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IN A MUSIC SHOP.

In a dim corner of the shop,
 With none but mice to mark,
 The weary old toy either hung,
 Forgotten by the dark.

The cobweb hid its outworn case,
 Dimmed with the anxious years;
 The strings that little hands had pricked
 To laughter more than tears.

(And didst thou hope, a music toy,
 For slumber? Nay, awake!
 The heart of music has no rest
 Until its cords must break.)

Without, among the violins
 That master hands had wrought,
 It heard the master music voice
 Its own unuttered thought:

Like some poor bird of halting song
 Wayworn, with broken wing,
 Watching the lark fly up through heaven,
 Ever to fly—and sing.

To little old toy instruments
 Nor rest nor sleep belong;
 Only to feel with helpless strings
 Eternal stress of song

And even there, adown with dust,
 Too old and worn to sing,
 The message of the violin set
 Its voice a quivering

Thou weary little zither,
 Long days and years shall come
 Before thy heart of song may break,
 Thy weary strings be dumb,
 —Josephine Peabody in Youth's Companion

THE CONSPIRATORS.

Captain Hanson, having returned from a long voyage to find himself a widower, had sacrificed his fondness for a seafaring life to the needs of his only daughter, Lucy, and had settled in a thriving coast city, where he could live comfortably upon the modest fortune he had accumulated.

A good man was the captain, rough in his ways, but tender hearted, irascible, but forgiving, and deeply devoted to his "little girl," as he continued to call Lucy even after she took to long gowns and began to receive calls from eligible young men.

It was rather slow in dawning upon the captain's mind that Lucy might some day like to marry. He never took her "company" seriously, for most of the young men who called and whom he admitted, for he habitually answered the doorbell, were of a type with which to put it mildly, he was not familiar. That Lucy should cherish a genuine interest in a young man who knew nothing of the sea never occurred to him until a son of one of his former shipmates proposed for Lucy's hand. Then there was a rude awakening.

The suitor, Jack Darrow, was himself a sailor, and the old captain had found great comfort in his calls. In fact, the ancient mariner had entertained the notion that Jack called to see him, and it was quite a shock when Jack, finding the captain alone one evening, made his purpose clear.

"Have ye signaled her, Jack?" he asked.

"Haven't hoisted a rag," replied the young sailor sheepishly. "If it's all right, cap, you speak to her. She'll do anything you say."

"Dunno, dunno," returned the captain dubiously, "but I'll leave the lead, Jack, and let you know if the channel's clear."

That satisfied Jack, and, true to his word, the captain "heaved the lead" that very night.

"Lucy," he said, "Jack Darrow wants to splice with ye."

"Can't be done, papa," she answered at once. "Jack's a good fellow, but I don't love him."

The captain knew not whether to rejoice or regret. He was sorry for Jack, but glad for himself.

"All's well," he said after a moment. "I'm not asking ye to love him, Lucy. You shan't marry anybody ye don't love."

"I knew you'd say so, papa, just as I knew you won't object to my marrying the man I do love."

"Eh? Steady there! Do ye mean ye've got somebody in mind?"

Lucy blushed and looked at the floor.

"Who is he?" asked the captain anxiously.

"It's Henry Whitman, papa. He asked me this evening."

"What! That dude?"

"Papa!"

Lucy's eyes blazed as she addressed her father in sharper tones than she had ever used. She looked at him steadily for a moment and then went to her room.

The captain drew a long breath, sank into a chair and fumbled for his pipe. Under its soothing influence he became comforted. Whitman dressed stylishly, but that might not be against him. He could afford his apparent extravagance, for he was a clerk in a bank. Everybody spoke well of him too. Poor Jack Darrow!

After a time the captain knocked the ashes from his pipe and, going to Lucy's room, spoke to her through the closed door.

"It's all right, little girl," he said in a shaking voice. "If ye want young Whitman, ye shall have him, and God bless ye both."

Whereupon Lucy arose, went to the door, opened it and threw her arms around her father's neck.

Next day Captain Hanson reported his soundings to Jack and told him plainly that he'd have to sheer off. Perhaps the captain failed to couch his information in terms that suggested his disappointment and kindly feelings.

Jack did not manifest his ill will then, but a little later he devised a way to wreak vengeance on his successful rival. He chanced to learn that Whitman was to take Lucy to a theater on a certain evening. It began to rain that afternoon, a depressing, ceaseless drizzle. This was Jack's opportunity, and he arranged his plot with great care. There was nothing he could do himself except supervise operations, but he found three loyal friends to whom he confided the situation and his purpose, and they agreed to look after details.

The curtain rises upon their little drama at exactly 7:15 in the evening. Scene, the front steps of Captain Han-

son's house. A cold drizzle continues throughout. The first conspirator enters, trips up the steps and pulls the bell. After a slight pause the door opens and the old captain appears, looking out into the wet.

"Is Miss Hanson at home?" inquires the conspirator.

"Yes," replies the captain, trying to recognize the visitor. "Will ye walk in?"

"Thanks, no," is the reply. "I just called to say that it is a very uncomfortable night, moist and windy, and she really ought not to think of going out. Good evening!" And the first conspirator trots down, leaving the captain in open mouthed amazement.

Offended, but too surprised to do or say anything, he slams the door and retires.

Five or six minutes pass, and Conspirator No. 2 comes striding confidently along, mounts the high stoop and rings the bell.

"Is Miss Hanson at home?" asks the visitor of the old gentleman.

"Yes, she is," responds the captain. "What do ye want?"

"It's a very dirty night," remarks the conspirator with engaging frankness, "and she really ought not to venture out."

"Big seas and great gales!" roars the captain in a tremendous rage. "Ye get out of here!" And he makes a dash at the self appointed adviser, but the latter is on his guard and skips down the steps unharmed.

Ten minutes are then allowed to lapse before the third conspirator appears on the scene. He, too, trots up the high stoop and rings the bell, but, having rung, he prudently retreats half way down again and waits. Almost immediately the door swings open and the irate captain howls.

"Well! How is it?"

"Is Miss—" begins the third conspirator, but the captain waits for no more—He makes a mad rush down the steps, roaring savage imprecations and evidently bent upon violence, but the third conspirator, anticipating just this attack, nimbly jumps out of the way and flees. The captain, choking with unexpressed rage, returns to his home and the three conspirators and the discarded lover gather under a convenient doorway across the street.

They had not long to wait. Henry Whitman, with commendable promptness, pattered up the steps at 7:45 and rang the bell. The captain was in waiting for the accepted lover's hand had not left the bell pull when the door opened, the captain emerged like an ocean greyhound out of a fog bank and fell upon the caller before he could utter a word. It was hammer and tongs for about a second, and then such was the force of the captain's onslaught that both men rolled down the steps and came to a stop in a heap.

Whitman yelled, the captain belowed, and Lucy, coming to the door, screamed. The conspirators across the way sneaked off in great delight at their success, and it was well they did so, for had they remained they would have witnessed an anticlimax that would have been unpleasant for them. Lucy, recognizing her lover's voice, promptly went to his relief and caressed his bruised face in a way that Jack Darrow would not have liked to see. The captain, too, though still mystified and wrathful, apologized handsomely, and when later the truth about the conspiracy became known to him he made full amends to Whitman by doing all he could to hasten the wedding.—Chicago News

A Compliment For the Scots.

An old Scotch lady in Detroit is a little bit prouder of her nationality than of anything else to which she can lay claim and never misses a chance to boast of what her countrymen have accomplished. She never tires of telling what they have done, dwelling particularly upon Scott, Burns, Wallace, Bruce and Ian Maclaren.

"Mother," said her son, after she had been discoursing upon her favorite theme the other day, "you honestly seem to think that no good can come except out of Scotland. I fear it's becoming a sort of mania with you. You'll be chaining yet, mother, that Gladstone, Washington, Lincoln, Dewey and all the best of our greatest men in modern times were born in Scotland."

"Weel, I'm nae so sure o' that Jamie, but there be one thing I do ken o' the gude men ye name, laddie, a' most a' o' them had intellect enuch to be Scotchmen."—Detroit Free Press

The First Smokers.

Unquestionably smoking had already been practiced by the Indians for centuries when Columbus first reached these shores. It was with them to a great extent a form of religious ceremonial. Dr. Daniel G. Brinton, the famous ethnologist, thinks that it had its beginning in the blowing tube of the medicine man. Ignorant savages are disposed to regard the human breath as possessing magical properties, and it may be supposed that burning leaves were introduced into the tube for the purpose of making the breathing visible. The Indians smoked many kinds of plants, such as sumac, red willow bark and the leaves of the kinnikinnic or bearberry, and tobacco doubtless was a discovery resulting from a selection of the fittest.—Science Siftings

Paine and Washington.

At the close of the American Revolution it became a proverb that independence had been achieved equally by the sword of Washington and the pen of Paine, writes Moncure D. Conway in The Arena. Up to January, 1776, Washington had protested his loyalty to the crown. On the 10th of that month Paine's "Common Sense" appeared; on the 31st of that month Washington wrote from Cambridge to Joseph Reed of the "sound doctrine and unanswerable reasoning contained in the pamphlet 'Common Sense.'" The die was cast.

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