, blew out his lamp, and settled himself. I had been very much awake, but was nearly gone to sleep again, when the door creaked and the Virginian stood by the Doctor's side.

"Are you awake, seh?"

"What? What's that? What is it?"

"Excuse me, seh. The enemy is winning on me. I'm feeling less inward opposition to sin."

The lamp was lighted, and I listened to some further exhortations. They must have taken half an hour. When the Doctor was in bed again, I thought that I heard him sigh. This upset my composure in the dark; but I lay face downward in the pillow, and the Doctor was soon again snoring. I envied him for a while his faculty of easy sleep. But I must have dropped off myself; for it was the lamp in my eyes that now waked me as he came back for the third time from the Virginian's room. Before blowing the light out he looked at his watch, and thereupon I inquired the hour of him.

"Three," said he.

I could not sleep any more now, and I lay watching the darkness. [Pg 707]

"I'm afeard to be alone!" said the Virginian's voice presently in the next room. "I'm afeard." There was a short pause, and then he shouted very loud, "I'm losin' my desire afteh the sincere milk of the Word!"

"What? What's that? What?" The Doctor's cot gave a great crack as he started up listening, and I put my face deep in the pillow.

"I'm afeard! I'm afeard! Sin has quit being bitter in my belly."

"Courage, my good man." The Doctor was out of bed with his lamp again, and the door shut behind him. Between them they made it long this time. I saw the window become gray; then the corners of the furniture grow visible; and outside, the dry chorus of the blackbirds began to fill the dawn. To these the sounds of chickens and impatient hoofs in the stable were added, and some cow wandered by loudly calling for her calf. Next, some one whistling passed near and grew distant. But although the cold hue that I lay staring at through the window warmed and changed, the Doctor continued working hard over his patient in the next room. Only a word here and there was distinct; but it was plain from the Virginian's fewer remarks that the sin in his belly was alarming him less. Yes, they made this time long. But it proved, indeed, the last one. And though some sort of catastrophe was bound to fall upon us, it was myself who precipitated the thing that did happen.

Day was wholly come. I looked at my own watch, and it was six. I had been about seven hours in my bed, and the Doctor had been about seven hours out of his. The door opened, and he came in with his book and lamp. He seemed to be shivering a little, and I saw him cast a longing eye at his couch. But the Virginian followed him even as he blew out the now quite superfluous light. They made a noticeable couple in their underclothes; the Virginian with his lean racehorse [Pg 708] shanks running to a point at his ankle, and the Doctor with his stomach and his fat sedentary calves.

"You'll be going to breakfast and the ladies, seh, pretty soon," said the Virginian, with a chastened voice. "But I'll worry through the day somehow without y'u. And to-night you can turn your wolf loose on me again."

Once more it was no use. My face was deep in the pillow, but I made sounds as of a hen who has laid an egg. It broke on the Doctor with a total instantaneous smash, quite like an egg.

He tried to speak calmly. "This is a disgrace. An infamous disgrace. Never in my life have I—" Words forsook him, and his face grew redder. "Never in my life—" He stopped again, because, at the sight of him being dignified in his red drawers, I was making the noise of a dozen hens. It was suddenly too much for the Virginian. He hastened into his room, and there sank on the floor with his head in his hands. The Doctor immediately slammed the door upon him, and this rendered me easily fit for a lunatic asylum. I cried into my pillow, and wondered if the Doctor would come and kill me. But he took no notice of me whatever. I could hear the Virginian's convulsions through the door, and also the Doctor furiously making his toilet within three feet of my head; and I lay quite still with my face the other way, for I was really afraid to look at him. When I heard him walk to the door in his boots, I ventured to peep; and there he was, going out with his bag in his hand. As I still continued to lie, weak and sore, and with a mind that had ceased all operation, the

Virginian's door opened. He was clean and dressed and decent, but the devil still sported in his eye. I have never seen a creature more irresistibly handsome. [Pg 709]

Then my mind worked again. "You've gone and done it," said I. "He's packed his valise. He'll not sleep here."

The Virginian looked quickly out of the door. "Why, he's leavin' us!" he exclaimed. "Drivin' away right now in his little old buggy!" He turned to me, and our eyes met solemnly over this large fact. I thought that I perceived the faintest tincture of dismay in the features of Judge Henry's new, responsible, trusty foreman. This was the first act of his administration. Once again he looked out at the departing missionary. "Well," he vindictively stated, "I cert'nly ain't goin' to run afteh him." And he looked at me again.

"Do you suppose the Judge knows?" I inquired.

He shook his head. "The windo' shades is all down still oveh yondeh." He paused. "I don't care," he stated, quite as if he had been ten years old. Then he grinned guiltily. "I was mighty respectful to him all night."

"Oh, yes, respectful! Especially when you invited him to turn his wolf loose."

The Virginian gave a joyous gulp. He now came and sat down on the edge of my bed. "I spoke awful good English to him most of the time," said he. "I can, y'u know, when I cinch my attention tight on to it. Yes, I cert'nly spoke a lot o' good English. I didn't understand some of it myself!"

He was now growing frankly pleased with his exploit. He had builded so much better than he knew. He got up and looked out across the crystal world of light. "The Doctor is at one-mile crossing," he said. "He'll get breakfast at the N-lazy-Y." Then he returned and sat again on my bed, and began to give me his real heart. "I never set up for being better than others. Not even to myself. My thoughts ain't apt to travel around making comparisons. And I shouldn't wonder if my memory took as much notice of the meannesses I have done as of—as of the other actions. But to [Pg 710] have to sit like a dumb lamb and let a stranger tell y'u for an hour that yu're a hawg and a swine, just after you have acted in a way which them that know the facts would call pretty near white—" [Pg 711]

AN APRIL ARIA

BY R.K. MUNKITTRICK

Now, in the shimmer and sheen that dance on the leaf of the lily,
Causing the bud to explode, and gilding the poodle's chinchilla,
Gladys cavorts with the rake, and hitches the string to the lattice,
While with the trowel she digs, and gladdens the heart of the shanghai.

Now, while the vine twists about the ribs of the cast-iron Pallas,
And, on the zephyr afloat, the halcyon soul of the borax
Blends with the scent of the soap, the brush of the white-washer's flying
E'en as the chicken-hawk flies when ready to light on its quarry.

Out in the leaf-dappled wood the dainty hepatica's blowing,
While the fiend hammers the rug from Ispahan, Lynn, or Woonsocket,
And the grim furnace is out, and over the ash heap and bottles
Capers the "Billy" in glee, becanning his innermost Billy.

[Pg 712]

Now the blue pill is on tap, and likewise the sarsaparilla,
And on the fence and the barn, quite worthy of S. Botticelli,
Frisk the lithe leopard and gnu, in malachite, purple, and crimson,
That we may know at a glance the circus is out on the rampage.

Put then the flannels away and trot out the old linen duster,
Pack the bob-sled in the barn, and bring forth the baseball and racket,
For the spry Spring is on deck, performing her roseate breakdown
Unto the tune of the van that rattles and bangs on the cobbles.

[Pg 713]

MEDITATIONS OF A MARINER[4]

BY WALLACE IRWIN

A-watchin' how the sea behaves
    For hours and hours I sit;
And I know the sea is full o' waves—
    I've often noticed it.

For on the deck each starry night
The wild waves and the tame
I counts and knows 'em all by sight
And some of 'em by name.

And then I thinks a cove like me
Ain't got no right to roam;
For I'm homesick when I puts to sea
And seasick when I'm home.

[Pg 714]

VICTORY[5]

BY TOM MASSON

I turned to the dictionary
For a word I couldn't spell,
And closed the book when I found it
And dipped my pen in the well.

Then I thought to myself, "How was it?"
With a sense of inward pain,
And still 'twas a little doubtful,
So I turned to the book again.

This time I remarked, "How easy!"
As I muttered each letter o'er,
But when I got to the inkwell
'Twas gone, as it went before.

Then I grabbed that dictionary
And I sped its pages through,
And under my nose I put it
With that doubtful word in view.

I held it down with my body
While I gripped that pen quite fast,
And I howled, as I traced each letter:
"I've got you now, *at last*!"

[Pg 715]

THE FAMILY HORSE

BY FREDERICK S. COZZENS

I have bought me a horse. As I had obtained some skill in the *manège* during my younger days, it was a matter of consideration to have a saddle-horse. It surprised me to find good saddle-horses very abundant soon after my consultation with the stage proprietor upon this topic. There were strange saddle-horses to sell almost every day. One man was very candid about his horse: he told me, if his horse had a blemish, he wouldn't wait to be asked about it; he would tell it right out; and, if a man didn't want him then, he needn't take him. He also proposed to put him on trial for sixty days, giving his note for the amount paid him for the horse, to be taken up in case the animal were returned. I asked him what were the principal defects of the horse. He said he'd been fired once, because they thought he was spavined; but there was no more spavin to him than there was to a fresh-laid egg—he was as sound as a dollar. I asked him if he would just state what were the defects of the horse. He answered, that he once had the pink-eye, and added, "now that's honest." I thought so, but proceeded to question him closely. I asked him if he had the bots. He said, not a bot. I asked him if he would go. He said he would go till he dropped down dead; just touch him with a whip, and he'll jump out of his hide. I inquired how old he was. He answered, just eight years, exactly—some men, he said, wanted to make their horses younger than they be; he was willing to speak right out, and own up he was eight years. I asked him if there were any other objections. He said no, except that he was inclined to be a little gay; "but," he added, "he is so kind, a child can drive him with a thread." I asked him if he was a good family horse. He replied that no lady that ever drew rein over him would be willing to part with him. Then I asked him his price. He answered that no man could have bought him for one hundred dollars a month ago, but now he was willing to sell him for seventy-five, on account of having a note to pay. This seemed such a very low price, I was about saying I would take him, when Mrs. Sparrowgrass whispered that I had better *see the horse first*. I confess I was a little afraid of losing my bargain by it, but, out of deference to Mrs. S., I did ask to see the horse before I bought him. He said he would fetch him down. "No man," he added, "ought to buy a horse unless he's saw him." When the horse came down, it struck me that, whatever his qualities might be, his

[Pg 716]

personal appearance was against him. One of his fore legs was shaped like the handle of our punch-ladle, and the remaining three legs, about the fetlock, were slightly bunchy. Besides, he had no tail to brag of; and his back had a very hollow sweep from his high haunches to his low shoulder-blades. I was much pleased, however, with the fondness and pride manifested by his owner, as he held up, by both sides of the bridle, the rather longish head of his horse, surmounting a neck shaped like a pea-pod, and said, in a sort of triumphant voice, "three-quarters blood!" Mrs. Sparrowgrass flushed up a little when she asked me if I intended to purchase *that* horse, and added, that, if I did, she would never want to ride. So I told the man he would not suit me. He answered by suddenly throwing himself upon his stomach across the [Pg 717] backbone of his horse, and then, by turning round as on a pivot, got up a-straddle of him; then he gave his horse a kick in the ribs that caused him to jump out with all his legs, like a frog, and then off went the spoon-legged animal with a gait that was not a trot, nor yet precisely pacing. He rode around our grass plot twice, and then pulled his horse's head up like the cock of a musket. "That," said he, "is *time*." I replied that he did seem to go pretty fast. "Pretty fast!" said his owner. "Well, do you know Mr. ——?" mentioning one of the richest men in our village. I replied that I was acquainted with him. "Well," said he, "you know his horse?" I replied that I had no personal acquaintance with him. "Well," said he, "he's the fastest horse in the county—jist so—I'm willin' to admit it. But do you know I offered to put my horse agin' his to trot? I had no money to put up, or raythe, to spare; but I offered to trot him, horse agin' horse, and the winner to take both horses, and I tell you—*he wouldn't do it!*"

Mrs. Sparrowgrass got a little nervous, and twitched me by the skirt of the coat "Dear," said she, "let him go." I assured her that I would not buy the horse, and told the man firmly I would not buy him. He said, very well—if he didn't suit 'twas no use to keep a-talkin': but he added, he'd be down agin' with another horse, next morning, that belonged to his brother; and if he didn't suit me, then I didn't want a horse. With this remark he rode off....

"It rains very hard," said Mrs. Sparrowgrass, looking out of the window next morning. Sure enough, the rain was sweeping broadcast over the country, and the four Sparrowgrassii were flattening a quartet of noses against the window-panes, believing most faithfully the man would [Pg 718] bring the horse that belonged to his brother, in spite of the elements. It was hoping against hope; no man having a horse to sell will trot him out in a rainstorm, unless he intend to sell him at a bargain—but childhood is so credulous! The succeeding morning was bright, however, and down came the horse. He had been very cleverly groomed, and looked pleasant under the saddle. The man led him back and forth before the door. "There, 'squire, 's as good a hos as ever stood on iron." Mrs. Sparrowgrass asked me what he meant by that. I replied, it was a figurative way of expressing, in horse-talk, that he was as good a horse as ever stood in shoe-leather. "He's a handsome hos, 'squire," said the man. I replied that he did seem to be a good-looking animal; but, said I, "he does not quite come up to the description of a horse I have read." "Whose hos was it?" said he. I replied it was the horse of Adonis. He said he didn't know him; but, he added, "there is so many hosses stolen, that the descriptions are stuck up now pretty common." To put him at his ease (for he seemed to think I suspected him of having stolen the horse), I told him the description I meant had been written some hundreds of years ago by Shakespeare, and repeated it:

> "Round-hooft, short-joynted, fetlocks shag and long,
> Broad breast, full eyes, small head, and nostrils wide,
> High crest, short ears, straight legs, and passing strong,
> Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide."

"'Squire," said he, "that will do for a song, but it ain't no p'ints of a good hos. Trotters nowadays go in all shapes, big heads and little heads, big eyes and little eyes, short ears or long ears, thick tail and no tail; so as they have sound legs, good l'in, good barrel, and good stifle, and wind, 'squire, and speed well, they'll fetch a price. Now, this animal is what I call a hos, 'squire; he's got [Pg 719] the p'ints, he's stylish, he's close-ribbed, a free goer, kind in harness—single or double—a good feeder." I asked him if being a good feeder was a desirable quality. He replied it was; "of course," said he, "if your hos is off his feed, he ain't good for nothin'. But what's the use," he added, "of me tellin' you the p'ints of a good hos? You're a hos man, 'squire: you know—" "It seems to me," said I, "there is something the matter with that left eye." "No, *sir*" said he, and with that he pulled down the horse's head, and, rapidly crooking his forefinger at the suspected organ, said, "see thar—don't wink a bit." "But he should wink," I replied. "Not onless his eye are weak," he said. To satisfy myself, I asked the man to let me take the bridle. He did so, and as soon as I took hold of it, the horse started off in a remarkable retrograde movement, dragging me with him into my best bed of hybrid roses. Finding we were trampling down all the best plants, that had cost at auction from three-and-sixpence to seven shillings apiece, and that the more I pulled, the more he backed, I finally let him have his own way, and jammed him stern-foremost into our largest climbing rose that had been all summer prickling itself, in order to look as much like a vegetable porcupine as possible. This unexpected bit of satire in his rear changed his retrograde movement to a sidelong bound, by which he flirted off half the pots on the balusters, upsetting my gladioluses and tuberoses in the pod, and leaving great splashes of mould, geraniums, and red pottery in the gravel walk. By this time his owner had managed to give him two pretty severe cuts with the whip, which made him unmanageable, so I let him go. We had a pleasant time catching him again, when he got among the Lima-bean poles; but his owner led him back with a [Pg 720] very self-satisfied expression. "Playful, ain't he, 'squire?" I replied that I thought he was, and asked him if it was usual for his horse to play such pranks. He said it was not "You see, 'squire, he feels his oats, and hain't been out of the stable for a month. Use him, and he's as kind as a

kitten." With that he put his foot in the stirrup, and mounted. The animal really looked very well as he moved around the grass-plot, and, as Mrs. Sparrowgrass seemed to fancy him, I took a written guarantee that he was sound, and bought him. What I gave for him is a secret; I have not even told Mrs. Sparrowgrass....

We had passed Chicken Island, and the famous house with the stone gable and the one stone chimney, in which General Washington slept, as he made it a point to sleep in every old stone house in Westchester County, and had gone pretty far on the road, past the cemetery, when Mrs. Sparrowgrass said suddenly, "Dear, what is the matter with your horse?" As I had been telling the children all the stories about the river on the way, I managed to get my head pretty well inside of the carriage, and, at the time she spoke, was keeping a lookout in front with my back. The remark of Mrs. Sparrowgrass induced me to turn about, and I found the new horse behaving in a most unaccountable manner. He was going down hill with his nose almost to the ground, running the wagon first on this side and then on the other. I thought of the remark made by the man, and turning again to Mrs. Sparrowgrass, said, "Playful, isn't he?" The next moment I heard something breaking away in front, and then the rockaway gave a lurch and stood still. Upon examination I found the new horse had tumbled down, broken one shaft, gotten the other through the check-rein so as to bring his head up with a round turn, and besides had managed to [Pg 721] put one of the traces in a single hitch around his off hind leg. So soon as I had taken all the young ones and Mrs. Sparrowgrass out of the rockaway, I set to work to liberate the horse, who was choking very fast with the check-rein. It is unpleasant to get your fishing-line in a tangle when you are in a hurry for bites, but I never saw fishing-line in such a tangle as that harness. However, I set to work with a pen-knife, and cut him out in such a way as to make getting home by our conveyance impossible. When he got up, he was the sleepiest-looking horse I ever saw. "Mrs. Sparrowgrass," said I, "won't you stay here with the children until I go to the nearest farm-house?" Mrs. Sparrowgrass replied that she would. Then I took the horse with me to get him out of the way of the children, and went in search of assistance. The first thing the new horse did when he got about a quarter of a mile from the scene of the accident was to tumble down a bank. Fortunately the bank was not over four feet high, but as I went with him, my trousers were rent in a grievous place. While I was getting the new horse on his feet again, I saw a colored person approaching, who came to my assistance. The first thing he did was to pull out a large jack-knife, and the next thing he did was to open the new horse's mouth and run the blade two or three times inside the new horse's gums. Then the new horse commenced bleeding. "Dah, sah," said the man, shutting up his jack-knife, "ef 't hadn't been for dat yer, your hos would a' bin a goner." "What was the matter with him?" said I. "Oh, he's only jis got de blind-staggers, das all. Say," said he, before I was half indignant enough at the man who had sold me such an animal, "say, ain't your name Sparrowgrass?" I replied that my name was Sparrowgrass. "Oh," said he, "I knows [Pg 722] you, I brung some fowls once down to you place. I heerd about you and your hos. Dats de hos dats got de heaves so bad, heh! heh! You better sell dat hoss." I determined to take his advice, and employed him to lead my purchase to the nearest place where he would be cared for. Then I went back to the rockaway, but met Mrs. Sparrowgrass and the children on the road coming to meet me. She had left a man in charge of the rockaway. When we got to the rockaway we found the man missing, also the whip and one cushion. We got another person to take charge of the rockaway, and had a pleasant walk home by moonlight. I think a moonlight night delicious, upon the Hudson.

Does any person want a horse at a low price? A good stylish-looking animal, close-ribbed, good loin, and good stifle, sound legs, with only the heaves and blind-staggers, and a slight defect in one of his eyes? If at any time he slips his bridle and gets away, you can always approach him by getting on his left side. I will also engage to give a written guarantee that he is sound and kind, signed by the brother of his former owner. [Pg 723]

SONNET OF THE LOVABLE LASS AND THE PLETHORIC DAD[6]

BY J.W. FOLEY

Shee sez shee neavur neavur luvd befoar
shee saw me passen bi hur paws frunt dore
wenn shee wuz hangen on the gait ann i
Lookt foolish att hur wenn ime goen bi.
Uv korse sheed hadd sum boze butt nun thatt sturd
hur hart down too itts deppths until shee hurd
me wissel ann shee saw mi fais. Ann wenn
shee furst saw mee sheed neavur luv agen
shee sedd shee noo. ann iff i shunnd hur eye
sheed be a nunn ann bidd thee wurld good bi.

How swete itt is wenn munnys on thee throan
uv life to bee luvd fore ureself aloan
Ann no thatt u have gott thee powr to stur

a woomans hart wenn u jusst look att hur.
ann o itts sweeter still iff u kan no
hur paw has gott jusst oshuns uv thee doe
Ann u jusst hav to furnish luv ann hee
wil furnish munny fore boath u ann shee.
i wood nott kair iff shee wuz poor butt o
itts dubley swete too no sheez gott thee doe:

[Pg 724]

i wood nott hezzetait iff shee wuz poor
Too marrie hur. togeathur weed endoor
wottever forchun sennt with rite good will
butt sins sheeze rich itts awl thee bettur stil.
ide luv hur in a cottidge jusst thee saim
fore luv is such a holey sakerud flaim
thatt burns like tindur wenn u strike a lite
butt still itt burns moar gloarious ann brite
wenn shee has lotts uv munny ann hur paw
with menny thowsunds is ure fawthernlaw.

[Pg 725]

THE LOVE SONNETS OF A HUSBAND

BY MAURICE SMILEY

I LOVE YOU STILL

You ask me if I love you still, tho' you
And I were wed scarce one short happy year
Agone. How well do I remember, dear,
The day you put your hand in mine, and through
Life's good and ill, tho' skies were gray or blue,
We plighted faith that should not know a fear.
That was the day I kissed away the tear
That trembled on your cheek like morning dew.
Of course I love you—still. You're at your best,
Your perihelion, when you're silentest.
I'd love you as I did, dear heart, of yore,
And still a little more, nor ever tire:
Why, I would love you like a house afire
If you were only still a little more.

SOUL TO SOUL

I think I loved you first when in your eyes
I saw the glad, rapt answer to the spell
Of Paderewski, when we heard him tell
Life's gentler meaning, Love's sweet sacrifice.
The master caught the rhythm of your sighs
And then, inspired, the story rose and fell
And sang of moonlight in a leafy dell,
Of souls' Arcadias and dreaming skies,
Of hearts and hopes and purposes that blend. [Pg 726]
Your bosom heaved beneath the witcheries
That seemed to set a halo on his brow,
And then the message sobbed on to its end.
"That's fine," you murmured, chewing faster; "please
Ask him if he won't play 'Bedelia' now."

YOU SAID THAT YOU WOULD DIE FOR ME

You said that you would die for me, if e'er
That price would buy me happiness. I dreamed
Not of devotion like to that, that seemed
To joy in sacrifice; that, tenderer
Than selfish Life's small immolations were,
Made Love an altar whereupon it deemed
It naught to offer all; a shrine that gleamed
With utter loyalty's red drops. I ne'er
Believed that you were just quite in your head
In saying death would prove Fidelity.
But when I saw the packages of white and red

Your druggist showed me—he's my chum, you see—
I knew you meant, dear heart, just what you said,
When you declared that you would dye for me.

I CAN NOT BEAR YOUR SIGHS

Your smiles, dear one, have all the glad surprise
The sunshine hath for roses; what the day
Brings to the waiting lark. When you are gay
My spirit sings in tune, and sorrow flies
Away. But, dear, I can not bear your sighs
When on my knees you nestle and you lay
Your tear-wet face upon my shoulder. Nay,
I can not help the pain that fills mine eyes.
So, love, whatever cup of Life you drain [Pg 727]
I'll stand for. Send the cashier's check to me.
"Smile" all you want to; smile and smile again.
But as you weigh two hundred pounds, you see
Why, when you cuddle down upon my knee,
It is your size, dear heart, that gives me pain.

A HAND I HELD

The heartless years have many hopes dispelled.
But they have left me one dear night in June.
They've left the still white splendor of the moon.
They've left the mem'ry of a hand I held,
While up thro' all my soul the rapture welled
Of victory. I hear again the croon
Of twilight time, the lullaby that soon
To all the day's glad music shall have swelled.
I hold a hand I never held before,
A hand like which I'll never hold some more.
It was the first time I had ever "called."
'Twas at the club, as we began to leave.
I held five aces, but the dealer balled
The ones that he had planted up his sleeve.

YOUR CHEEK

To feel your hands stray shyly to my head
And flutter down like birds that find their nest,
To see the gentle rise and fall of your dear breast,
To hear again some tender word you said,
To watch the little feet whose dainty tread
Fell light as flowers upon the way they pressed,
To touch again the lips I have caressed—
All these are precious. But your cheek of red
Outlives the mem'ry of all other things.
I'd known you scarce a month, or maybe two; [Pg 728]
I had not yet made up my mind to speak,
You trots out Tifny's catalogue of rings;
Says No. 6 (200 yen) will do.
So I remember best of all your cheek.

WITH ALL YOUR FAULTS

You would not stop this side the farthest line
Of Truth, you said, nor hide one little falsity
From my sweet faith that was too kind to see.
You said a keener vision would divine
All failings later, bare each hid design,
Each poor disguise of loving's treachery
That screened its weaknesses from even me.
How oft you said those cherry lips were mine
Alone. The cherries came in little jars,
I learned. Those auburn locks, I found with pain,
Cost forty plunks, according to the bill
I saw. Those pearly teeth were porcelain.
But I forgive you for each fault that mars.
With all your faults, dear heart, I love you still.

[Pg 729]

HOW WE BOUGHT A SEWIN' MACHINE AND ORGAN

BY JOSIAH ALLEN'S WIFE

We done dretful well last year. The crops come in first-rate, and Josiah had five or six heads of cattle to turn off at a big price. He felt well, and he proposed to me that I should have a sewin' machine. That man,—though he don't coo at me so frequent as he probable would if he had more encouragement in it, is attached to me with a devotedness that is firm and almost cast-iron, and says he, almost tenderly: "Samantha, I will get you a sewin' machine."

Says I, "Josiah, I have got a couple of sewin' machines by me that have run pretty well for upwards of—well it haint necessary to go into particulars, but they have run for considerable of a spell anyway"—says I, "I can git along without another one, though no doubt it would be handy to have round."

But Josiah hung onto that machine. And then he up and said he was goin' to buy a organ. Thomas Jefferson wanted one too. They both seemed sot onto that organ. Tirzah Ann took hern with her of course when she was married, and Josiah said it seemed so awful lonesome without any Tirzah Ann or any music, that it seemed almost as if two girls had married out of the family instead of one. He said money couldn't buy us another Tirzah Ann, but it would buy us a new organ, and he was determined to have one. He said it would be so handy for her to play on when she came [Pg 730] home, and for other company. And then Thomas J. can play quite well; he can play any tune, almost, with one hand, and he sings first-rate, too. He and Tirzah Ann used to sing together a sight; he sings bearatone, and she sulfireno—that is what they call it. They git up so many new-fangled names nowadays, that I think it is most a wonder that I don't make a slip once in a while and git things wrong. I should, if I hadn't got a mind like a ox for strength.

But as I said, Josiah was fairly sot on that machine and organ, and I thought I'd let him have his way. So it got out that we was goin' to buy a sewin' machine, and a organ. Well, we made up our minds on Friday, pretty late in the afternoon, and on Monday forenoon I was a washin', when I heard a knock at the front door, and I wrung my hands out of the water and went and opened it. A slick lookin' feller stood there, and I invited him in and sot him a chair.

"I hear you are talkin' about buyin' a musical instrument," says he.

"No," says I, "we are goin' to buy a organ."

"Well," says he, "I want to advise you, not that I have any interest in it at all, only I don't want to see you so imposed upon. It fairly makes me mad to see a Methodist imposed upon; I lean towards that perswasion myself. Organs are liable to fall to pieces any minute. There haint no dependence on 'em at all, the insides of 'em are liable to break out at any time. If you have any regard for your own welfare and safety, you will buy a piano. Not that I have any interest in advising you, only my devotion to the cause of Right; pianos never wear out."

"Where should we git one?" says I, for I didn't want Josiah to throw away his property.

"Well," says he, "as it happens, I guess I have got one out here in the wagon. I believe I threw one [Pg 731] into the bottom of the wagon this mornin', as I was a comin' down by here on business. I am glad now I did, for it always makes me feel ugly to see a Methodist imposed upon."

Josiah came into the house in a few minutes, and I told him about it, and says I:

"How lucky it is Josiah, that we found out about organs before it was too late."

But Josiah asked the price, and said he wasn't goin' to pay out no three hundred dollars, for he wasn't able. But the man asked if we was willin' to have it brought into the house for a spell—we could do as we was a mind to about buyin' it; and of course we couldn't refuse, so Josiah most broke his back a liftin' it in, and they set it up in the parlor, and after dinner the man went away.

Josiah bathed his back with linement, for he had strained it bad a liftin' that piano, and I had jest got back to my washin' again (I had had to put it away to git dinner) when I heerd a knockin' again to the front door, and I pulled down my dress sleeves and went and opened it, and there stood a tall, slim feller; and the kitchen bein' all cluttered up I opened the parlor door and asked him in there, and the minute he catched sight of that piano, he jest lifted up both hands, and says he:

"You haint got one of them here!"

He looked so horrified that it skairt me, and says I in almost tremblin' tones:

"What is the matter with 'em?" And I added in a cheerful tone, "we haint bought it."

He looked more cheerful too as I said it, and says he "You may be thankful enough that you haint. There haint no music in 'em at all; hear that," says he, goin' up and strikin' the very top note. It did sound flat enough. [Pg 732]

Says I, "There must be more music in it than that, though I haint no judge at all."

"Well, hear that, then," and he went and struck the very bottom note. "You see just what it is, from top to bottom. But it haint its total lack of music that makes me despise pianos so, it is

because they are so dangerous."

"Dangerous?" says I.

"Yes, in thunder storms, you see;" says he, liftin' up the cover, "here it is all wire, enough for fifty lightnin' rods—draw the lightnin' right into the room. Awful dangerous! No money would tempt me to have one in my house with my wife and daughter. I shouldn't sleep a wink thinkin' I had exposed 'em to such danger."

"Good land!" says I, "I never thought on it before."

"Well, now you *have* thought of it, you see plainly that a organ is jest what you need. They are full of music, safe, healthy and don't cost half so much."

Says I, "A organ was what we had sot our minds on at first."

"Well, I have got one out here, and I will bring it in."

"What is the price?" says I.

"One hundred and ninety dollars," says he.

"There won't be no need of bringin' it in at that price," says I, "for I have heerd Josiah say, that he wouldn't give a cent over a hundred dollars."

"Well," says the feller, "I'll tell you what I'll do. Your countenance looks so kinder natural to me, and I like the looks of the country round here so well, that if your mind is made up on the price you want to pay, I won't let a trifle of ninety dollars part us. You can have it for one hundred."

Well, the end on't was, he brung it in and sot it up the other end of the parlor, and drove off. And when Josiah come in from his work, and Thomas J. come home from Jonesville, they liked it first rate. [Pg 733]

But the very next day, a new agent come, and he looked awful skairt when he katched sight of that organ, and real mad and indignant too.

"That villain haint been a tryin' to get one of them organs off onto you, has he?" says he.

"What is the trouble with 'em?" says I, in a awestruck tone, for he looked bad.

"Why," says he, "there is a heavy mortgage on every one of his organs. If you bought one of him, and paid for it, it would be liable to be took away from you any minute when you was right in the middle of a tune, leavin' you a settin' on the stool; and you would lose every cent of your money."

"Good gracious!" says I, for it skairt me to think what a narrow chance we had run. Well, finally, he brung in one of hisen, and sot it up in the kitchen, the parlor bein' full on 'em.

And the fellers kep' a comin' and a goin' at all hours. For a spell, at first, Josiah would come in and talk with 'em, but after a while he got tired out, and when he would see one a comin' he would start on a run for the barn, and hide, and I would have to stand the brunt of it alone. One feller see Josiah a runnin' for the barn, and he follered him in, and Josiah dove under the barn, as I found out afterwards. I happened to see him a crawlin' out after the feller drove off. Josiah come in a shakin' himself—for he was all covered with straw and feathers—and says he:

"Samantha there has got to be a change."

"How is there goin' to be a change?" says I.

"I'll tell you," says he, in a whisper—for fear some on 'em was prowlin' round the house yet—"we will git up before light to-morrow mornin', and go to Jonesville and buy a organ right out." [Pg 734]

I fell in with the idee, and we started for Jonesville the next mornin'. We got there jest after the break of day, and bought it of the man to the breakfast table. Says Josiah to me afterwards, as we was goin' down into the village:

"Let's keep dark about buyin' one, and see how many of the creeters will be a besettin' on us to-day."

So we kep' still, and there was half a dozen fellers follerin' us round all the time a most, into stores and groceries and the manty makers, and they would stop us on the sidewalk and argue with us about their organs and pianos. One feller, a tall slim chap, never let Josiah out of his sight a minute; and he follered him when he went after his horse, and walked by the side of the wagon clear down to the store where I was, a arguin' all the way about his piano. Josiah had bought a number of things and left 'em to the store, and when we got there, there stood the organ man by the side of the things, jest like a watch dog. He knew Josiah would come and git 'em, and he could git the last word with him.

Amongst other things, Josiah had bought a barrel of salt, and the piano feller that had stuck to Josiah so tight that day, offered to help him on with it. And the organ man—not goin' to be outdone by the other—he offered too. Josiah kinder winked to me, and then he held the old mare, and let 'em lift. They wasn't used to such kind of work, and it fell back on 'em once or twice, and most squashed 'em; but they nipped to, and lifted again, and finally got it on; but they was completely tuckered out.

And then Josiah got in, and thanked 'em for the liftin'; and the organ man, a wipin' the sweat offen his face—that had started out in his hard labor—said he should be down to-morrow mornin'; and the piano man, a pantin' for breath, told Josiah not to make up his mind till *he* came; he should be down that night if he got rested enough. [Pg 735]

And then Josiah told 'em that he should be glad to see 'em down a visitin' any time, but he had jest bought a organ.

I don't know but what they would have laid holt of Josiah, if they hadn't been so tuckered out; but as it was, they was too beat out to look anything but sneakin'; and so we drove off.

The manty maker had told me that day, that there was two or three new agents with new kinds of sewin' machines jest come to Jonesville, and I was tellin' Josiah on it, when we met a middle-aged man, and he looked at us pretty close, and finally he asked us as he passed by, if we could tell him where Josiah Allen lived.

Says Josiah, "I'm livin' at present in a Democrat."

Says I, "In this one-horse wagon, you know."

Says he, "You are thinkin' of buyin' a sewin' machine, haint you?"

Says Josiah, "I am a turnin' my mind that way."

At that, the man turned his horse round, and follered us, and I see he had a sewin' machine in front of his wagon. We had the old mare and the colt, and seein' a strange horse come up so close behind us, the colt started off full run towards Jonesville, and then run down a cross-road and into a lot.

Says the man behind us, "I am a little younger than you be, Mr. Allen; if you will hold my horse I will go after the colt with pleasure."

Josiah was glad enough, and so he got into the feller's wagon; but before he started off, the man, says he:

"You can look at that machine in front of you while I am gone. I tell you frankly, that there haint another machine equal to it in America; it requires no strength at all; infants can run it for days at a time; or idiots; if anybody knows enough to set and whistle, they can run this machine; and it's especially adapted to the blind—blind people can run it jest as well as them that can see. A blind woman last year, in one day, made 43 dollars a makin' leather aprons; stitched them all round the age two rows. She made two dozen of 'em, and then she made four dozen gauze veils the same day, without changin' the needle. That is one of the beauties of the machine, its goin' from leather to lace, and back again, without changin' the needle. It is so tryin' for wimmen, every time they want to go from leather to gauze and book muslin, to have to change the needle; but you can see for yourself that it haint got its equal in North America." [Pg 736]

He heerd the colt whinner, and Josiah stood up in the wagon, and looked after it. So he started off down the cross road.

And we sot there, feelin' considerable like a procession; Josiah holdin' the stranger's horse, and I the old mare; and as we sot there, up driv another slick lookin' chap, and I bein' ahead, he spoke to me, and says he:

"Can you direct me, mom, to Josiah Allen's house?"

"It is about a mile from here," and I added in a friendly tone, "Josiah is my husband."

"Is he?" says he, in a genteel tone.

"Yes," says I, "we have been to Jonesville, and our colt run down that cross road, and—"

"I see," says he interruptin' of me, "I see how it is." And then he went on in a lower tone, "If you think of buyin' a sewin' machine, don't git one of that feller in the wagon behind you—I know him well; he is one of the most worthless shacks in the country, as you can plainly see by the looks of his countenance. If I ever see a face in which knave and villain is wrote down, it is on hisen. Any one with half an eye can see that he would cheat his grandmother out of her snuff handkerchief, if he got a chance." [Pg 737]

He talked so fast that I couldn't git a chance to put in a word age ways for Josiah.

"His sewin' machines are utterly worthless; he haint never sold one yet; he cant. His character has got out—folks know him. There was a lady tellin' me the other day that her machine she bought of him, all fell to pieces in less than twenty-four hours after she bought it; fell onto her infant, a sweet little babe, and crippled it for life. I see your husband is havin' a hard time of it with that colt. I will jest hitch my horse here to the fence, and go down and help him; I want to have a little talk with him before he comes back here." So he started off on the run.

I told Josiah what he said about him, for it madded me, but Josiah took it cool. He seemed to love to set there and see them two men run. I never *did* see a colt act as that one did; they didn't have time to pass a word with each other, to find out their mistake, it kep' 'em so on a keen run. They would git it headed towards us, and then it would kick up its heels, and run into some lot, and canter round in a circle with its head up in the air, and then bring up short ag'inst the fence; and

then they would leap over the fence. The first one had white pantaloons on, but he didn't mind 'em; over he would go, right into sikuta or elderbushes, and they would wave their hats at it, and holler, and whistle, and bark like dogs, and the colt would whinner and start off again right the wrong way, and them two men would go a pantin' after it. They had been a runnin' nigh onto half an hour, when a good lookin' young feller come along, and seein' me a settin' still and holdin' the old mare, he up and says: [Pg 738]

"Are you in any trouble that I can assist you?"

Says I, "We are goin' home from Jonesville, Josiah and me, and our colt got away and—"

But Josiah interrupted me, and says he, "And them two fools a caperin' after it, are sewin' machine agents."

The good lookin' chap see all through it in a minute, and he broke out into a laugh it would have done your soul good to hear, it was so clear and hearty, and honest. But he didn't say a word; he drove out to go by us, and we see then that he had a sewin' machine in the buggy.

"Are you a agent?" says Josiah.

"Yes," says he.

"What sort of a machine is this here?" says Josiah, liftin' up the cloth from the machine in front of him.

"A pretty good one," says the feller, lookin' at the name on it.

"Is yours as good?" says Josiah.

"I think it is better," says he. And then he started up his horse.

"Hello! stop!" says Josiah.

The feller stopped.

"Why don't you run down other fellers' machines, and beset us to buy yourn?"

"Because I don't make a practice of stoppin' people on the street."

"Do you haunt folks day and night; foller 'em up ladders, through trap-doors, down sullers, and under barns?"

"No," says the young chap, "I show people how my machine works; if they want it, I sell it; and if they don't, I leave."

"How much is your machine?" says Josiah.

"75 dollars."

"Can't you," says Josiah, "because I look so much like your old father, or because I am a Methodist, or because my wife's mother used to live neighbor to your grandmother—let me have it for 25 dollars?" [Pg 739]

The feller got up on his wagon, and turned his machine round so we could see it plain—it was a beauty—and says he:

"You see this machine, sir; I think it is the best one made, although there is no great difference between this and the one over there; but I think what difference there is, is in this one's favor. You can have it for 75 dollars if you want it; if not, I will drive on."

"How do you like the looks on it, Samantha?"

Says I, "It is the kind I wanted to git."

Josiah took out his wallet, and counted out 75 dollars, and says he:

"Put that machine into that wagon where Samantha is."

The good lookin' feller was jest liftin' of it in, and countin' over his money, when the two fellers come up with the colt. It seemed that they had had a explanation as they was comin' back; I see they had as quick as I catched sight on 'em, for they was a walkin' one on one side of the road, and the other on the other, most tight up to the fence. They was most dead the colt had run 'em so, and it did seem as if their faces couldn't look no redder nor more madder than they did as we catched sight on 'em and Josiah thanked 'em for drivin' back the colt; but when they see that the other feller had sold us a machine, their faces *did* look redder and madder.

But I didn't care a mite; we drove off tickled enough that we had got through with our sufferin's with agents. And the colt had got so beat out a runnin' and racin', that he drove home first-rate, walkin' along by the old mare as stiddy as a deacon. [Pg 740]

CHEER FOR THE CONSUMER

BY NIXON WATERMAN

I'm only a consumer, and it really doesn't matter
If you crowd me in the street cars till I couldn't well be flatter;
I'm only a consumer, and the strikers may go striking,
For it's mine to end my living if it isn't to my liking.
I am a sort of parasite without a special mission
Except to pay the damages—mine is a queer position:
The Fates unite to squeeze me till I couldn't well be flatter,
For I'm only a consumer, and it really doesn't matter.

The baker tilts the price of bread upon the vaguest rumor
Of damage to the wheat crop, but I'm only a consumer,
So it really doesn't matter, for there's no law that compells me
To pay the added charges on the loaf of bread he sells me.
The iceman leaves a smaller piece when days are growing hotter,
But I'm only a consumer, and I do not need iced water:
My business is to pay the bills and keep in a good humor,
And it really doesn't matter, for I'm only a consumer.

The milkman waters milk for me; there's garlic in my butter,
But I'm only a consumer, and it does no good to mutter;
I know that coal is going up and beef is getting higher,
But I'm only a consumer, and I have no need of fire;
While beefsteak is a luxury that wealth alone is needing, [Pg 741]
I'm only a consumer, and what need have I for feeding?
My business is to pay the bills and keep in a good humor,
And it really doesn't matter, since I'm only a consumer.

The grocer sells me addled eggs; the tailor sells me shoddy,
I'm only a consumer, and I am not anybody.
The cobbler pegs me paper soles, the dairyman short-weights me,
I'm only a consumer, and most everybody hates me.
There's turnip in my pumpkin pie and ashes in my pepper,
The world's my lazaretto, and I'm nothing but a leper;
So lay me in my lonely grave and tread the turf down flatter,
I'm only a consumer, and it really doesn't matter.

[Pg 742]

A DESPERATE RACE

BY J.F. KELLEY

Some years ago, I was one of a convivial party that met in the principal hotel in the town of Columbus, Ohio, the seat of government of the Buckeye state.

It was a winter's evening, when all without was bleak and stormy and all within were blithe and gay,—when song and story made the circuit of the festive board, filling up the chasms of life with mirth and laughter.

We had met for the express purpose of making a night of it, and the pious intention was duly and most religiously carried out. The Legislature was in session in that town, and not a few of the worthy legislators were present upon this occasion.

One of these worthies I will name, as he not only took a big swath in the evening's entertainment, but he was a man *more* generally known than our worthy President, James K. Polk. That man was the famous Captain Riley, whose "Narrative" of suffering and adventures is pretty generally known all over the civilized world. Captain Riley was a fine, fat, good-humored joker, who at the period of my story was the representative of the Dayton district, and lived near that little city when at home. Well, Captain Riley had amused the company with many of his far-famed and singular adventures, which, being mostly told before and read by millions of people that have seen his book, I will not attempt to repeat.

Many were the stories and adventures told by the company, when it came to the turn of a well- [Pg 743]
known gentleman who represented the Cincinnati district. As Mr. —— is yet among the living, and perhaps not disposed to be the subject of joke or story, I do not feel at liberty to give his name. Mr. —— was a slow believer of other men's adventures, and, at the same time, much disposed to magnify himself into a marvellous hero whenever the opportunity offered. As Captain Riley wound up one of his truthful though really marvellous adventures, Mr. —— coolly remarked that the captain's story was all very *well*, but it did not begin to compare with an adventure that he had, "once upon a time," on the Ohio, below the present city of Cincinnati.

"Let's have it!"—"Let's have it!" resounded from all hands.

"Well, gentlemen," said the Senator, clearing his voice for action and knocking the ashes from his

cigar against the arm of his chair,—"gentlemen, I am not in the habit of spinning yarns of marvellous or fictitious matters; and therefore it is scarcely necessary to affirm upon the responsibility of my reputation, gentlemen, that what I am about to tell you I most solemnly proclaim to be truth, and—"

"Oh, never mind that: go on, Mr. ——," chimed the party.

"Well gentlemen, in 18— I came down the Ohio River, and settled at Losanti, now called Cincinnati. It was at that time but a little settlement of some twenty or thirty log and frame cabins, and where now stand the Broadway Hotel and blocks of stores and dwelling-houses, was the cottage and corn-patch of old Mr. ——, the tailor, who, by the bye, bought that land for the making of a coat for one of the settlers. Well, I put up my cabin, with the aid of my neighbors, and put in a patch of corn and potatoes, about where the Fly Market now stands, and set about [Pg 744] improving my lot, house, etc.

"Occasionally I took up my rifle and started off with my dog down the river, to look up a little deer or bar meat, then very plenty along the river. The blasted red-skins were lurking about and hovering around the settlement, and every once in a while picked off some of our neighbors or stole our cattle or horses. I hated the red demons, and made no bones of peppering the blasted sarpents whenever I got a sight of them. In fact, the red rascals had a dread of me, and had laid a good many traps to get my scalp, but I wasn't to be catched napping. No, no, gentlemen, I was too well up to 'em for that.

"Well, I started off one morning, pretty early, to take a hunt, and traveled a long way down the river, over the bottoms and hills, but couldn't find no *bar* nor deer. About four o'clock in the afternoon I made tracks for the settlement again. By and by I sees a buck just ahead of me, walking leisurely down the river. I slipped up, with my faithful old dog close in my rear, to within clever shooting-distance, and just as the buck stuck his nose in the drink I drew a bead upon his top-knot, and over he tumbled, and splurged and bounded a while, when I came up and relieved him by cutting his wizen—"

"Well, but what has that to do with an *adventure*?" said Riley.

"Hold on a bit, if you please, gentlemen; by Jove, it had a great deal to do with it. For, while I was busy skinning the hind-quarters of the buck, and stowing away the kidney-fat in my hunting-shirt, I heard a noise like the breaking of brush under a moccasin up 'the bottom.' My dog heard it, and started up to reconnoiter, and I lost no time in reloading my rifle. I had hardly got my priming out before my dog raised a howl and broke through the brush toward me with his tail down, as he [Pg 745] was not used to doing unless there were wolves, painters (panthers), or Injins about.

"I picked up my knife, and took up my line of march in a skulking trot up the river. The frequent gullies on the lower bank made it tedious traveling there, so I scrabbled up to the upper bank, which was pretty well covered with buckeye and sycamore, and very little underbrush. One peep below discovered to me three as big and strapping red rascals, gentlemen, as you ever clapped your eyes on! Yes, there they came, not above six hundred yards in my rear, shouting and yelling like hounds, and coming after me like all possessed."

"Well," said an old woodsman, sitting at the table, "you took a tree, of course."

"Did I? No, gentlemen, I took no tree just then, but I took to my heels like sixty, and it was just as much as my old dog could do to keep up with me. I run until the whoops of my red-skins grew fainter and fainter behind me, and, clean out of wind, I ventured to look behind me, and there came one single red whelp, puffing and blowing, not three hundred yards in my rear. He had got on to a piece of bottom where the trees were small and scarce. 'Now,' thinks I, 'old fellow, I'll have you.' So I trotted off at a pace sufficient to let my follower gain on me, and when he had got just about near enough I wheeled and fired, and down I brought him, dead as a door-nail, at a hundred and twenty yards!"

"Then you skelp'd (scalped) him immediately?" said the backwoodsman.

"Very clear of it, gentlemen; for by the time I got my rifle loaded, here came the other two red-skins, shouting and whooping close on me, and away I broke again like a quarter-horse. I was now about five miles from the settlement, and it was getting toward sunset. I ran till my wind [Pg 746] began to be pretty short, when I took a look back, and there they came, snorting like mad buffaloes, one about two or three hundred yards ahead of the other: so I acted possum again until the foremost Injin got pretty well up, and I wheeled and fired at the very moment he was 'drawing a bead' on me: he fell head over stomach into the dirt, and up came the last one!"

"So you laid for him, and—" gasped several.

"No," continued the "member," "I didn't lay for him, I hadn't time to load, so I laid my *legs* to ground and started again. I heard every bound he made after me. I ran and ran until the fire flew out of my eyes, and the old dog's tongue hung out of his mouth a quarter of a yard long!"

"Phe-e-e-e-w!" whistled somebody.

"Fact, gentlemen. Well, what I was to do I didn't know: rifle empty, no big trees about, and a murdering red Indian not three hundred yards in my rear; and what was worse, just then it occurred to me that I was not a great ways from a big creek (now called Mill Creek), and there I should be pinned at last.

"Just at this juncture, I struck my toe against a root, and down I tumbled, and my old dog over me. Before I could scrabble up—"

"The Indian fired!" gasped the old woodsman.

"He did, gentlemen, and I felt the ball strike me under the shoulder; but that didn't seem to put any embargo upon my locomotion, for as soon as I got up I took off again, quite freshened by my fall! I heard the red-skin close behind me coming booming on, and every minute I expected to have his tomahawk dashed into my head or shoulders.

"Something kind of cool began to trickle down my legs into my boots—" [Pg 747]

"Blood, eh? for the shot the varmint gin you," said the old woodsman, in a great state of excitement.

"I thought so," said the Senator; "but what do you think it was?"

Not being blood, we were all puzzled to know what the blazes it could be; when Riley observed,—

"I suppose you had—"

"Melted the deer-fat which I had stuck in the breast of my hunting-shirt, and the grease was running down my leg until my feet got so greasy that my heavy boots flew off, and one, hitting the dog, nearly knocked his brains out."

We all grinned, which the "member" noticing, observed,—

"I hope, gentlemen, no man here will presume to think I'm exaggerating?"

"Oh, certainly not! Go on, Mr. ——," we all chimed in.

"Well, the ground under my feet was soft, and, being relieved of my heavy boots, I put off with double-quick time, and, seeing the creek about half a mile off, I ventured to look over my shoulder to see what kind of chance there was to hold up and load. The red-skin was coming jogging along, pretty well blowed out, about five hundred yards in the rear. Thinks I, 'Here goes to load, anyhow.' So at it I went: in went the powder, and, putting on my patch, down went the ball about half-way, and off snapped my ramrod!"

"Thunder and lightning!" shouted the old woodsman, who was worked up to the top-notch in the "member's" story.

"Good gracious! wasn't I in a pickle! There was the red whelp within two hundred yards of me, pacing along and *loading up his rifle as he came*! I jerked out the broken ramrod, dashed it away, and started on, priming up as I cantered off, determined to turn and give the red-skin a blast, anyhow, as soon as I reached the creek. [Pg 748]

"I was now within a hundred yards of the creek, could see the smoke from the settlement chimneys. A few more jumps, and I was by the creek. The Indian was close upon me: he gave a whoop, and I raised my rifle: on he came, knowing that I had broken my ramrod and my load not down: another whoop! whoop! and he was within fifty yards of me. I pulled trigger, and—"

"And killed *him*?" chuckled Riley.

"No, *sir*! I missed fire!"

"And the red-skin—" shouted the old woodsman, in a frenzy of excitement.

"*Fired and killed me!*"

The screams and shouts that followed this finale brought landlord Noble, servants and hostlers running up stairs to see if the house was on fire! [Pg 749]

"AS GOOD AS A PLAY"

BY HORACE E. SCUDDER

There was quite a row of them on the mantel-piece. They were all facing front, and it looked as if they had come out of the wall behind, and were on their little stage facing the audience. There was the bronze monk reading a book by the light of a candle, who had a private opening under his girdle, so that sometimes his head was thrown violently back, and one looked down into him and found him full of brimstone matches. Then the little boy leaning against a greyhound; he was made of Parian, very fine Parian, too, so that one would expect to find a glass cover over him: but no, the glass cover stood over a cat and a cat made of worsted, too: still it was a very old cat, fifty years old in fact. There was another young person there, young like the boy leaning on a greyhound, and she, too, was of Parian: she was very fair in front, but behind—ah, that is a secret which is not quite time yet to tell. One other stood there, at least she seemed to stand, but nobody could see her feet, for her dress was so very wide and so finely flounced. She was the china girl that rose out of a pen-wiper.

The fire in the grate below was of soft coal, and flashed up and down, throwing little jets of flame up that made very pretty foot-lights. So here was a stage, and here were the actors, but where was the audience? Oh, the Audience was in the arm-chair in front. He had a special seat; he was a critic, and could get up when he wanted to, when the play became tiresome, and go out. [Pg 750]

"It is painful to say such things out loud," said the Boy-leaning-against-a-greyhound, with a trembling voice, "but we have been together so long, and these people round us never will go away. Dear girl, will you?—you know." It was the Parian girl that he spoke to, but he did not look at her; he could not, he was leaning against the greyhound; he only looked at the Audience.

"I am not quite sure," she coughed. "If, now, you were under a glass case."

"I am under a glass case," spoke up the Cat-made-of-worsted. "Marry me. I am fifty years old. Marry me, and live under a glass case."

"Shocking!" said she. "How can you? Fifty years old, too! That would indeed be a match!"

"Marry!" muttered the bronze Monk-reading-a-book. "A match! I am full of matches, but I don't marry. Folly!"

"You stand up very straight, neighbor," said the Cat-made-of-worsted.

"I never bend," said the bronze Monk-reading-a-book. "Life is earnest. I read a book by candle. I am never idle."

The Cat-made-of-worsted grinned to himself.

"You've got a hinge in your back," said he, "they open you in the middle; your head flies back. How the blood must run down. And then you're full of brimstone matches. He! he!" and the Cat-made-of-worsted grinned out loud. The Boy-leaning-against-a-greyhound spoke again, and sighed:

"I am of Parian, you know, and there is no one else here of Parian except yourself."

"And the greyhound," said the Parian girl. [Pg 751]

"Yes, and the greyhound," said he eagerly. "He belongs to me. Come, a glass case is nothing to it. We could roam; oh, we could roam!"

"I don't like roaming."

"Then we could stay at home, and lean against the greyhound."

"No," said the Parian girl, "I don't like that."

"Why?"

"I have private reasons."

"What?"

"No matter."

"I know," said the Cat-made-of-worsted. "I saw her behind. She's hollow. She's stuffed with lamp-lighters. He! he!" and the Cat-made-of-worsted grinned again.

"I love you just as much," said the steadfast Boy-leaning-against-a-greyhound, "and I don't believe the Cat."

"Go away," said the Parian girl, angrily. "You're all hateful. I won't have you."

"Ah!" sighed the Boy-leaning-against-a-greyhound.

"Ah!" came another sigh—it was from the China-girl-rising-out-of-a-pen-wiper—"how I pity you!"

"Do you?" said he eagerly. "Do you? Then I love you. Will you marry me?"

"Ah!" said she; "but—"

"She can't!" said the Cat-made-of-worsted. "She can't come to you. She hasn't got any legs. I know it. I'm fifty years old. I never saw them."

"Never mind the Cat," said the Boy-leaning-against-a-greyhound.

"But I do mind the Cat," said she, weeping. "I haven't. It's all pen-wiper."

"Do I care?" said he.

"She has thoughts," said the bronze Monk-reading-a-book. "That lasts longer than beauty. And she is solid behind." [Pg 752]

"And she has no hinge in her back," grinned the Cat-made-of-worsted. "Come, neighbors, let us congratulate them. You begin."

"Keep out of disagreeable company," said the bronze Monk-reading-a-book.

"That is not congratulation; that is advice," said the Cat-made-of-worsted. "Never mind, go on, my dear,"—to the Parian girl. "What! nothing to say? Then I'll say it for you. 'Friends, may your love

last as long as your courtship.' Now I'll congratulate you."

But before he could speak, the Audience got up.

"You shall not say a word. It must end happily."

He went to the mantel-piece and took up the China-girl-rising-out-of-a-pen-wiper.

"Why, she has legs after all," said he.

"They're false," said the Cat-made-of-worsted. "They're false. I know it. I'm fifty years old. I never saw true ones on her."

The Audience paid no attention, but took up the Boy-leaning-against-a-greyhound.

"Ha!" said the Cat-made-of-worsted. "Come. I like this. He's hollow. They're all hollow. He! he! Neighbor Monk, you're hollow. He! he!" and the Cat-made-of-worsted never stopped grinning. The Audience lifted the glass case from him and set it over the Boy-leaning-against-a-greyhound and the China-girl-rising-out-of-a-pen-wiper.

"Be happy!" said he.

"Happy!" said the Cat-made-of-worsted. "Happy!"

Still they were happy. [Pg 753]

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST TABLE

BY OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

It is not easy, at the best, for two persons talking together to make the most of each other's thoughts, there are so many of them.

[The company looked as if they wanted an explanation.]

When John and Thomas, for instance, are talking together, it is natural enough that among the six there should be more or less confusion and misapprehension.

[Our landlady turned pale;—no doubt she thought there was a screw loose in my intellects,—and that involved the probable loss of a boarder. A severe-looking person, who wears a Spanish cloak and a sad cheek, fluted by the passions of the melodrama, whom I understand to be the professional ruffian of the neighboring theater, alluded, with a certain lifting of the brow, drawing down of the corners of the mouth and somewhat rasping *voce di petti*, to Falstaff's nine men in buckram. Everybody looked up. I believe the old gentleman opposite was afraid I should seize the carving-knife; at any rate, he slid it to one side, as it were carelessly.]

I think, I said, I can make it plain to Benjamin Franklin here, that there are at least six personalities distinctly to be recognized as taking part in that dialogue between John and Thomas.

Three Johns	{ 1. The real John; known only to his Maker. { 2. John's ideal John; never the real one, and often very unlike him. { 3. Thomas's ideal John; never the real John, nor John's John, but often very unlike either.
Three Thomases	{ 1. The real Thomas. { 2. Thomas's ideal Thomas. { 3. John's ideal Thomas.

Only one of the three Johns is taxed; only one can be weighed on a platform-balance; but the other two are just as important in the conversation. Let us suppose the real John to be old, dull and ill-looking. But as the Higher Powers have not conferred on men the gift of seeing themselves in the true light, John very possibly conceives himself to be youthful, witty, and fascinating, and talks from the point of view of this ideal. Thomas, again believes him to be an artful rogue, we will say; therefore he *is* so far as Thomas's attitude in the conversation is concerned, an artful rogue, though really simple and stupid. The same conditions apply to the three Thomases. It follows, that, until a man can be found who knows himself as his Maker knows him, or who sees himself as others see him, there must be at least six persons engaged in every dialogue between two. Of these, the least important, philosophically speaking, is the one that we have called the real person. No wonder two disputants often get angry, when there are six of them talking and listening all at the same time. [Pg 754]

[A very unphilosophical application of the above remarks was made by a young fellow, answering to the name of John, who sits near me at table. A certain basket of peaches, a rare vegetable, little known to boarding houses, was on its way to me *viâ* this unlettered Johannes. He appropriated the three that remained in the basket, remarking that there was just one apiece for

him. I convinced him that his practical inference was hasty and illogical, but in the mean time he had eaten the peaches.]

"Our Sumatra Correspondence

"This island is now the property of the Stamford family,—having been won, it is said, in a raffle, by Sir —— Stamford, during the stock-gambling mania of the South-Sea Scheme. The history of this gentleman may be found in an interesting series of questions (unfortunately not yet answered) contained in the "Notes and Queries." This island is entirely surrounded by the ocean, which here contains a large amount of saline substance, crystallizing in cubes remarkable for their symmetry, and frequently displays on its surface, during calm weather, the rainbow tints of the celebrated South-Sea bubbles. The summers are oppressively hot, and the winters very probably cold; but this fact can not be ascertained precisely, as, for some peculiar reason, the mercury in these latitudes never shrinks, as in more northern regions, and thus the thermometer is rendered useless in winter.

"The principal vegetable productions of the island are the pepper-tree and the bread-fruit tree. Pepper being very abundantly produced, a benevolent society was organized in London during the last century for supplying the natives with vinegar and oysters, as an addition to that delightful condiment. [Note received from Dr. D.P.] It is said, however, that, as the oysters were of the kind called *natives* in England, the natives of Sumatra, in obedience to a natural instinct, refused to touch them, and confined themselves entirely to the crew of the vessel in which they were brought over. This information was received from one of the oldest inhabitants, a native himself, and exceedingly fond of missionaries. He is said also to be very skilful in the *cuisine* peculiar to the island.

"During the season of gathering the pepper, the persons employed are subject to various incommodities, the chief of which is violent and long-continued sternutation, or sneezing. Such is the vehemence of these attacks, that the unfortunate subjects of them are often driven backward for great distances at immense speed, on the well-known principle of the æolipile. Not being able to see where they are going, these poor creatures dash themselves to pieces against the rocks or are precipitated over the cliffs, and thus many valuable lives are lost annually. As, during the whole pepper-harvest, they feed exclusively on this stimulant, they become exceedingly irritable. The smallest injury is resented with ungovernable rage. A young man suffering from the *pepper-fever*, as it is called, cudgeled another most severely for appropriating a superannuated relative of trifling value, and was only pacified by having a present made him of a pig of that peculiar species of swine called the *Peccavi* by the Catholic Jews, who, it is well known, abstain from swine's flesh in imitation of the Mahometan Buddhists.

"The bread-tree grows abundantly. Its branches are well known to Europe and America under the familiar name of *macaroni*. The smaller twigs are called *vermicelli*. They have a decided animal flavor, as may be observed in the soups containing them. Macaroni, being tubular, is the favorite habitat of a very dangerous insect, which is rendered peculiarly ferocious by being boiled. The government of the island, therefore, never allows a stick of it to be exported without being accompanied by a piston with which its cavity may at any time be thoroughly swept out. These are commonly lost or stolen before the macaroni arrives among us. It therefore always contains many of these insects, which, however, generally die of old age in the shops, so that accidents from this source are comparatively rare.

"The fruit of the bread-tree consists principally of hot rolls. The buttered-muffin variety is supposed to be a hybrid with a cocoanut palm, the cream found on the milk of the cocoanut exuding from the hybrid in the shape of butter, just as the ripe fruit is splitting, so as to fit it for the tea-table, where it is commonly served up with cold—"

—There,—I don't want to read any more of it. You see that many of these statements are highly improbable.—No, I shall not mention the paper.—No, neither of them wrote it, though it reminds me of the style of these popular writers. I think the fellow that wrote it must have been reading some of their stories, and got them mixed up with his history and geography. I don't suppose *he* lies; he sells it to the editor, who knows how many squares off "Sumatra" is. The editor, who sells it to the public—by the way, the papers have been very civil—haven't they?—to the—the—what d'ye call it?—"Northern Magazine,"—isn't it?—got up by some of these Come-outers, down East, as an organ for their local peculiarities.

It is a very dangerous thing for a literary man to indulge his love for the ridiculous. People laugh *with* him just so long as he amuses them; but if he attempts to be serious, they must still have their laugh, and so they laugh *at* him. There is in addition, however, a deeper reason for this than would at first appear. Do you know that you feel a little superior to every man who makes you laugh, whether by making faces or verses? Are you aware that you have a pleasant sense of patronizing him, when you condescend so far as to let him turn somersets, literal or literary, for your royal delight? Now if a man can only be allowed to stand on a dais, or raised platform, and look down on his neighbor who is exerting his talent for him, oh, it is all right!—first-rate performance!—and all the rest of the fine phrases. But if all at once the performer asks the gentleman to come upon the floor, and, stepping upon the platform, begins to talk down at him,—ah, that wasn't in the program!

I have never forgotten what happened when Sydney Smith—who, as everybody knows, was an exceedingly sensible man, and a gentleman, every inch of him—ventured to preach a sermon on the Duties of Royalty. The "Quarterly," "so savage and tartly," came down upon him in the most contemptuous style, as "a joker of jokes," a "diner-out of the first water" in one of his own phrases; sneering at him, insulting him, as nothing but a toady of a court, sneaking behind the anonymous, would ever have been mean enough to do to a man of his position and genius, or to any decent person even.—If I were giving advice to a young fellow of talent, with two or three facets to his mind, I would tell him by all means to keep his wit in the background until after he had made a reputation by his more solid qualities. And so to an actor: *Hamlet* first and *Bob Logic* afterward, if you like; but don't think, as they say poor Liston used to, that people will be ready to allow that you can do anything great with *Macbeth's* dagger after flourishing about with *Paul Pry's* umbrella. Do you know, too, that the majority of men look upon all who challenge their attention,—for a while, at least,—as beggars, and nuisances? They always try to get off as cheaply as they can; and the cheapest of all things they can give a literary man—pardon the forlorn pleasantry!—is the *funny*-bone. That is all very well so far as it goes, but satisfies no man, and makes a good many angry, as I told you on a former occasion.

Oh, indeed, no!—I am not ashamed to make you laugh, occasionally. I think I could read you something I have in my desk that would probably make you smile. Perhaps I will read it one of [Pg 759] these days, if you are patient with me when I am sentimental and reflective; not just now. The ludicrous has its place in the universe; it is not a human invention, but one of the Divine ideas, illustrated in the practical jokes as kittens and monkeys long before Aristophanes or Shakespeare. How curious it is that we always consider solemnity and the absence of all gay surprises and encounter of wits as essential to the idea of the future life of those whom we thus deprive of half their faculties and then called *blessed*! There are not a few who, even in this life, seem to be preparing themselves for that smileless eternity to which they look forward, by banishing all gaiety from their hearts and all joyousness from their countenances. I meet one such in the street not unfrequently, a person of intelligence and education, but who gives me (and all that he passes) such a rayless and chilling look of recognition,—something as if he were one of Heaven's assessors, come down to "doom" every acquaintance he met,—that I have sometimes begun to sneeze on the spot, and gone home with a violent cold, dating from that instant. I don't doubt he would cut his kitten's tail off, if he caught her playing with it. Please tell me, who taught her to play with it? [Pg 760]

CÆSAR'S QUIET LUNCH WITH CICERO

BY JAMES T. FIELDS

Have you read how Julius Cæsar
Made a call on Cicero
In his modest Formian villa,
Many and many a year ago?

"I shall pass your way," wrote Cæsar,
"On the Saturnalia, Third,
And I'll just drop in, my Tullius,
For a quiet friendly word:

"Don't make a stranger of me, Marc,
Nor be at all put out,
A snack of anything you have
Will serve my need, no doubt.

"I wish to show my confidence—
The invitation's mine—
I come to share your simple food,
And taste your honest wine."

Up rose M. Tullius Cicero,
And seized a Roman punch,—
Then mused upon the god-like soul
Was coming round to lunch.

[Pg 761]

"By Hercules!" he murmured low
Unto his lordly self,
"There are not many dainties left
Upon my pantry shelf!

"But what I have shall Julius share.
What, ho!" he proudly cried,
"Great Cæsar comes this way anon
To sit my chair beside.

"A dish of lampreys quickly stew,
And cook them with a turn,
For that's his favorite pabulum
From Mamurra I learn."

* * * * * * * * * *

His slaves obey their lord's command;
The table soon is laid
For two distinguished gentlemen,—
One rather bald, 'tis said.

When lo! a messenger appears
To sound approach—and then,
"Brave Cæsar comes to greet his friend
With *twice a thousand men*!

"His cohorts rend the air with shouts;
That is their dust you see;
The trumpeters announce him near!"
Said Marcus, "Woe is me!

"Fly, Cassius, fly! assign a guard!
Borrow what tents you can!
Encamp his soldiers round the field,
Or I'm a ruined man!

[Pg 762]

"Get sheep and oxen by the score!
Buy corn at any price!
O Jupiter! befriend me now,
And give me your advice!"

* * * * * * * * * *

It turned out better than he feared,—
Things proved enough and good,—
And Cæsar made himself at home,
And much enjoyed his food.

But Marcus had an awful fright,—
That can not be denied;
"I'm glad 'tis over!"—when it was—
The host sat down and sighed,

And when he wrote to Atticus,
And all the story told,
He ended his epistle thus:
"J.C.'s a warrior bold,

"A vastly entertaining man,
In Learning quite immense,
So full of literary skill,
And most uncommon sense,

"But, frankly, I should never say
'No trouble, sir, at all;
And when you pass this way again,
Give us another call!'"

[Pg 763]

COMIN' HOME THANKSGIVIN'

BY JAMES BALL NAYLOR

I've clean fergot my rheumatiz—
Hain't nary limp n'r hobble;
I'm feelin' like a turkey-cock—
An' ready 'most to gobble;
I'm workin' spry, an' steppin' high—
An' thinkin' life worth livin'.
Fer all the children's comin' home
All comin' home Thanksgivin'.

There's Mary up at Darby Town,

An' Sally down at Goshen,
An' Billy out at Kirkersville,
An' Jim—who has a notion
That Hackleyburg's the very place
Fer which his soul has striven;
They're all a-comin' home ag'in—
All comin' home Thanksgivin'.

Yes—yes! They're all a-comin' back;
There ain't no ifs n'r maybes.
The boys'll fetch the'r wives an' kids;
The gals, th'r men an' babies.
The ol' place will be upside-down;
An' me an' Mammy driven
To roost out in the locus' trees—
When they come home Thanksgivin'.

[Pg 764]

Fer Mary she has three 'r four
Mis*chee*vous little tykes, sir,
An' Sally has a houseful more—
You never seen the like, sir;
While Jim has six, an' Billy eight—
They'll tear the house to flinders,
An' dig the cellar out in chunks
An' pitch it through the winders.

The gals 'll tag me to the barn;
An' climb the mows, an' waller
All over ev'ry ton o' hay—
An' laugh an' scream an' holler.
The boys 'll git in this an' that;
An' git a lickin'—p'r'aps, sir—
Jest like the'r daddies used to git
When *they* was little chaps, sir.

But—lawzee-me!—w'y, I won't care.
I'm jest so glad they're comin',
I have to whistle to the tune
That my ol' heart's a-hummin'.
An' me an' Mammy—well, we think
It's good to be a-livin',
Sence all the children's comin' home
To spend the day Thanksgivin'.

[Pg 765]

PRAISE-GOD BAREBONES

BY ELLEN MACKAY HUTCHINSON CORTISSOZ

I and my cousin Wildair met
And tossed a pot together—
Burnt sack it was that Molly brewed,
For it was nipping weather.
'Fore George! To see Dick buss the wench
Set all the inn folk laughing!
They dubbed him pearl of cavaliers
At kissing and at quaffing.

"Oddsfish!" says Dick, "the sack is rare,
And rarely burnt, fair Molly;
'Twould cure the sourest Crop-ear yet
Of Pious Melancholy."
"Egad!" says I, "here cometh one
Hath been at 's prayers but lately."
—Sooth, Master Praise-God Barebones stepped
Along the street sedately.

Dick Wildair, with a swashing bow,
And touch of his Toledo,
Gave Merry Xmas to the rogue
And bade him say his Credo;
Next crush a cup to the King's health,
And eke to pretty Molly;

"'T will cure your saintliness," says Dick,
"Of Pious Melancholy."

[Pg 766]

Then Master Barebones stopped and frowned;
My heart stood still a minute;
Thinks I, both Dick and I will hang,
Or else the devil's in it!
For me, I care not for old Noll,
Nor all the Rump together.
Yet, faith! 't is best to be alive
In pleasant Xmas weather.

His worship, Barebones, grimly smiled;
"I love not blows nor brawling;
Yet will I give thee, fool, a pledge!"
And, zooks! he sent Dick sprawling!
When Moll and I helped Wildair up,
No longer trim and jolly—
"Feelst not, Sir Dick," says saucy Moll,
"A Pious Melancholy?"

[Pg 767]

THE LOAFER AND THE SQUIRE

BY PORTE CRAYON

The squire himself was the type of a class found only among the rural population of our Southern States—a class, the individuals of which are connected by a general similarity of position and circumstance, but present a field to the student of man infinite in variety, rich in originality.

As the isolated oak that spreads his umbrageous top in the meadow surpasses his spindling congener of the forest, so does the country gentleman, alone in the midst of his broad estate, outgrow the man of crowds and conventionalities in our cities. The oak may have the advantage in the comparison, as his locality and consequent superiority are permanent. The Squire, out of his own district, we ignore. Whether intrinsically, or simply in default of comparison, at home he is invariably a great man. Such, at least, was Squire Hardy. Sour and cynical in speech, yet overflowing with human kindness; contemning luxury and expense in dress and equipage, but princely in his hospitality; praising the olden time to the disparagement of the present; the mortal foe of progressionists and fast people in every department; above all, a philosopher of his own school, he judged by the law of Procrustes, and permitted no appeals; opinionated and arbitrary as the Czar, he was sauced by his negroes, respected and loved by his neighbors, led by the nose by his wife and daughters, and the abject slave of his grandchildren.

[Pg 768]

His house was as big as a barn, and, as his sons and daughters married, they brought their mates home to the old mansion. "It will be time enough for them to hive," quoth the Squire, "when the old box is full."

Notwithstanding his contempt for fast men nowadays, he is rather pleased with any allusion to his own youthful reputation in that line, and not unfrequently tells a good story on himself. We can not omit one told by a neighbor, as being characteristic of the times and manners forty years ago:

At Culpepper Court-house, or some court-house thereabout, Dick Hardy, then a good-humored, gay young bachelor, and the prime favorite of both sexes, was called upon to carve the pig at the court dinner. The district judge was at the table, the lawyers, justices, and everybody else that felt disposed to dine. At Dick's right elbow sat a militia colonel, who was tricked out in all the pomp and circumstance admitted by his rank. He had probably been engaged on some court-martial, imposing fifty-cent fines on absentees from the last general muster. Howbeit Dick, in thrusting his fork into the back of the pig, bespattered the officer's regimentals with some of the superfluous gravy. "Beg your pardon," said Dick, as he went on with his carving. Now these were times when the war spirit was high, and chivalry at a premium. "Beg your pardon" might serve as a napkin to wipe the stain from one's honor, but did not touch the question of the greased and spotted regimentals.

The colonel, swelling with wrath, seized a spoon, and deliberately dipping it into the gravy, dashed it over Dick's prominent shirt-frill.

[Pg 769]

All saw the act, and with open eyes and mouth sat in astonished silence, waiting to see what would be done next. The outraged citizen calmly laid down his knife and fork, and looked at his frill, the officer, and the pig, one after another. The colonel, unmindful of the pallid countenance and significant glances of the burning eye, leaned back in his chair, with arms akimbo, regarding the young farmer with cool disdain. A murmur of surprise and indignation arose from the congregated guests. Dick's face turned red as a turkey-gobbler's. He deliberately took the pig by the hind legs, and with a sudden whirl brought it down upon the head of the unlucky officer. Stunned by the squashing blow, astounded and blinded with streams of gravy and wads of

stuffing, he attempted to rise, but blow after blow from the fat pig fell upon his bewildered head. He seized a carving-knife and attempted to defend himself with blind but ineffectual fury, and at length, with a desperate effort, rose and took to his heels. Dick Hardy, whose wrath waxed hotter and hotter, followed, belaboring him unmercifully at every step, around the table, through the hall, and into the street, the crowd shouting and applauding.

We are sorry to learn that among this crowd were lawyers, sheriffs, magistrates, and constables; and that even his honor the judge, forgetting his dignity and position, shouted in a loud voice, "Give it to him, Dick Hardy! There's no law in Christendom against basting a man with a roast pig!" Dick's weapon failed before his anger; and when at length the battered colonel escaped into the door of a friendly dwelling, the victor had nothing in his hands but the hind legs of the roaster. He re-entered the dining-room flourishing these over his head, and venting his still unappeased wrath in great oaths.

The company reassembled, and finished their dinner as best they might. In reply to a toast, Hardy made a speech, wherein he apologized for sacrificing the principal dinner-dish, and, as he [Pg 770] expressed it, for putting public property to private uses. In reply to this speech a treat was ordered. In those good old days folks were not so virtuous but that a man might have cakes and ale without being damned for it, and it is presumable the day wound up with a spree.

After the squire got older, and a family grew up around him, he was not always victorious in his contests. For example, a question lately arose about the refurnishing of the house. On their return from a visit to Richmond the ladies took it into their heads that the parlors looked bare and old-fashioned, and it was decided by them in secret conclave that a change was necessary.

"What!" said he, in a towering passion, "isn't it enough that you spend your time and money in vinegar to sour sweet peaches, and your sugar to sweeten crab-apples, that you must turn the house you were born in topsy-turvy? God help us! we've a house with windows to let the light in, and you want curtains to keep it out; we've plastered the walls to make them white, and now you want to paste blue paper over them; we've waxed floors to walk on, and we must pay two dollars a yard for a carpet to save the oak plank! Begone with your nonsense, ye demented jades!"

The squire smote the oak floor with his heavy cane, and the rosy petitioners fled from his presence laughing. In due time, however, the parlors were furnished with carpets, curtains, paper, and all the fixtures of modern luxury. The ladies were, of course, greatly delighted; and while professing great aversion and contempt for the "tawdry lumber," it was plain to see that the worthy man enjoyed their pleasure as much as they did the new furniture. [Pg 771]

On another occasion, too, did the doughty squire suffer defeat under circumstances far more humiliating, and from an adversary far less worthy.

The western horizon was blushing rosy red at the coming of the sun, whose descending chariot was hidden by the thick Indian-summer haze that covered lowland and mountain as it were with a violet-tinted veil. This was the condition of things (we were going to say) when Squire Hardy sallied forth, charged with a small bag of salt, for the purpose of looking after his farm generally, and particularly of salting his sheep. It was an interesting sight to see the old gentleman, with his dignified, portly figure, marching at the head of a long procession of improved breeds—the universally-received emblems of innocence and patience. Barring his modern costume, he might have suggested to the artist's mind a picture of one of the Patriarchs.

Having come to a convenient place, or having tired himself crying *co-nan*, *co-nan*, at the top of his voice, the squire halted. The black ram halted, and the long procession of ewes and well-grown lambs moved up in a dense semicircle, and also halted, expressing their pleasure at the expected treat by gentle bleatings. The squire stooped to spread the salt. The black ram, either from most uncivil impatience, or mistaking the movement of the proprietor's coat-tail for a challenge, pitched into him incontinently. "*Plenum sed*," as the Oxonions say. An attack from behind, so sudden and unexpected, threw the squire sprawling on his face into a stone pile.

> Oh, never was the thunder's jar,
> The red tornado's wasting wing,
> Or all the elemental war,

like the fury of Squire Hardy on that occasion. [Pg 772]

He recovered his feet with the agility of a boy, his nose bleeding and a stone in each hand. The timid flock looked all aghast, while the audacious offender, so far from having shown any disposition to skulk, stood shaking his head and threatening, as if he had a mind to follow up the dastardly attack. The squire let fly one stone, which grazed the villain's head and killed a lamb. With the other he crippled a favorite ewe. The ram still showed fight, and the vengeful proprietor would probably have soon decimated his flock had not Porte Crayon (who had been squirrel-shooting) made his appearance in time to save them.

"Quick, quick! young man—your gun; let me shoot the cursed brute on the spot."

The squire was frantic with rage, the cause of which our hero, having seen something of the affray, easily divined. He was unwilling, however, to trust his hair-triggered piece in the hands of his excited host.

"By your leave, Squire, and by your orders, I'll do the shooting myself. Which of them was it?"

"The ram—the d——d black ram—kill him—shoot—don't let him live a minute!"

Crayon leveled his piece and fired. The offender made a bound and fell dead, the black blood spouting from his forehead in a stream as thick as your thumb.

"There, now," exclaimed the squire, with infinite satisfaction, "you've got it, you ungrateful brute! You've found something harder than your own head at last, you cursed reptile! Friend Crayon, that's a capital gun of yours, and you shot well."

The squire dropped the stones which he had in his hands, and looking back at the dead body of the belligerent sheep, observed, with a thoughtful air, "He was a fine animal, Mr. Crayon—a fine animal, and this will teach him a good lesson." [Pg 773]

"In all likelihood," replied Crayon, dryly, "it will break him of this trick of butting."

Not long after this occurrence, Squire Hardy went to hear an itinerant phrenologist who lectured in the village. In the progress of his discourse, the lecturer, for purposes of illustration, introduced the skulls of several animals, mapped off in the most correct and scientific manner.

"Observe, ladies and gentlemen, the head of the wolf: combativeness enormously developed, alimentiveness large, while conscientiousness is entirely wanting. On the other hand, look at this cranium. Here combativeness is a nullity—absolutely wanting—while the fullness of the sentimental organs indicate at once the mild and peaceful disposition of the sheep."

The squire, who had listened with great attention up to this point, hastily rose to his feet.

"A sheep!" he exclaimed; "did you call a sheep a peaceful animal? I tell you, sir, it is the most ferocious and unruly beast in existence. Sir, I had a ram once—"

"My dear sir," cried the astonished lecturer, "on the authority of our most distinguished writers, the sheep is an emblem of peace and innocence."

"An emblem of the devil," interrupted the squire, boiling over. "You are an ignorant impostor, and your science a humbug. I had a ram once that would have taught you more in five seconds than you've learned from books in all your lifetime."

And so Squire Hardy put on his hat and walked out, leaving the lecturer to rectify his blunder as best he might. [Pg 774]

DE STOVE PIPE HOLE[7]

BY WILLIAM HENRY DRUMMOND

Dat's very cole an' stormy night on Village St. Mathieu,
W'en ev'ry wan he's go couché, an' dog was quiet, too—
Young Dominique is start heem out see Emmeline Gourdon,
Was leevin' on her fader's place, Maxime de Forgeron.

Poor Dominique he's lak dat girl, an' love her mos' de tam,
An' she was mak' de promise—sure—some day she be his famme,
But she have worse ole fader dat's never on de worl',
Was swear onless he's riche lak diable, no feller's get hees girl.

He's mak' it plaintee fuss about hees daughter Emmeline,
Dat's mebby nice girl, too, but den, Mon Dieu, she's not de queen!
An' w'en de young man's come aroun' for spark it on de door,
An' hear de ole man swear "Bapteme!" he's never come no more.

[Pg 775]

Young Dominique he's sam' de res',—was scare for ole Maxime,
He don't lak risk hese'f too moche for chances seein' heem,
Dat's only stormy night he come, so dark you can not see,
An dat's de reason w'y also, he's climb de gallerie.

De girl she's waitin' dere for heem—don't care about de rain,
So glad for see young Dominique he's comin' back again,
Dey bote forget de ole Maxime, an' mak de embrasser
An affer dey was finish dat, poor Dominique is say—

"Good-by, dear Emmeline, good-by; I'm goin' very soon,
For you I got no better chance, dan feller on de moon—
It's all de fault your fader, too, dat I be go away,
He's got no use for me at all—I see dat ev'ry day.

"He's never meet me on de road but he is say 'Sapré!'
An' if he ketch me on de house I'm scare he's killin' me,
So I mus' lef' ole St. Mathieu, for work on 'noder place,

An' till I mak de beeg for-tune, you never see ma face."

Den Emmeline say "Dominique, ma love you'll alway be
An' if you kiss me two, t'ree tam I'll not tole noboddy—
But prenez garde ma fader, please, I know he's gettin' ole—
All sam' he offen walk de house upon de stockin' sole.

"Good-by, good-by, cher Dominique! I know you will be true,
I don't want no riche feller me, ma heart she go wit' you,"
Dat's very quick he's kiss her den, before de fader come,
But don't get too moche pleasurement—so 'fraid de ole Bonhomme.

[Pg 776]

Wall! jus' about dey're half way t'roo wit all dat love beez-nesse
Emmeline say, "Dominique, w'at for you're scare lak all de res'?
Don't see mese'f moche danger now de ole man come aroun',"
W'en minute affer dat, dere's noise, lak' house she's fallin' down.

Den Emmeline she holler "Fire! will no wan come for me?"
An' Dominique is jomp so high, near bus' de gallerie,—
"Help! help! right off," somebody shout, "I'm killin' on ma place,
It's all de fault ma daughter, too, dat girl she's ma disgrace."

He's kip it up long tam lak dat, but not hard tellin' now,
W'at's all de noise upon de house—who's kick heem up de row?
It seem Bonhomme was sneak aroun' upon de stockin' sole,
An' firs' t'ing den de ole man walk right t'roo de stove pipe hole.

W'en Dominique is see heem dere, wit' wan leg hang below,
An' 'noder leg straight out above, he's glad for ketch heem so—
De ole man can't do not'ing, den, but swear and ax for w'y
Noboddy tak' heem out dat hole before he's comin' die.

[Pg 777]

Den Dominique he spik lak dis, "Mon cher M'sieur Gourdon
I'm not riche city feller, me, I'm only habitant,
But I was love more I can tole your daughter Emmeline,
An' if I marry on dat girl, Bagosh! she's lak de Queen.

"I want you mak de promise now, before it's come too late,
An' I mus' tole you dis also, dere's not moche tam for wait.
Your foot she's hangin' down so low, I'm 'fraid she ketch de cole,
Wall! if you give me Emmeline, I pull you out de hole."

Dat mak' de ole man swear more hard he never swear before,
An' wit' de foot he's got above, he's kick it on de floor,
"Non, non," he say "Sapré tonnerre! she never marry you,
An' if you don't look out you get de jail on St. Mathieu."

"Correc'," young Dominique is say, "mebbe de jail's tight place,
But you got wan small corner, too, I see it on de face,
So if you don't lak geev de girl on wan poor habitant,
Dat's be mese'f, I say, Bonsoir, mon cher M'sieur Gourdon."

"Come back, come back," Maxime is shout—"I promise you de girl,
I never see no wan lak you—no never on de worl'!
It's not de nice trick you was play on man dat's gettin' ole,
But do jus' w'at you lak, so long you pull me out de hole."

[Pg 778]

"Hooraw! Hooraw!" Den Dominique is pull heem out tout suite
An' Emmeline she's helpin' too for place heem on de feet,
An' affer dat de ole man's tak' de young peep down de stair,
W'ere he is go couché right off, an' dey go on parloir.

Nex' Sunday morning dey was call by M'sieur le Curé
Get marry soon, an' ole Maxime geev Emmeline away;
Den affer dat dey settle down lak habitant is do,
An' have de mos' fine familee on Village St. Mathieu.

[Pg 779]

THE GIRL FROM MERCURY

An Interplanetary Love Story

Being the Interpretation of Certain Phonic Vibragraphs Recorded by the Long's Peak Wireless Installation, Now for the First Time Made Public Through the Courtesy of

Professor Caducious, Ph.D., Sometime Secretary of the Boulder Branch of the Association for the Advancement of Interplanetary Communication.

BY HERMAN KNICKERBOCKER VIELÉ

It is evident that the following logograms form part of a correspondence between a young lady, formerly of Mercury, and her confidential friend still resident upon the inferior planet. The translator has thought it best to preserve, as far as possible, the spirit of the original by the employment of mundane colloquialisms; the result, in spite of many regrettable trivialities, will, it is believed, be of interest to students of Cosmic Sociology.

The First Record

Yes, dear, it's me. I'm down here on the Earth and in our Settlement House, safe and sound. I meant to have called you up before, but really this is the first moment I have had to myself all day.—Yes, of course, I said "all day." You know very well they have days and nights here, because this restless little planet spins, or something of the sort.—I haven't the least idea why it does so, and I don't care.—I did not come here to make intelligent observations like a dowdy "Seeing Saturn" tourist. So don't be Uranian. Try to exercise intuitive perception if I say anything you can't understand.—What is that?—Please concentrate a little harder.—Oh! Yes, I have seen a lot of human beings already, and would you believe it? some of them seem almost possible—especially *one*.—But I will come to that one later. I've got so much to tell you all at once I scarcely know where to begin.—Yes, dear, the One happens to be a man. You would not have me discriminate, would you, when our object is to bring whatever happiness we can to those less fortunate than ourselves? You know success in slumming depends first of all upon getting yourself admired, for then the others will want to be like you, and once thoroughly dissatisfied with themselves they are almost certain to reform. Of course I am only a visitor here, and shall not stay long enough to take up serious work, so Ooma says I may as well proceed along the line of least resistance.—If you remember Ooma's enthusiasm when she ran the Board of Missions to Inferior Planets, you can fancy her now that she has an opportunity to carry out all her theories. Oh, she's great! [Pg 780]

My transmigration was disappointing as an experience. It was nothing more than going to sleep and dreaming about circles—orange circles, yellow circles, with a thousand others of graduated shades between, and so on through the spectrum till you pass absolute green and get a tone or two toward blue and strike the Earth color-note. Then with me everything got jumbled together and seemed about to take new shapes, and I woke up in the most commonplace manner and opened my eyes to find myself externalized in our Earth Settlement House with Ooma laughing at me. [Pg 781]

"Don't stir!" she cried. "Don't lift a finger till we are sure your specific gravity is all right." And then she pinched me to see if I was dense enough, because the atmosphere is heavier or lighter or something here than with us.

I reminded her that matter everywhere must maintain an absolute equilibrium with its environment, but she protested.

"That's well enough in theory; you must understand that the Earth is awfully out of tune at present, and sometimes it requires time to readjust ourselves to its conditions."

—I did not say so, but I fancy Ooma may have been undergoing readjustment.—My dear, she has grown as pudgy as a Jupitan, and her clothes—but then she always did look more like a spiral nebula than anything else.

(The record here becomes unintelligible by reason of the passage of a thunderstorm above the summit of Long's Peak.)

—There must be star-dust in the ether.—I never had to concentrate so hard before.—That's all about the Settlement House, and don't accuse me again of slighting details. I'm sure you know the place now as well as Ooma herself, so I can go on to tell what little I have learned about human beings.

It seems I am never to admit that I was not born on Earth, for, like all provincials, the humans pride themselves on disbelieving everything beyond their own experience, and if they understood they would be certain to resent intrusions from another planet. I'm sure I don't blame them altogether when I recall those patronizing Jupitans.—And I'm told they are awfully jealous and distrustful even of one another, herding together for protection and governed by so many funny little tribal codes that what is right on one side of an imaginary boundary may be wrong on the other.—Ooma considers this survival of the group-soul most interesting, and intends to make it the subject of a paper. I mention it only to explain why we call our Settlement a Boarding-House. A Boarding-House, you must know, is fundamentally a hunting pack which one can affiliate with or separate from at will.—Rather a pale yellow idea, isn't it? Ooma thinks it necessary to conform to it in order to be considered respectable, which is the one thing on Earth most desired.—What, dear?—Oh, I don't know what it means to be respectable any more than you do.—One thing more. You'll have to draw on your imagination! Ooma is called here Mrs. Bloomer.—Her own name was just a little too unearthly. Mrs. signifies that a woman is married.—What?—Oh, no, no, no, nothing of the sort.—But I shall have to leave that for another time. I'm not at all sure how it is [Pg 782]

myself.

By the way, if *any one* should ask you where I am, just say I've left the planet, and you don't know when I shall be back.—Yes, you know who I mean.—And, dear, perhaps you might drop a hint that I detest all foreigners, especially Jupitans.—Please don't laugh so hard; you'll get the atmospheric molecules all woozy.—Indeed, there's not the slightest danger here. Just fancy, if you please, beings who don't know when they are hungry without consulting a wretched little mechanism, and who measure their radius of conception by the length of their own feet.—Of course I shall be on hand for the Solstice! I wouldn't miss that for an asteroid!—Oh, did I really promise that? Well, I'll tell you about hi-m another time. [Pg 783]

The Second Record

THOUGH PROBABLY THIRD COMMUNICATION

—I really must not waste so much gray matter, dear, over unimportant details. But I simply had to tell you all about my struggles with the clothes. When Ooma came back, just as I had mastered them with the aid of her diagrams, the dear thing was so much pleased she actually hugged me, and I must confess the effect made me forget my discomfort. Really, an Earth girl is not so much to be pitied if she has becoming dresses to wear. As you may be sure I was anxious to compare myself with others, I was glad enough to hear Ooma suggest going out.

"Come on," she said, executively, "I have only a half-hour to devote to your first walk. Keep close beside me, and remember on no account to either dance or sing."

"But if I see others dancing may I not join them?" I inquired.

"You won't see anybody dancing on Broadway," she replied, a trifle snubbily, but I resolved to escape from her as soon as possible and find out for myself.

I shall never forget my shock on discovering the sky blue instead of the color it should be, but soon my eyes became accustomed to the change. In fact, I have not since that first moment been able to conceive of the sky as anything but blue. And the city?—Oh, my dear, my dear, I never expected to encounter anything so much out of key with the essential euphonies. Of course I have not traveled very much, but I should say there is nothing in the universe like a street they call Broadway—unless it be upon the lesser satellite of Mars, where the poor people are so awfully cramped for space. When I suggested this to Ooma she laughed and called me clever, for it seems [Pg 784] there is a tradition that a mob of meddling Martians once stopped on Earth long enough to give the foolish humans false ideas about architecture and many other matters. But I soon forgot everything in my interest in the people. Such a poor puzzle-headed lot they are. One's heart goes out to them at once as they push and jostle one another this way and that, with no conceivable object other than to get anywhere but where they are in the shortest time possible. One longs to help them; to call a halt upon their senseless struggles; to reason with them and explain how all the psychic force they waste might, if exerted in constructive thought, bring everything they wish to pass. Mrs. Bloomer assures me they only ridicule those who venture to interfere, and it will take at least a Saturn century to so much as start them in the right direction. Our settlement is their only hope, she says, and even we can help them only indirectly.

Not long ago, it appears, they had to choose a King or Mayor, or whatever the creature is called who executes their silly laws, and our people so manipulated the election that the choice fell on one of us.

I thought this a really good idea, and supposed, of course, we must at once have set about demonstrating how a planet should be managed. But no! that was not our system, if you please. Instead of making proper laws our agent misbehaved himself in every way the committee could suggest, until at last the humans rose against him and put one of themselves in his place, and after that things went just a little better than before. This is the only way in which they can be taught. But, dear me, isn't it tedious?

Of course, I soon grew anxious for an exchange of thought with almost any one, but it was a long while before I discovered a single person who was not in a violent hurry. At last, however, we [Pg 785] came upon a human drawn apart a little from the throng, who stood with folded arms, engaged apparently in lofty meditation. His countenance was amiable, although a little red.

Saying nothing to Ooma of my purpose, I slipped away from her, and looking up into the creature's eyes inquired mentally the subject of his thoughts; also, how he came to be so inordinately stout, and why he wore bright metal buttons on his garment. But my only answer was a stupid blink, for his mentality seemed absolutely incapable of receiving suggestions not expressed in sounds. I observed farther that his aura inclined too much toward violet for perfect equipoise.

"G'wan out of this, and quit yer foolin'," he remarked, missing my meaning altogether.

Of course I spoke then, using the human speech quite glibly for a first attempt, and hastened to assure him that though I had no idea of fooling, I should not go on until my curiosity had been satisfied. But just then Ooma found me.

"My friend is a stranger," she explained to the brass-buttoned man.

"Then why don't you put a string to her?" he asked.

I learned later that I had been addressing one of the public jesters employed by the community to keep Broadway from becoming intolerably dull.

"But you must not speak to people in the street," said Ooma, "not even to policemen."

"Then how am I to brighten others' lives?" I asked, more than a little disappointed, for several humans hurrying past had turned upon me looks indicating moods receptive of all the brightening I could give.

I might have amused myself indefinitely, studying the rapid succession of varying faces, had not Bloomer cautioned me not to stare. She said people would think me from the country, which is considered discreditable, and as this reminded me that I had as yet seen nothing growing, I asked to be shown the gardens and groves. [Pg 786]

"There is one," she said, indicating an open space not far away, where sure enough there stood some wretched looking trees which I had not recognized before, forgetting that, of course, leaves here must be green. I saw no flowers growing, but presently we came upon some in a sort of crystal bower guarded by a powerful black person. I wanted so to ask him how he came to be black, but the memory of my last attempt at information deterred me. Instead, I inquired if I might have some roses.

"Walk in, Miss," he replied most civilly, and in I walked through the door, past the sweetest little embryonic, who wore the vesture of a young policeman.

"Boy," I said, "have you begun to realize your soul?"

"Nope," he replied. "I ain't in fractions yet."

—Some stage of earthly progress, I suppose, though I did not like a certain movement of his eyelid, and one never can tell, you know, how hard embryonics are really striving. So I made haste to gather all the roses I could carry, and was about to hurry after Ooma, when a person barred my way.

"Hold on!" he cried. "Ain't you forgetting something? Why don't you take the whole lot?"

"Because I have all I want for the present," I answered, rather frightened, perceiving that his aura had grown livid, and I don't know how I could have soothed him had not Ooma once more come to my relief. I could see that she was annoyed with me, but she controlled herself and placed some token in the being's hand which acted on his agitation like a charm.

As I told you, Bloomer had given me with the other things, a crown of artificial roses which, now that I had real flowers to wear, I wanted to throw away, but this she would not permit, insisting that such a proceeding would make the humans laugh at me—though to look into their serious faces one would not believe this possible. The thoughts of those about me, as I divined them, seemed anything but jocular. They came to me incoherent and inconsecutive, a jumble of conditional premises leading to approximate conclusions expressed in symbols having no intrinsic meaning.—Of course, it is unfair to judge too soon, but I have already begun to doubt the existence of direct perception among them.—What did you say, dear?—Bother direct perception?—Well, I wonder how *we* should like to apprehend nothing that could not be put into words? You, I'm sure, would have the most confused ideas about Earthly conditions if you depended entirely upon my remarks.—Now concentrate, and you shall hear something really interesting. [Pg 787]

—No, not the One yet.—He comes later.—

We had not gone far, I carrying my roses, and Bloomer not too well pleased, as I fancied, because so many people turned to look at us (Bloomer has retrograded physically until she is at times almost Uranian, probably as the result of wearing black, which appears to be the chromatic equivalent of respectability), when suddenly I became sensible of a familiar influence, which was quite startling because so unexpected. Looking everywhere, I caught sight of—who do you suppose? Our old friend Tuk.—Mr. Tuck, T-u-c-k here, if you please. He was about to enter a—a means of transportation, and though his back was towards me, I recognized that drab aura of his at once, and projected a reactionary impulse which was most effective.

In his surprise he was for the moment in danger of being trampled upon by a rapidly moving animal.—Yes, dear, I said "animal."—I don't know and I don't consider it at all important. I do not pretend to be familiar with mundane zoölogy.—Tuck declared himself delighted to see me, and so I believe he was, though he controlled his radiations in the supercilious way he always had. But upon one point he did not leave me long in doubt. Externally, at least, my Earthly Ego is a— [Pg 788]

(NOTE: *The word which signifies a species of peach or nectarine peculiar to the planet Mercury is doubtless used here in a symbolic sense.*)

—I caught on to that most interesting fact the moment his eyes rested on me.

"By all that's fair to look upon!" he cried, jumping about in a manner human people think eccentric, "are you astral or actualized?"

"See for yourself," I said, holding out my hand, which it took him rather longer than necessary to make sure of.

"Well, what on Earth brings you here? Come down to paint another planet red?" he rattled on, believing himself amusing.

"Now haven't I as much right to light on Earth as on any other bit of cosmic dust?" I asked, laughing and forgetting how much snubbing he requires in the delight of seeing any one I knew.

Then he insisted that I had a "date" with him.—A date, as I discovered later, means something nice to eat—and hinted very broadly that Bloomer need not wait if she had more important matters to attend to. I must confess she did not seem at all sorry to have me taken off her hands, for after cautioning me to beware of a number of things I did not so much as know by name, she shot off like a respectable old aerolite with a black trail streaming out behind. If she remains here much longer she will be coming back upon a mission to reform *us*. As for Tuck, he became [Pg 789] insufferably patronizing at once.

"Well, how do you like the Only Planet? and how do you like the Only Town? and how do you like the Only Street?" he began, waving his hands and looking about him as though there were anything here that one of *us* could admire. But, of course, I refused to gratify him with my crude impressions. I simply said:

"You appear very well pleased with them yourself."

"And so will you be," he replied, "when you have realized their possibilities. Remark that elderly entity across the street. I have to but exert my will that he shall sneeze and drop his eyeglasses, and behold, there they go."—Yes, my dear, eyeglasses. They are worn on the nose by people who imagine they can not see very well.

"I consider such actions cruel and unkind," I said, at the same time willing an embryonic girl to pick the glasses up, and though the child was rather beyond my normal circle, I was delighted to see her obey. But I have an idea Tuck regretted an experiment which taught me something I might not have found out, at least for a while.

I had now been on Earth several hours, and change of atmosphere gives one a ravenous appetite. You see, I had forgotten to ask Ooma how, and how often, humans ate, so when Tuck suggested breakfast as a form of entertainment I put myself in sympathy with the idea at once. Besides it is most important to know just where to find the things you want, and you may be sure I made a lot of mental notes when we came, as presently we did, to a tower called Astoria.

I understand that the upper portions of the edifice are used for study of the Stars, but we were made welcome on the lower story by a stately being, who conducted us to honorable seats in an inner court. There were small trees growing here, green, of course, but rather pretty for all that; [Pg 790] the people, gathered under their shade in little groups, were much more cheerful and sustaining than any I had seen so far, and an elemental intelligence detailed to minister to our wants seemed well-trained and docile.

"Here you have a glimpse of High Life," announced Tuck, when he had written something on a paper.

"The Higher Life?" I inquired, eagerly, and I did not like the flippant tone in which he answered:

"No, not quite—just high enough."

I was beginning to be so bored by his conceit and self-complacency that I cast my eyes about and smiled at several pleasant-looking persons, who returned the smile and nodded in a friendly fashion, till I could perceive Tuck's aura bristle and turn greenish-brown.

"You can't possibly see any one you know here," he protested, crossly.

"All the better reason why I should reach out in search of affinities," I retorted. But after that, though I was careful to keep my eyes lowered most of the time, I resolved to come some day to the Astoria alone and smile at every one I liked. I don't believe I should ever know a human if Tuck could have his way.

Presently the elemental brought us delicious things, and while we ate them Tuck talked about himself. It appears he has produced an opera here which is a success. People throng to hear it and consider him a great composer. At all of which, you may believe, I was astonished—just fancy our Tuk posing as a genius!—but presently when he became elated by the theme and hummed a bar or two, I understood. The wretch had simply actualized a few essential harmonies—and done it very badly. I see now why he likes so much being here, and understand why his associates are almost altogether human. I don't remember ever meeting with such deceit and effrontery before. [Pg 791] I was so indignant that I could feel my astral fingers tremble. I could not bear to look at him, and as by that time I had eaten all I could, I rose and walked directly from the court without another word. I am sure he would have pursued me had not the elemental, divining my wish to escape, detained him forcibly.

Once in the street again, I immediately hypnotized an old lady, willing her to go direct to Bloomer's Boarding-House while I followed behind. It may not have been convenient for her, I am afraid, but I knew of no other way to get back.—Dear me, the light is growing dim, and I must be dressing for the evening. Good-by!—By the way, I forgot to tell you something else that happened —remind me of it next time!

—Yes, I remember, and you shall hear all about it before I describe an evening at the Settlement, but it don't amount to much.—I told you how cross and over-bearing Tuck was at the Astoria tower, and of the mean way in which he restricted my observations. Well, of all the people in the grove that day there was only one whom I could see without being criticized, and he sat all alone and facing me, just behind Tuck's back. Some green leaves hung between us, and whenever I moved my head to note what he was doing he moved his, too, to look at me. He seemed so lonely that I was sorry for him, but his atmosphere showed him to be neither sullen nor Uranian, and I could not help it if I was just a little bit responsive. Besides, Tuck, once on the subject of his opera, grew so self-engrossed and dominant that one had either to assert one's own mentality or become subjective. [Pg 792]

—No, dear, that is not the *only* reason. There may be such a thing as an isolated reason, but I have never met one—they always go in packs. I confess to a feeling of interest in the stranger. Nobody can look at you with round blue eyes for half an hour steadily without exercising some attraction, either positive or negative, and I felt, too, that he was trying to tell me something which would have been a great deal more interesting than Tuck's opera, and I believe had I remained a little longer we could have understood each other between the trees just as you and I can understand each other across the intervals of space. But then it is so easy to be mistaken.—I had to pass quite close to him in going out, and I am not sure I did not drop a rose.

—There may be just a weenie little bit more about the Astorian, but that will come in its proper place. Now I must get on to the evening.—It was not much of an occasion, merely the usual gathering of our crowd, or rather of those of us who have no special assignment for the time in the large Council Room I have described to you.

The President of the Board of Control at present is Marlow, Marlow the Great, as he is called, the painter whose pictures did so much to elevate the Patagonians.—No, dear, I never heard of Patagonia before, but I'm almost sure it's not a planet.—With Marlow came a Mrs. Mopes, who is engaged in creating schools of fiction by writing stories under different names and then reviewing them in her own seven magazines. Next, taking the guests at random, was Baxter, a deadly person in his human incarnation, whose business it is to make stocks fly up or tumble down.—I don't know what stocks are, but they must be something very easily frightened.—Then there was a Mr. Waller, nicknamed the Reverend, whom the Council allows to speak the truth occasionally, while the rest of the time he tells people anything they want to hear to win their [Pg 793] confidence. And the two Miss Dooleys who sing so badly that thousands who can not sing at all leave off singing altogether when they once hear them. And Mr. Flick, who misbehaves at funerals to distract mourners from their grief, and a Mr. O'Brien, whose duty it is to fly into violent passions in public places just to show how unbecoming temper is.

There were many others, so many I can not begin to enumerate them. Some had written books and were known all over the planet, and some who were not known at all had done things because there was nobody else to do them. And some were singers and some were actors, and some were rich and some were poor to the outside world, but in the Council Room they met and laughed and matched experiences and made jokes; from the one who had built a battle ship so terrible that all the other ships were burnt on condition that his should be also, to the ordinary helpers who applaud stupid plays till intelligent human beings become thoroughly disgusted with bad art.

In the world, of course, they are all serious enough, and often know each other only by secret signs, while every day and night and minute our poor earth-brothers come a little nearer the light —pushed toward it, pulled toward it, wheedled and trickled and bullied and coaxed, and thinking all the while how immensely clever they are, and what a wonderful progressive, glorious age they have brought about for themselves.—At all events, this is the rather vague composite impression I have received of the plans and purposes of the Board of Directors, and doubtless it is wrong.

I suppose with a little trouble I might have recognized nearly every one, but the fancy took me to suspend intuition just to see how Earth girls feel, and you know when one is hearing a lot of [Pg 794] pleasant things one does not much care who happens to be saying them.

I fancy Marlow thought less of me when I confessed that I am here only for the lark, and really do not care a meteor whether the planet is ever elevated or not. But he is a charming old fellow all the same, and the only one of the lot who has not grown the least bit smudgy.

Marlow announced that the evening would be spent in harmony with the vibrations of Orion, and set us all at work to get in touch. I love Orion light myself, for none other suits my aura quite so well, and I was glad to find they had not taken up the Vega fad.—The light here? My dear, it is not even filtered.—Some of us, no doubt for want of practice, were rather slow about perfecting, but finally we all caught on, and when O'Brien, no longer fat and florid, and the elder Miss Dooley, no longer scrawny, moved out to start the dance, there was only one who had not assumed an astral personality. Poor fellow, though I pitied him, I did admire his spunk in holding back. It seems that as an editor he took to telling falsehoods on his own account so often that the Syndicate is packing him off as Special Correspondent to a tailless comet.

Tuck never came at all; either he realizes how honest people must regard him and his opera, or else the elementals at the Astoria are still detaining him.

We had a lovely dance, and while we rested Marlow called on some of us for specialties. Mrs. Mopes did a paragraph by a man named Henry James, translated into action, which seemed quite difficult, and then a person called Parker externalized a violin and gave the Laocoon in terms of sound. To me his rendering of marble resembled terra-cotta until I learned that the copy of the [Pg 795] statue here is awfully weatherstained. After this three pretty girls gave the Aurora Borealis by telepathic suggestion rather well, and then I sang "Love Lives Everywhere"—just plain so.

—I know this must all sound dreadfully flat to you, quite like "Pastimes for the Rainy Season in Neptune," but Bloomer says she doesn't know what would happen if we should ever give a really characteristic jolly party.

We wound up with an Earth dance called the Virginia Reel, the quickest means you ever saw for descending to a lower psychic plane. That's all I have to tell, and quite enough, I'm sure you'll think.—What? The Astorian? I have not seen him since.—But there is a little more, a very little, if you are not tired.—This morning I received a gift of roses, just like the one I dropped yesterday, brought me by the same small embryonic I had seen in the flower shop. I asked the child in whose intelligence the impulse had originated, and he replied:

"A blue-eyed feller with a mustache, but he gave me a plunk not to tell."

I understood a plunk to be a token of confidence, and I at once expressed displeasure at the boy's betrayal of his trust. I told him such an act would make dark lines upon his aura which might not fade for several days.

"Say, ain't you got some message to send back?" he asked.

"Boy!" said I, "don't forget your little aura."

"All right," he answered, "I'll tell him 'Don't forget your little aura.' I'll bet he coughs up another plunk."

I don't know what he meant, but I am very much afraid there may be some mistake.—Oh, yes, I am quite sure to be back in time for the Solstice.—Or at least for the Eclipse. [Pg 796]

The Fourth Record

(Note: *Between this logogram and the last the Long's Peak Receptive Pulsator was unfortunately not in operation for the space of a fortnight, as the electrician who took the instrument apart for adjustment found it necessary to return to Denver for oil.*)

—Yes, dear, it's me, though if I did not know personality to be indestructible I should begin to have my doubts. I have not made any more mistakes, that is, not any bad ones, since I went to the Astoria alone for lunch, and the elementals were so very disagreeable just because I had no money. I know all about money now, except exactly how you get it, and Tuck assures me that is really of no importance. I never told Ooma how the blue-eyed Astorian paid my bill for me, and her perceptive faculties have grown too dull to apprehend a thing she is not told. Fresh roses still come regularly every day, and of course I can do no less than express my gratitude now and then.—Oh, I don't know how often, I don't remember.—But it is ever so much pleasanter to have some one you like to show you the way about than to depend on hypnotizing strangers, who may have something else to do.

—I told you last week about the picnic, did I not? The day, I mean, when Bloomer took me into the country, and Tuck so far forgave my rudeness to him as to come with us to carry the basket.—Oh, yes, indeed, I am becoming thoroughly domesticated on Earth. And, my dear, these humans are docility itself when you once acquire the knack of making them do exactly as you wish, which is as easy as falling off a log.—A *log* is the external evidence of a pre-existent tree, cylindrical in form, and though often sticky, not sufficiently so to be adhesive.

—That picnic was so pleasant—or would have been but for Bloomer's anxiety that I should behave [Pg 797] myself, and Tuck's anxiety that I should not—that I determined to have another all by myself—and I have had it.

I traveled to the same little dell I described before, and I put my feet in the water just as I wasn't allowed to do the other day. And I built a fire and almost cooked an egg and ate cake (an egg is the bud of a bird, and cake is edible poetry) sitting on a fence.—Fences grow horizontally and have no leaves.—Don't ask so many questions!

After a while, however, I became tired of being alone, so I started off across some beautiful green meadows toward a hillside, where I had observed a human walking about and waving a forked wand. He proved the strangest-looking being I have met with yet, more like those wild and woolly space-dwellers who tumbled out when that tramp comet bumped against our second moon. But he was a considerate person, for when he saw me coming and divined that I should be tired, he piled up a quantity of delicious-scented herbage for me to sit on.

"Good morning, mister," I said, plumping myself down upon the mound he had made, and he, being much more impressionable than you would suppose from his Uranian appearance, replied:

"I swan, I like your cheek."

"It's a pleasant day," I said, because one is always expected to announce some result of

observation of the atmosphere. It shows at once whether or not one is an idiot.

"I call it pretty danged hot," he returned, intelligently.

"Then why don't you get out of the sun?" I suggested, more to keep the conversation fluid than because I cared a bit.

"I'm a-goin' to," he answered, "just as soon as that goll-darned wagon comes." (A "goll-darned" wagon is, I think, a wagon without springs.) [Pg 798]

"What are you going to do then?" I asked, beginning to fear I should be left alone again after all my trouble.

"Goin' home to dinner," he replied, and I at once said I would go with him.—You see, I had placed a little too much reliance on the egg.

"I dunno about that, but I guess it will be all right," he urged, hospitably, and presently the goll-darned wagon arrived with another man, who turned out to be the first one's son and who looked as though he bit.

Together the two threw all the herbage into the wagon till it was heaped far above their heads.

"How am I ever to get up?" I asked, for I had no idea of walking any farther, and I could see the man's white house ever so far away.

"Who said you was goin' to get up at all?" inquired the biter, disagreeably, but the other answered for me.

"I said it, that's who, you consarned jay," he announced, reprovingly.

When I had made them both climb up first and give me each a hand, I had no difficulty at all in mounting, but I was very careful not to thank the Jay, which seemed to make him more morose than ever. Then they slid down again, and off we started.

Once when we came to some lovely blue flowers growing in water near the roadside I told the Jay to stop and wade in and pick them for me.

"I'll be dogged if I do," he answered; so I said:

"I don't know what being 'dogged' means, but if it is a reward for being nice and kind and polite, I hope you will be."

Whereupon he bit at me once and waded in, while the other man, whose name, it seems, was Pop, sat down upon a stone and laughed.

"Gosh! If this don't beat the cats," he said, slapping his knee, which was his way of making himself laugh harder. [Pg 799]

I put the flowers in my hair and in my belt and wherever I could stick them. But there was still a lot left over, and whenever we met people I threw them some, which appeared to please Pop, but made the Jay still more bite-y.

Presently we came to a very narrow place and there, as luck would have it, we met an automobile.—Thank goodness, I need not explain automobile.—And who should be at the lever all alone but—the Astorian.

I recognized him instantly, and he recognized me, which was, I suppose, his reason for forgetting to stop till he had nearly run us down. In a moment we were in the wildest tangle, though nothing need have happened had not the Jay completely lost his temper.

"Hang your picture!" he called out, savagely, "What do you want?—The Earth?"

And with that he struck the animals—the wagon was not self-propelling—a violent blow, and they sprang forward with a lurch which made the hay begin to slip. I tried to save myself, but there was nothing to catch hold of, so off I slid and—oh, my dear, my dear, just fancy it!—I landed directly in his lap.—No, not the Jay's.—Of course, I stayed there as short a time as possible, for he was very nice about moving up to make room for me on the seat, but I am afraid it did seem frightfully informal just at first.

"It was all the fault of that consarned Jay," I explained, as soon as I had recovered my composure, "and I shall never ride in his goll-darned wagon again."

"I sincerely hope you will not," replied Astoria, looking at me with the most curious expression. "It would be much better to let me take you wherever you wish to go."

"That's awfully kind of you," I said, "but I don't care to go anywhere in particular this afternoon, except as far as possible from that objectionable young man." [Pg 800]

The Astorian did not speak again till he had turned something in the machine to make it back and jerk, and, once free from the upset hay, go on again.

"Say, Sissy, I thought you was comin' to take dinner," Pop called out from under the wagon, where he had crawled for safety, and when I replied as nicely as I could, "No, thank you, not to-day," he said again, quite sadly as I thought, "Gosh blim me, if that don't beat the cats!" and also

several other things I could not hear because we were moving away so rapidly.

When we had gone about a hundred miles—or yards, or inches, whichever it was—the Astorian, who had been sitting very straight, inquired if those gentlemen—meaning Pop and Jay—were near relatives.

I showed him plainly that I thought his question Uranian, and explained that I had not a relative on Earth. Then I told him exactly how I had come to be with them, and about my picnic and the egg. I am afraid I did not take great pains to make the story very clear, for it was such fun to perplex him. He is not at all like the Venus people, who have become so superlatively clever that they are always bored to death.

"Were you surprised to see me flying through the air?" I asked.

"Oh, no," he said; "I have always thought of you as coming to Earth in some such way from some far-distant planet."

"Oh, then, you know!" I gasped.

The Astorian laughed.

"I know you are the one perfect being in the world, and that is quite enough," he said, and I saw at once that whatever he had guessed about me he knew nothing at all of the Settlement. [Pg 801]

"Miss Aura," he went on,—he has called me that ever since that little embryonic made his stupid blunder, and I have not corrected him—here it is almost necessary to have some sort of a name —"Miss Aura, don't you think we have been mere acquaintances long enough? I'm only human—"

"Yes, of course," I interrupted, "but then that is not your fault—"

"I'm glad you look upon my misfortune so charitably," he said, a trifle more puzzled than usual, as I fancied.

"It is my duty," I replied. "I want to elevate you; to brighten your existence."

"My Aura!" he whispered; and I was not quite sure whether he meant me or not.

We were moving rapidly along the broad road beside a river. There were hills in the distance and the air from them was in the key of the Pleiades. There were gardens everywhere full of sunlight translated into flowers, and without an effort one divined the harmony of growing things. I felt that something was about to happen; I knew it, but I did not care to ask what it might be. Perhaps if I had tried I could not have known; perhaps for that hour I was only an Earth girl and could only know things as they know them, but I did not care.

We were going faster, faster every moment.

"Was it you who willed me to come out into the country?" I asked. "Have you been watching for me and expecting me?"

We were moving now as clouds that rush across a moon.

"I think I have been watching for you all my life and willing you to come," he said, which shows how dreadfully unjust we sometimes are to humans.

"While I was on another planet?" I inquired. "While we were millions and millions of miles apart? Suppose that I had never come to Earth?" [Pg 802]

We were moving like the falling stars one journeys to the Dark Hemisphere to see.

"I should have found you all the same," he whispered, half laughing, but his blue eyes glistened. "I do not think that space itself could separate us."

"Oh, do you realize that?" I asked, "and do you really know?"

"I know I have you with me now," he said, "and that is all I care to know."

We were flying now, flying as comets fly to perihelion. The world about was slipping from us, disintegrating and dissolving into cosmic thoughts expressed in color. Only his eyes were actual, and the blue hills far away, and the wind from them in the key of the Pleiades.

"There shall never any more be time or space for us," he said.

"But," I protested, "we must not overlook the fundamental facts."

"In all the universe there is just one fact," he cried, catching my hand in his, and then—

(Note: *Here a portion of the logogram becomes indecipherable, owing, perhaps, to the passage of some large bird across the line of projection. What follows is the last recorded vibragraph to date.*)

—Yes, dear, I know I should have been more circumspect. I should have remembered my position, but I didn't. And that's why I'm engaged to be married.—You have to here, when you reach a certain point—I know you will think it a great come-down for one of us, but after all do we not owe something to our sister planets?—

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