

THE DEVIL FISHING.

The devil sat by the river's side.
The stream of time, where you'll always find him.
Casting his line in the rushing tide,
And landing his fish on the bank behind him.

He sat at ease in a cosy nook,
And was filling his tank with the best fish.
While you might have seen that his deadly
hook was differently baited for every cast.

He caught 'em as fast as a man could count;
Little or big-it was all the same;
One bait was a check for a round amount,
As the best and purest for miles around came.

He took a jism that as Saturn shone,
It sank in the water without a sound;
A woman caught it who long was known
As the best and purest for miles around came.

Sometimes he would laugh, and sometimes
sing,
For better luck no one could wish;
And he seemed to know to a dead sure thing
The bait best suited to every fish.

Quoth Satan: "The fishing is rare and fine"
"and he took a fish, somewhat enlarged."
But now a person swam 'round the line,
Who even the most tempting of baits refused.

He baited with gold, and with fishing gems;
He hung lures and lures upon the line,
And dressing-gowns with embroidered seams-
But still the man refused to be enticed.

A woman's garter went on the hook,
"I have him at last," quoth the devil bright-
ling.
Then Satan's face with laughter shook,
And he landed the preacher quick as light-
ning.

A TRAMP.

That is just it. I was a tramp! In the light of today I have to admit it, but I must. I had been a machinist, with a pretty, gentle wife, good wages, a pleasant home; and then the hard times came. Hard enough they were to millions beside me, but I did not think of them. I had more means than many others. I knew—food, if it was coarse, is enough for warmth—but what I wanted, credit for my work, I could not get, was delicate living and luxuries for Annie, for she was dying. I know now nothing could have saved her; consumption is a helpless and hopeless; but one day when I went down to the Charleston steamer the day she sailed, to adjust some little matter in the machinery that they thought out of gear, I saw the wife of one of the first for whom I worked in town brought on board to go to Florida for the winter.

She looked a little like Annie; her eyes were clear and gray too, and her face was wan and sweet. She was wrapped in soft shawls and lying back in a chair, cried by two servants, a kind-faced nurse with her and her husband beside her. I had a glimpse at her state-room as I passed through the cabin, for they were arranging it so that she might be settled before the rest of the passengers came aboard. It was like a nest, crowded with comfort. If I could have stolen that fur-lined cloak and that swing-chair I would have done it; as it was, I swore.

What had this woman done to have all, and my patient wife to have nothing? I kept thinking of all this, brooding day and night as wages grew lower and work less, and Annie faded away. She was a good woman, that wife of mine, and not a bit afraid to die; but she was afraid to leave me in the furious bitterness of my condition then.

One day I came home and found her paler than ever. I had brought her an orange, but she could not taste it. I sat down by the lounge and she put her thin, white hands in mine.

"Frank," she said in a whisper, "when I am dead try to be good; try to know God. I couldn't talk about it, dear; but I have prayed. God is good, Frank. I know it. I am going home."

I could not bear this. I did not believe in it. Good, and Annie dying while I sat as well as she. I did not stop to consider that he was once poorer than I, and had worked successfully for his money, or to ask why society owed me a living. I took the species argument of the demagogue for what they were, and I would have it as well as I could.

I went to hear Communist harangues, and learned the stale old story that property was robbery. Why was Mr. Lawrence rich and I poor? It was an outrage! Society owed me a living, and I would have it as well as I could.

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There was a little sort of stoop built out under the roof of the all part, and the kitchen door opened into it. There was a row of bright milk-pans standing against the wall, to sun, and a bunch of two of herbs hanging up by the door. A great yellow cat ran away when it saw me, and eyed me from under a bench in the wood-shed. It was a poor place enough, but looked dirty and comfortable. I knocked, and a young woman opened the door directly. I never saw such a steady face; her eyes were brown, and looked straight at you like a robin's; her mouth was as pure and clean as a child's, and her firm cheeks showed a healthy, even color of pink. Her hair was so tidy, so shining, her calico gown and check apron so perfectly neat, that she seemed somehow as if she was just new, every way. I did not say anything at once, for I felt so dirty and so bad the minute I looked at her.

"Well," she said, in a cool sort of voice, "do you want anybody?"

"I want something to eat," said I gruffly.

"We never give to tramps," she answered, without any change of tone.

"I've got to have it!" said I, as crossly as I could.

"We have nothing for you," said she, quite unmoved.

"Come, hurry up! I've got to have my dinner, and you'd better get it for me pretty quick," I called out with an oath, taking out my pistol and handling it as a threat.

Her eyes grew a little darker at that, and she smiled; she was not scared a mite; she only said, very quietly—

"If a man will not work neither should he eat."

"That may be your opinion, miss, but it isn't mine. The world owes me a living, and I'm bound to have it," I growled back.

"How so?" she answered. "What have you done for the world to put it in your debt?"

I couldn't answer this question; it was like a blow in the face; so I swore again and demanded some dinner.

"I shall not give you any," she said, quite as calmly as ever. "If you were sick, or feeble, or crippled, helpless in any way, it would be different; but you are a strong, likely man, and you can earn your living just as well as I can."

I looked at her slight straight figure. "You work for a living?" I asked.

"Yes, I have worked ever since I was six years old. I was bound out then, and I worked at whip-braiding. I haven't any relations—any near ones I mean; there is nobody to take care of me. I have to work, and I am glad of it."

I swore a very common oath, calling on God to punish me if I would stand that if I were she.

Her face flushed.

"Don't do that again!" she said. "If you want to be lost call upon Satan; he hears such requests gladly. God is your Father; he does not like to punish you even if you ask him to; he'd ever so much rather forgive you."

I never was so taken aback.

"Do you work for a living?" I asked, at a moment.

"Don't you think it's outrageous that a pretty-bellied girl like you should be working for a living when there's thousands of women no better than you are rolling in their carriages?"

"God knows best," she said.

"Well, you seem to think God knows a good deal. I claim to know some things myself, and I believe folks all have equal rights."

"Do you?" she said, "so do I; some rights. Rights to get ready to die and to serve God while we live."

She stepped out of the door and picked up a red leaf from the grass.

"Can you make such a leaf as that?" she asked, holding it up by the stem.

"Why, I know I couldn't; and so did she."

"Till you can, I expect you had better believe God knows more than you do."

I turned and went out into the yard. I couldn't stand her talk, but I could not get away from it.

I never seemed so mean to myself before. Here was I, strong healthy, even a skilled workman, tramping about the country begging! I never had called it begging before, but I knew now what it was, for I seemed to look out of her eyes.

About God; well, if there was a God he must know more than I did or he couldn't be God; perhaps I had made a mistake after all.

Jim Lawrence must be a rich man because he had more brains than I, with the same chance; and who was to blame about the brains?

I sat down by the little pond there was near by, and fell to thinking, when all of a sudden I looked down into the water and saw—a tramp! a big, dirty, ragged tramp.

Good Lord! it was me!

I wondered that the girl had spoken to me at all, and then I thought what Annie would have said to me like that.

He was as good as his word. I got work from him right off, and after a while, when I could buy decent clothes, I took to going to meeting; for I could not get what the girl said, when I swore, out of my head.

I have got a Bible too. I knew Annie would like that; but I had to shut it up quick one day when it opened at a sentence about "the horrible pit and the miry clay." I had been there myself, you see!

Sometime when I have laid up a little money—and I guess it won't be long first, for when it is all said and done I never was one to drink nor yet to gamble—I mean to go up to Vermont and find that girl, and maybe I can have a home. I hope she won't know me again. I hate to hide anything from her clean, clear eyes; but I don't see how I ever can tell her I was that tramp.—*Christian Union.*

Puss and the Sparrows.

The other day a number of gentlemen were sitting in the detective room in the City Hall when an English sparrow flew near the window, peeped in, and darted away again. Capt. Holzworth, who saw the little fellow, said that whenever he saw a sparrow it reminded him of little scene which occurred in his yard one cold day last winter.

The sparrows, it seems, ascertained the fact that there was a knot-hole in the gable of his house and took advantage of their knowledge by taking possession of the hole and a portion of his attic, where they passed the winter as snug as bugs in a rug. The Captain's wife has a warm spot in her heart for birds. So when the ground was covered with snow, and the little fellows ran a risk of starving to death, Mrs. H. saw a way to help them.

"I had rather be poor and contented, papa," sobbed the child.

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A HEROINE OF ROMANCE.

His hair was white as snow, but his rosy visage was ruddy still, and his black, bead-like eyes glittered as with the fire of youth.

"Capt. Dulaney, will you never grow old," said his friends, which saying interpreted, meant that he would be hale and hearty to the last, when death would take him suddenly, with no worrying prelude of lengthened helpless decline, as might reasonably be expected, as he had already passed his allotted term of three score years and ten.

The beautiful girl at his side was known as his daughter and prospective heiress.

Virginia Dulaney was shapely in figure and not too tall. Her features were exquisite, her lips scarlet, her eyes large and brown, and her silky hair like a fleece of gold.

Just now the young and flushed face was hidden on the old man's knee.

"Do you really love the poor fellow whom they call Hugh Girard?" asked Captain Dulaney, in a fond, disappointed whisper.

"Very dearly, papa," was the smothered reply.

With both his white withered hands he lifted the dainty, blushing face, and looked steadily into the big, wistful, brown eyes.

"Virginia," he said, in those firm, stern tones that no man ever dared to disobey, "it is my wish and will that you marry Sextus Weldon. You think you love another, but at your age love is but a fancy, and I know best what will make you happy. Therefore I have chosen your husband for you."

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"You are with one who will never forsake you, my child, even if you had known sin and shame before I found you," said the sweet-faced woman, holding close the quivering hands.

"I have never sinned; but I have been ashamed to the soul by the frowns of poverty," answered Virginia, while the hectic grew hotter on her cheeks.

"Be calm, dear, and listen to what I have to tell you. When I saw you first lying like one dead on those cold, granite steps, I loved you. You looked, Virginia, as my husband looked when he lay in his coffin. I found you name marked on your clothes. It was the name of a little child stolen from me years and years ago. While you have been lying here I have made a happy discovery. Can you guess what it is?"

Virginia could not mistake the expression of the fond, sweet, handsome face bent so close to her own.

"You are my mother," she said.

"I am your mother, my darling," answered the lady; "and henceforth, for Virginia Champey, there shall be no more toil nor trouble, if I can prevent it."

And only for the memory of Hugh Girard, she would have been quite happy.

As the daughter of one of the wealthiest and aristocratic ladies of the city, she was perhaps more admired and sought after than Virginia Dulaney had even been.

And so it happened one day that Sextus Weldon came to woo her.

"It was very cruel for you to refuse me as you did. Why did you break our engagement, Virginia? I am asking you, not me, my sorrow and humility. I want you for my wife, dear."

And with scorn in her eyes and disdain on her lips she rejected his suit.

The impudence of the fellow is amazing," laughed Mrs. Champey, when Capt. Dulaney chose a husband for you, he should have chosen more wisely. I think I shall be a better match-maker, Virginia."

"Are you so anxious to lose me," said the girl with innocent naivete, "that you will let me go so readily?" Mrs. Champey smoothed her grey tresses, soberly.

"Virginia, you must marry sometime, you know. But there is no reason why you should not still remain my daughter."

"Only that your future husband may prove as good and tender and faithful as your father was. And now put on your hat and shawl. I am going to take you to see a hero of romance. He is the son of one of the old friends of my school-boy days. Once upon a time we were so fond of each other that our first son and daughter should become husband and wife."

"Oh!" gasped Virgie, thinking of Hugh Girard, and wondering, with a shudder, if she was to be the victim of a scheme to sell her life, and her honor, for money.

"Well, this poor fellow fell in love with a beautiful girl, who loved him, but she rejected him for a richer lover. In his despair he left his native place, and in California—that land of gold—he made a fortune. But with money came misery also. He came home, and it is said to die. Virgie, you are so sweet and winning that I guess you can catch this desolate heart in the response, you know. Then the old compact will not have been made in vain."

Virgie listened with a sinking heart. "I cannot marry this man unless he asks me," she returned, bitterly.

"He will ask you," was the decided response, as the big pebbled roan was reined up before the house.

Mrs. Champey led her daughter to a beautiful room on the second floor.

"Listen," she said, pausing before the door, which was slightly ajar.

"Virgie, my lost love! Virgie—oh, my Virgie!"

The color flew into the white cheeks of the astonished girl.

"God bless you to this, mother!" she said, rushing into the room where Hugh Girard lay sick almost unto death.

I am here, Hugh," she cried.

What words were said in that chamber of illness, may not be told.

Virginia came out after half an hour with a contented smile on her sweet young lips.

"He will live!" said her mother, kissing the blushing girl.

"Yes, he will live for me," answered Virgie.

And somebody who witnessed the grand wedding that occurred a month later, spoke of the lovely bride, Virginia, as a heroine of romance.

WHAT WAS PAID FOR ILLINOIS.—The Chicago Tribune prints an old document of considerable historic interest. It is a deed of