

**THE STAY-AT-HOME.**

There's dress an' hood to buy fr' Jane,  
A pair o' pants fr' John,  
A whole outfit fr' Buster Bill,  
An' winter's comin' on.  
But baby Nan, the stay-at-home,  
Jis laughs, an' never knows  
That all on earth she has to wear  
Is ole made-over clothes.

There's books to buy fr' them at school—  
It makes a pore man sick  
To hear 'em holler "Jogzags"  
An' "mental rithmetick."  
But, thank the Lord! the stay-at-home  
Is not so hard to please:  
Jis gits the fam'ly almanac  
An' reads it on her knees.

An' writin' books an' drawin' books—  
They never seem to think  
How natchy it costs to buy sich truck,  
An' pencils, pens, an' ink.  
But little Nan, the stay-at-home,  
She knows her daddy's pore;  
Jis gits a charcoal pen an' writes  
Her lesson on the floor.

There's boots to buy fr' Buster Bill,  
An' boots to buy fr' John,  
An' shoes fr' Jane an' ma an' I,  
Till all my money's gone.  
So Nan, the last, the stay-at-home,  
Is left to do without;  
Jis wears her home-made moccasins,  
An' crows, an' crawls about.

'Tears like that all I rake an' scrape  
Won't hardly satisfy  
The press'n' needs o' Bill an' John  
An' Jane an' ma an' I.  
But baby Nan, the stay-at-home,  
Is full o' sweet content;  
Jis cuddles up in daddy's arms  
An' never wants a cent.  
—Century.

**THE MIDDY'S CAPTIVE**

**B**UBBLERING won't do any good; you had better report the matter to Captain Wilson at once," said the navigating lieutenant of her majesty's ship Triumph, as he gazed quizzically down at the chubby-faced midshipman who stood in such comical dismay before his superior officer. "Come with me; I'm going to his stateroom now," the speaker added, not unkindly, as he noted the lad's evident distress. "I'm not blubbering, and I don't care if he does stop my leave!" indignantly responded the youngster, drawing himself up to his full height. "What is it, Stuart?" inquired the captain, as the twain entered his cabin. "I merely wish to say that we are ready to get under way whenever you please, sir; but Robson has a report to make," said the lieutenant. "Not seasick yet, I hope?" ejaculated Captain Wilson, ironically. "Well, I'm listening." "Please, sir, it's the 'First Lord'; he's bolted! He ran off while we were shipping the soft tack—I mean the bread!" incoherently stammered Robson. "The 'First Lord' bolted with the soft tack?" exclaimed Wilson in astonishment. "What does he mean, Stuart? Who's the 'First Lord'? Is the boy a raving maniac?" Lieutenant Stuart had perforce to explain that the cadet, being in charge of a boat sent ashore to ship provisions, had lost one of his men—an able-bodied seaman answering to the name of West, but who was, by reason of his superior bearing, nicknamed by his companions "the First Lord of the Admiralty."

Charley Robson meekly endured the reproaches of his commander, who was a stern martinet, and made no allowance for youthful inexperience. "But at any rate," mused the young fellow, when he was at length dismissed, "he said nothing about stopping my furlough." And then his volatile spirits threw off the recent discomfiture as only youth knows how to, while his thoughts wandered far away to that pleasant country home in Surrey, with all its attendant attractions, from which he had been separated for one long year. And if among the dream faces conjured up there was one which eclipsed all others, the fact should not cause undue surprise.

The usual steps taken to secure the arrest of the deserter were of no avail. His description was circulated by the police throughout the country, and all the majesty of the law invoked to capture the runaway, but the man disappeared as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up. He was of a strangely reserved nature, mixed but little with his companions, and had evidently once occupied a far superior station in life.

There was one person, however, who did not forget the runaway. Robson often in imagination ran the scoundrel to earth.

Little did Charley Robson imagine as at the commencement of his long-deferred leave he lounged in a first-class smoker on his way to Guildford how soon, or under what strange circumstances he would meet the villain of his melodrama.

"And you have come home; Alice will be able to resume her interrupted country walks," said the mother of the youthful sailor next morning. "But of course," added she, addressing the girl, "Charley has not heard of your latest admirer. I don't know whether the girl's nerves are out of order," continued Mrs. Robson, "but she declares that a strange man has been following her about during the last few weeks although no one else has ever caught a glimpse of him."

"I shan't be afraid of any loafers while Charley is with me," responded the maiden. "In proof of which, he shall convey me for a walk now." And Alice Western buoyantly danced off to array herself for the proposed jaunt. The eyes of mother and son followed

the girl with a wistful look as she quitted the room.

"I suppose nothing has been heard of him?" queried the latter.

"No! Your father thinks there never will be. Doubtless Sir Richard died abroad, believing to the end that he was a murderer."

"And Alice is still ignorant of her father's sad history?" queried the lad.

"Yes. We have decided not to say anything to her until she is of age, unless some contingency should arise, such as your obtaining a subalternancy, and being of the same mind as you are now."

Robson colored at the hint delicately conveyed by his mother, and so well understood by himself. To see their only son mated to their ward was the dearest wish of Admiral and Mrs. Robson, yet they had the good sense to restrain the impetuosity of the youthful couple until both arrived at years of maturity.

**II.**

With the course of true love running thus smoothly, and the crisp, frozen ground under their feet, the twain started upon their ramble.

With buoyant steps they breasted the "Hog's Back," from which favorite vantage ground a splendid view of the surrounding country could be obtained.

"Yes, there's the dear old Towers," said Alice, "where I should be living now if the pater had not died."

"You've found another home," whispered Charley, "and other parents."

"I know that, dear," responded the girl. "But you cannot imagine what it feels like to have one's birthplace given over to ruin and decay, and to know one hasn't a single living relative. Only to think I cannot even visit my father's grave, because he died in some far-away outlandish place!" Then, with returning vivacity, she added: "Don't you remember that day in your school holidays when we walked over there and rambled through the disused rooms? How we thought there was a ghost in the hall, and ran all the three miles back home without once stopping?"

"I should just think I did," said the young officer. "You caught a chill through being overheard, and the governor said he would make a tailor of me for being such an idiot."

"You wouldn't be afraid now?" queried the girl.

"No fear!" laughed her companion. "Life on a man-of-war soon knocks all the fear of spooks out of a man."

"Let us pay another visit, then!"

A sharp walk soon brought the twain to the rusty lodge-gates of Western Towers.

"How dreary it looks!" said the girl. "I wonder if that scullery window is still unfastened?"

Charley tried, and to his surprise the sash slipped up without difficulty. "It's a case of gentlemen first this time," said he, stepping through the aperture. "Come along, tomboy. If you're not careful you'll tear your dress. The window's no bigger than the lubber-hole of a brig."

The easement being negotiated in safety, together they wandered through the cobweb-festooned rooms of the once palatial residence. Ascending to a second story, Robson carelessly threw open a door of a room which faced the landing. Here an unexpected sight met their gaze. Sitting before a wood fire was an elderly man, contemplating the flames with a ruminant air. At the sound they made he turned his face toward them and started in alarm.

The next moment the youth was across the room and grappling with the stranger. "You villain!" he panted. "I've got you at last! Run, Alice, bring some one quickly! I can't hold him long; say he's a deserter from the navy."

The trembling limbs of the girl failed to carry out his behests as she stood fascinated, watching the unequal struggle, which was speedily ended. Youth and agility were no match for the sailor's sinewy arms, and in a short time Robson was ignominiously plumed against the wall.

With lowering brows and eyes, which boded no good to his captive, West stood staring at the lad as if undecided what to do with him. Then, catching sight of the pale face of Alice, who was petrified with horror upon recognizing in her companion's antagonist the man who had so persistently dogged her footsteps of late, his own features assumed a softer expression, and he muttered: "It is kismet!"

After a pause of breathless silence the ex-sailor, addressing his captive, said: "You are not so muscular as your father in his youth, young fellow. The Charley Robson that I knew would never have allowed an old man to get the better of him; but let that pass and come to the crux of the matter. You want to arrest me for deserting from the navy. Very well, you shall, if you still wish to after hearing what I have to say."

Releasing the grip upon his would-be captor, the elder man, in a strange, cultured voice, addressed his auditors.

"Years ago," said he, "I was known and respected in this neighborhood, a man of substance, and a member of the diplomatic corps. Unfortunately, in my official capacity, I became embroiled in a quarrel with a political opponent, and, as was more common even fifteen years ago, the result was I had no alternative between fighting a duel or being dishonored."

"Not to make a long story, my adversary and our seconds journeyed to Guildford with me late one night, intending to settle our differences at day-break, on the following morning. With the courtesy that such affairs demanded, I offered the whole party hospitality for the night."

"From the moment my head touched the pillow until I was awakened the next morning my mind was an entire blank, but judge of my horror when,

essaying to rise, I found the bedclothes dabbled with blood, and at the foot of my couch a gory hunting knife belonging to myself. Simultaneous with my horrible discovery the servant found the man I was to have fought lying foefully murdered.

"Although conscious of my innocence, I dared not face the inquiry which was sure to follow, as who would believe my own theory of the matter, which was simply that I committed the terrible act in my sleep, as from childhood I had been subject to attacks of somnambulism. Hastily caressing my infant daughter, the only pledge left me by my departed wife, I left the house like a felon and fled the country, and it was hunger for a glimpse of my dear child's face that has worked my undoing. My faithful secretary conspired at my escape, and subsequently sent me the news of the charge of the willful murder against Sir Richard Western. Yes, you will be able to deliver up to justice a more important person than the deserter West. My devoted retainer, Burton, who assisted me at such great risks to himself, is not here to help me now. He is dead."

"He was a villain, Sir Richard!" cried Robson, in wild excitement. "It was he himself who killed Lord Marcus, and artfully foisted the blame upon you in order that you should not discover his defilements. My father possesses his dying confession to that effect."

The sudden revelation of feeling was almost too much for the baronet. Tottling to the nearest chair, he buried his face in his toil-worn hands. Silence reigned in the room for a few intense moments. Then Sir Richard, feeling a gentle hand upon his shoulder, looked up into a sweet but still scared face and two half-frightened gray eyes.

"Daddy, dear," Charley heard a tremulous voice murmur softly as he stole from the room.

Powerful friends at the admiralty soon glossed over the delinquencies of the seaman West, and Sir Richard Western once more assumed his proper rank and station. As time wore on, and the vividness of his past misery faded, he could even afford to joke about the matter; and sometimes, upon the rare occasions that he saw a certain young officer, would, much to the amusement of his daughter, simulate extreme terror and cry in affected dismay: "He has come for me at last!"

When some few years later a very excited youth, with a golden circlet upon the arm of his new uniform coat, burst unceremoniously into the room, he was greeted by the same old joke, and in response blushing replied: "I'll let you off this time if you will give me Alice as a hostage." And as the girl seemed to be a willing sacrifice, Sir Richard gave them his blessing.

**THE YOUNGEST DEPOSITOR.**

**Flaxen-Haired Girl to Whom Someone Is Always Kind.**

Once every month, in the long line of men and women that forms in front of the teller's window on "open day" at the Union Life Savings-Bank, a flaxen head appears—at the height of their elbows. Looking down, one sees that close against the breast of a shabby frock is tightly clasped a bank-book—and then, says the New York World, the secret is out. The flaxen-haired little girl is the bank's and New York's youngest depositor.

Alice Metz is her name, and her home is close by Hell's Kitchen. She is barely eight years old. How she gets the money nobody knows, but each month there is a deposit of fifty cents to swell her account, which has now reached the sum of three dollars. There she stands patiently in line till some one less hurried and preoccupied than the rest bends to question her.

"Will you help me?" asks the little maid, breathlessly. "I have fifty cents—two quarters. Johnny got it changed for me; there were five before. And I want to put it in there," pointing to the window, "and they write it down here in the book," finding the row of figures. "But I don't know how by myself. Will you do it? O, yes, I can put down my own name. I earned I couldn't bring my money till I learned to do that."

She is so engaging in her pretty youthfulness that men or women, as the case may be, forthwith fill out the deposit blank. Alice laboriously inserts her name, and is in a state of ecstasy when she is lifted up to give in those precious quarters.

Her December helper was a woman. When the ceremony was over it was already dark.

"Where do you go now, little one?" she said, fearing for the child's safety.

"Oh, Johnny's waiting across the road," replied the little depositor.

So they traveled in company, and sure enough there was Johnny, sturdy and fat, one year older than his small charge.

"It's in!" Alice cried, gleefully. "The lady did it! She's ever so good!"

"Somebody's always good to you, I guess," was Johnny's comprehensive reply. "But did you count?" and together the two heads bent over the column. Over and over they counted.

"Three dollars, that's it," concluded Johnny, at last, with a sigh of relief. "It's in for keeps, Alice."

She clutched the book once more to her bosom, and hand in hand the two trotted off into the darkness.

**New English Dictionary.**

Dr. Murray expects to have more than half of the new English dictionary published by the end of the century—up to the middle of the letter L.

Half the people in the world are unhappy because they can't afford the things that make the other half miserable.

The wire trust lacks the ability to control political wire pulling.

It seems queer that an intelligence office should supply stupid servants.

**Explanation.**

"How do you explain the saying that two are company and three are none?" asked the inane visitor.

"I guess," said Tommy, "that there wasn't enough to eat."—Indianapolis Journal.

**A Strong Man's Secret.**

The strongest man on earth says the secret of his wonderful power is perfect digestion. Hostetter's Stomach Bitters makes digestion easy, and cures all complaints arising from a weak stomach, such as indigestion, biliousness, liver and kidney ailments. As a tonic it is marvelous. Everybody needs it at this time of the year.

The windows of Persian houses, as a rule, are not visible from the street.

There was a young man from Lenore,  
Who boldly went off to the war;  
The "beef" made him sick,  
He recovered quite quick  
By the prompt use of old Jesse Moore.

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That others may know the means of cure we give the name of the medicine used—Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. These pills contain all the elements necessary to give new life and richness to the blood and restore shattered nerves.

—New Era, Greenburg, Ind.

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