

A VISION.

By hands invisible I was caught Up to a rare and dizzy height...

A YOUNG NAPOLEON.

"When is it to be?" I asked John Strong this question because he was my intimate friend...

"I have done pretty well," resumed Strong, giving me a keen glance...

"That is what I cannot understand," I interrupted. "You are prospering, and yet you borrow money for speculations..."

"Old fellow, you don't know my plans," he answered. "I have never made a failure yet. I have the gift of seeing farther ahead than most people..."

"It was useless to argue with Strong. In our debating society he had always come off victor in every discussion..."

"Varina understands me," he said. "She is willing to wait. She knows that it is best for us both."

"Well, my young Napoleon," I remarked, "I hope that one of your brilliant, speculative campaigns will satisfy your ambition..."

"Twenty thousand dollars profit in cotton futures!" It was a big thing for Cottonville. But the young Napoleon took it quietly...

"I am off for New York," said Strong, the next day after the intelligence of his good fortune had reached him...

"But when are you coming back?" I asked, holding him by the hand. "Oh, I don't know. I can't very well say at present."

"There is Varina!" I exclaimed. "Ah, I see. After your return there will be a wedding."

"Don't bother me with that subject now," snapped my friend. "My head is full of important business matters..."

"My dear friend," I ventured, "why not let well alone? With your present start you will soon be the richest man in Cottonville."

biggest railway magnates in the country passed through. Strong was with the party, but he left it, and spent half a day at his old home...

"I think nothing of the kind," I answered shortly. "she certainly has a great deal of patience under trying circumstances..."

"When Strong paid his next visit to Cottonville, the following year, he was a millionaire. This time he remained several days, and was at his best..."

"You people call me a rich man," he said, "and I suppose I am, but you do not know how complicated my business is..."

"I thought of Strong's words often during the next year. From time to time we heard of his success. Everything that he touched seemed to turn to gold..."

It was an awful crash, and it carried some of the proudest firms in the great city down with it.

"Our hope proved to be without foundation. Not only had Strong's entire fortune been swept away, but he would have to begin the world again owing fully a million dollars."

The brave fellow bore up for a few days. His conduct was so manly that there was some talk of setting him upon his feet again, and it was predicted that he would retrieve his losses and make another fortune.

But the strain was too much. Finally he staggered to his bed, and when he arose from it, long weeks afterwards, his attack of brain fever had done its worst.

"He is a mental wreck," said Banker Jones, who had just returned from New York. "Is there no hope?" "None whatever. He will never regain his senses. He may improve physically, but his mind is gone forever."

"We must do something for him," I said. "Something has been done," replied Jones with very moist eyes. "Varina!" "What has she done?" "That noble woman, sir, went on to New York with her uncle. They took poor Strong and placed him in a private asylum, where he will receive every care and attention. You know that Varina has given up her school and is living with her uncle, who is going to make her his heiress..."

It was years afterward when I saw Strong for the first time since his misfortune. Business had called me to New York, and on the second day after my arrival I visited the asylum, a short distance from the city.

At first I thought that Strong had completely recovered, he was looking so well, but his talk undeceived me. "And how is Cottonville?" he asked. "Slow old place, too slow, no progress, nothing to keep a man of ability there. Why don't you come here? I have some big schemes on foot, and possibly I'll let you in."

I was glad to see that he recognized me, and I humored his rambling talk for an hour. "I saw Varina before I left," I said. "Varina! Oh, little Varina Vincent. Do you know I once thought of marrying her, but I saw that it wouldn't do. Good girl, but no force of character, you know. Why, they call me the young Napoleon of finance. Now, how would such a wife have suited me? Well, I managed it so as not to hurt her feelings. I let the engagement run along, and at last she offered to release me. I accused her of not having faith in me, and got in a high dudgeon and accepted my freedom. Good, wasn't it?"

It was too much for me. I rose to go. Strong accompanied me to the door, and chatted about his imaginary speculations. "Stay!" he cried, as I was leaving. He handed me a little flower from the profusion that decked his table. "Give that to Varina," he said. I took it and rushed off, unable to speak.

Of course I pressed that flower, and took the utmost care of it until I reached Cottonville. When I gave it to Varina, and told her who sent it, the poor thing cried over it until I thought her heart would break. Women are so peculiar.—Wallace P. Reed in Atlanta Constitution.

THE DIFFERENCE.

Touch me, clasp me and keep me fast; Yet warn and near as your touch may hold me, And close as your clinging clasp may fold me, Time laughs it away and it cannot last.

Grieve me, leave me, but if you give The thoughts of your heart in my fashion, In words of wisdom or words of passion, It stays with me while I breathe and live.

—Mary Anje De Vere in The Century.

NO MERCY FOR PIRATES.

I have several times heard my father, who was a lieutenant aboard of H. M. S. Spitfire, tell of his adventures among the pirates who used to make the coasts of Arabia and Persia such a terror to seamen.

"We had run across from the Laccadive Islands to the Gulf of Aden, and were just inside the Island of Socotra, when we picked up a sailor floating on a plank. It was about 7 o'clock in the morning, with little or no sea running, and the lookout saw him when he was yet a mile away."

"The American had been up the gulf and into the Red sea, and had come out with part of a cargo and was going up to Mirbat to finish loading, when he was attacked by three pirate dhows. This occurred the evening before, and only twenty miles north of the island. The attack was made after sundown, and while two other merchantmen were in sight. The dhows had been noticed hovering about, and their evil intention was suspected, but it was little the crew of the brig could do to defend themselves."

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and the first dhow had gone down before either of the other two seemed to think of escape. Then it was too late. Our shot went right through them and left terrible gaps for the sea to pour in, and in just seven minutes by the watch from the firing of the first gun we got the order to cease firing.

"One dhow was at the bottom, the second with her rail awash, and the third was on her beam end and slowly turning turtle. The survivors of our cannonade were floating about on pieces of the wreckage, but by the time we had lowered our boats and picked up seven the rest had been pulled under by the sharks, which came to the feast in a great school."

Among those rescued were the captains of two of the dhows. Seven worse looking villains than those we picked up were never seen in or out of prison. They were a defiant lot, too. Having recovered from their shock of surprise, and comprehending that a trick had been played on them, they fought us even as we rescued them from the sharks. No matter how hard a gang you get a hold of, on sea or land, some one of them will be ready to 'turn nose' to save his neck. It was so in this case. Six of them refused to answer a question concerning the American brig, but the seventh was willing to tell all if it would save him from the yardarm. He said that every one of the crew had been made away with, and that the brig was then lying in the bay spoken of. They were intending to plunder, dismantle and scuttle her, but had not yet begun the work, having espied the Spitfire and come out to investigate her. He gave the number of men aboard the three dhows at 110.

"In those days the captain of one of her majesty's vessels on a foreign station, or I might say on a barbarous coast, had things much his own way. Breakfast was only over when our captain ordered whips at the yardarms, and informed the six pirates that their time had come. Not a man of them even changed countenance, while each uttered the word 'Kismet'—it is fate. Each man went to his death as calmly as if it was an every day affair, and the informer gazed upon the spectacle with as little concern as you please. When the necks of the six were well stretched the bodies were lowered and sent to sharks. Then we spruced up a bit, headed in for the bay, and by mid-afternoon were alongside the brig. She was anchored within pistol shot of the shore, and nine or ten villainous Arabs made their escape from her before we had come up."

"The sights aboard that brig have always haunted me. There were stains of blood all over her decks, proving that the crew had fought a gallant fight, and in the cabin were the gory heads of two of the sailors. At the foot of the companion was a bloody hand, and near the scuttle butt was another. I believe three or four of the brig's crew surrendered, and were deliberately tortured to death. Our captain had agreed to spare the informer's life. We put a crew aboard the brig to sail her out, and when ready to go the Arab was ordered overboard. It was only a fair swim to shore, and he did not need to be told twice. He made a dive off the rail, came up like a duck, and then headed for the beach with an easy stroke. I had gone about fifty yards when a dozen of our crew called out in chorus. We saw two or three black fins cutting the water, a gleam of white at the surface, and the swimmer was gone."—New York Sun.

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INDECISION.

Invisible, unspeakable, whose voice In the soft murmur of this neighboring sea, From the beginning everlasting In thy own witness, energize my choice; Even now, by more than half the allotted span Wisely assigned, the returning years In timorous doubts and all too scrupulous fears Have dwindled sore my little term of man.

Must it be ever thus even to the end? Fearing to do aught lest I do the wrong? Shall I my spirit's patrimony spend? Arise, O God! this hour and make me strong; Let me this hour to fruitful ury lend One talent in the napkin buried long. —The Spectator.

BEATTIE'S APPARITION.

The city was creeping up that way; there was no manner of doubt about that. Indeed, why should one say it was creeping up? It had crept up already. To be sure, there were lone blocks here and there as yet, defined solely by a line of curbstones, intersected at right angles by unpaved roads that, after rains, turned into canals of oozing mud, and bestrewn over their quadrangular expanse with ejected tomato cans, old shoes and such rubbish generally as habitually tenants those waste suburban spaces given over to the frolicsome goat—blocks, in short, which a belated wayfarer in the vicinity of the park would be apt to pass through at a more or less rapid pace after 10 o'clock at night.

But other blocks again were, always with gaps and hiatuses of empty lots between, what one might call built up. A semi-rural mode of life obtained with the inhabitants, some of whom kept a few chickens in their yards. Many of these houses were divided into flats, and the separate dwellings brought low rents, as yet. It was a refuge within city limits for business men who had failed honorably, and being quite abreast of the progressive spirit of the times, and for unambitious young people beginning life—of these there were not many.

Now, a number of these houses—in fact whole rows here and there in the vicinity—were owned by Timothy Pinckney, and it has been said that they brought comparatively low rents. Nevertheless Timothy was well content. He knew that the rents would increase by and by. And he held on to his property and dreamed dreams of the future when it would make him many times a millionaire.

This prospective millionaire, with now more money in his coffers than any one knew, lived in a two-story white frame house whose rear yard was contiguous to the rear of some of those very houses owned by him. No one ever saw the inside of that two story frame dwelling from the simple reason that Timothy had no friends, relatives or acquaintances. He had a daughter, to be sure—a young, plump and black eyed thing, with long, demure lashes, who occasionally appeared at the door when a tinner came around to negotiate exchanges of old bottles and rags. But Timothy evidently intended to keep his Bertha's charms safely away from the covetous eyes of gallants. The women of the neighborhood—for instance, the undertaker's wife across the lot—were quite aware that black eyed Bertha never had a new frock from year's end to year's end; no, "nor a new bunnet, neither."

Well, Timothy was a pitiless and pitiful old miser; there was no question of that. And, seeing that he was progressing in years, he ought to have commenced to realize, mark and repent of the evil of his course. But it is safe to surmise that his conscience had given him no uneasiness of any sort this long time past. His digestion was as satisfactory as that of an ostrich, and his thoughts were pleasantly occupied with airy or arduous computations, as the case might be, day in and day out. When the stomach and the brain are thus in good condition it is astonishing how little place there remains for conscience in all the human mechanism.

However, one hot night in June Timothy came home not feeling quite so well as usual. The day had been sultry and he had walked about a great deal in the busy marts of commerce down town and in the sun. He had a headache and it made him cross. But after Bertha had gotten him his supper, and he had no appetite for it, these novel phenomena made him pensive instead.

He went out in his back yard and sat down on an overturned barrel and began to breathe the evening air. It was heavy, and compounded of many local and indigenous odors, not all of them pleasant. On one side there was a gap in the wooden rails of the fence. That gap opened out upon several empty corner lots, rocky in places, and gave an uninterrupted view of the ghastly undertaker's emblem by the side of that functionary's dwelling, diagonally across on the next street. Timothy could not see it this evening. It was too dark. But he knew it was there, and the knowledge somehow was uncomfortable.

A more agreeable object of contemplation presented itself in the row of buildings before him, the row which represented a portion of his possessions. But his mind seemed determined to take a new course this evening. His thoughts, starting from the row of buildings, began to travel backward over the years gone by, and the first acquisitions which had marked them. For the first time in—Lord! how many years!—he thought of Beattie. Now, there was no denying that the first of his good luck had begun with his acquaintance with Beattie. Beattie had given him a great deal of good advice. Yes, and he was very sorry that things turned out just as they did with regard to Beattie. Very sorry. But a man has got to look out for himself. Timothy now repeated that assertion to himself, rising in rebellion against this suddenly resurrected pang of a guilty conscience; repeated it with heat. Some people might say that he had ruined Beattie—Beattie, who had been his first friend—and left him to die in the poorhouse; but he, Timothy Pinckney, would always stand up and say that a man must look out for himself first! Must look out for himself!

In an excitement of these unexpected retrospective memories, Timothy, who had been sitting there in the pure night much longer than he knew, raised up his hand to bring it down with emphasis on his knee. It remained arrested in midair. A trembling seized it. The trembling communicated itself to all his body. A cold sweat beaded his brow. His heart left its normal place and began to thump and flutter horribly in his throat. In a moment more excess of terror gave him a frantic power of locomotion, succeeding upon the first interval of paralysis, and he burst headlong into the kitchen, startling Bertha into dropping a pan she held and causing her to exclaim, as she beheld his blanched visage: "Good land o' mercy, father! What is the matter?" "I've seen a ghost," he said.

June went and July came, and with it

"Oh, father!" said Bertha five minutes later, as father and daughter gazed at the sleeping apartments upstairs. "What made you look so dreadful when you saw Beattie standing in the yard? You looked most—most as frightened as I did!" "Hold your tongue and mind your business, will you?" said Timothy. And he slammed his bedroom door.

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days more sultry and nights more oppressively flavored with the odors from the bone factories across the river. The plump and black eyed Bertha, precocious in that social life which she distributed itself over open thresholds and upon friendly curbstones these breathless nights. But no such innocent delusions were comprised in Timothy Pinckney's system of discipline. He believed himself, in early hours, as being an economy in light, and six nights out of the seven was already in his room and in his bed before the last lingering rays of the twilight had quite faded out of the sky, expecting, of course, like regularity of hours from his daughter.

Therefore, returning home on one occasion unusually late—the bells of an Episcopal chapel a few blocks distant had struck 11—his ready wrath was kindled by seeing a feeble ray filtering out from one of the windows on the ground floor as he approached his house. It disappeared immediately again, and Timothy supposed—that was the way with these girls—that Bertha had grown nervous and was down and then into the back of the kitchen, there to wait for his return. In accordance with this supposition, instead of applying his latch key to the front door he made a detour by the side of the house and came out by the broken fence surrounding the yard. There had been a good many heavy clouds obscuring the moonlight, so that the night was rather dark. But at that moment the moon shone forth with a sudden silvery splendor, and Timothy distinctly saw some one something—dart rapidly across the yard.

Now, Timothy had well nigh forgotten the occurrence of that other memorable night. For a few days (though he had never tolerated an allusion to the night of Bertha, after that one moment of hasty stricken abandon) he had been haunted with an abiding terror, which every now and then sent the cold perspiration running down his back. But that had worn off, and he had recently only looked back upon what had happened then as upon a hallucination which had come of his overheated blood and overtaxed nerves, his general indisposition; promising himself grimly, that if ever he wrought himself to thinking of Beattie and all that dead business again, buried long ago—well, he would know it!

But all this elaborate and defined philosophy sank together like a heap of ashes when he saw that shadow cross the yard. His knees shook and his hands trembled. He stood still, with his arteries pounding wildly and his eyes staring into the yard, where the moon, now visible once more, only illuminated in a faint and ghostly way.

Then he saw a ray of light shine out from the kitchen window. To make no dash for that became his only instinct. To stand there a second longer had become unbearable.

He moved and passed through the gap in the fence. He took a few steps. Something moved in front of him. He wanted to cry out, but his tongue seemed glued to the roof of his mouth. Again a sudden burst of moonlight. And this time no mistake, no delusion possible. Four steps in front of him, turning a ghastly white face upon him, rooted to the spot, stood Beattie!

Beattie, as he had stolen up to the gap in the fence that other night, pressed his face through it and gazed at him with his distended eyes, and vanished!

A low cry of horror came from the house. The kitchen door had been opened. Bertha stood upon the threshold. One second she stood, then she glided forward and past the apparition and threw herself on her father's breast. "Father, father! Oh, don't look so awfully! Say something!" "Sir—Mr. Pinckney," said the apparition, instead, and, for an apparition, had a wonderfully substantial voice, though one that trembled and quaked. "I can explain everything if you will let me."

"Yes, yes; he can explain everything," repeated Bertha, hysterically. "Yes, sir! Explain, sir! Explain!" thundered Timothy Pinckney, in tremulous tones. "Who are you, sir? The passing in my yard at this time of night?" "Mr. Pinckney, my name is Beattie."

"Beattie! I see it, sir! Go on." "And—and—Mr. Pinckney, I—I—I love Bertha and Bertha loves me." "The devil she does!" "Look here, young man, if I'm not mistaken, I used to know your father."

"Oh, father," moaned Miss Bertha again. "Don't be a fool!" said the old man sharply to his offspring. Then—"Come in, both of you."

When the trembling culprits stood under the dim light of the tallow stick in the kitchen, Timothy looked Beattie's face over with lynx eye scrutiny under his beetle brows. "Humph! You don't look so awfully like your dad after all!"

Then—"How long is this thing been going on under my nose?" "We've been keepin' company since last winter, Mr. Pinckney, and Bertha promised to marry me then. Only as you were kinder opposed to her meetin' young men, we sorter kept it quiet, and Bertha, she used to come out in the yard sometimes."

"While you slunk around the fence, eh?" "Oh, father!" came from Bertha. Timothy had been ruminating. He looked up. "You got enough to support a wife?" "Yes, sir!" proudly, from the expected bridegroom. "Well, you can have her."

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A French anthropologist, M. A. Beaudouin, enumerates twenty-one characteristic forms of the human nose.