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WHO SHALL GO FIRST?

Who shall go first to the shadowy land, My love or I? Whose will it be in grief to stand And press the cold unweaving band.

Which shall band over the wounded sod, My love or I? Commandeer the precious soul to God Till the doleful fall of the muffled viol

Which shall return to the desolate home, My love or I? And bid for a step that must still be dumb, While the ha-stunned senses wander back

And then, perchance to that mourner there, My love or I? Wrestling with anguish and deep despair, An angel shall come through the gates of prayer,

And then, methinks, on that boundary land, My love or I? The mourner and the mourners together shall stand Or walk by those rivers of shining sand

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Did I tell them of queer people and strange experiences? Yes, indeed, did I. Can I recall them now!

No--yes. One I remember, because it was the most inexplicable affair that ever befell me--no, did not befall--but that has ever come to me "second hand, almost as good as new."

I found myself one day at a certain town with "no connection," till 6 o'clock in the afternoon--a train that might make 16 miles an hour, with 96 miles to go: over. Due on the platform at 7:40 o'clock. That wouldn't do, so of course I had to have a "special."

Place and time--Central Iowa, some years ago. Country, just a flat plain, not the rolling prairie land lying further west; no towns, few villages; fenceless, treeless; a speck of anything easily seen afar had any speak existed.

Even the ties were without incident. One after another, all alike--same length, striking family resemblance, lying on the even ground, without so much as a ditch at the side to break the monotony.

Nothing of interest without, so I turned my eyes to inspect what might be found within. They are generally wide open when they are to look at machines or mechanisms.

I have traveled behind engines and on them by thousands and have walked about and questioned and gazed and examined them thoroughly, but always with fresh wonder and admiration.

Strong as Titans, obedient as slaves--simple, complicated--helpful, merciless--beautiful, yet terrible.

I never look at them without wondering what manner of world this will be when some one learns how to utilize not 100, nor 50, but even 15 per cent of steam.

As to their manipulators--fool's don't abound among them. A man needs brains and logic to be a good machinist. I like to watch a first class one listen to an argument on a subject which he may be ever so unfamiliar. He sees flaws and knows where the screws are loose, and the sequence is broken, and the point overlooked or bunglingly made better--half the time--than the combatants, though they be no mean ones.

If a man knows a machine he knows how to argue from cause to effect, step by step of the way, and he isn't easily "bamboozled," and there's precious little "nonsense" about him.

My engineer was one of the right sort. A clear-eyed, intelligent, wide-awake young fellow from New England--the last man in the world who would suspect of either drink or superstitious flim-flams.

He was explaining to me some of the mechanism, when, with his right hand on the lever, he suddenly paused, threw himself half out the window, gazed a moment up the track, then, turning his head, with his left hand thrust up before it, as though shutting out some awful vision, drove on.

There was no mistaking the attitude and its meaning. "You have run over some one here," said I.

"Yes--no--I don't know," he answered. His fireman seemed to notice neither action nor answer. I gazed at both with amazement akin to horror.

"Am I rushing through space forty miles an hour in the keeping of two madmen?" thought I. Let us see.

"You don't know?" "I don't wonder you look," said he, "and ask too. Will you kindly oblige me by telling if you saw anything off at the right?"

"Nothing but open plain," said I. "Not ahead of us?" "Nothing but level track." "Nor behind us? Did you look?" he asked.

"Yes, I looked back, but there was nothing but track and plain." "I knew it," said he; "knew it just as well before I asked as afterwards, but couldn't help asking. Do you think that's queer?"

"I think you are troubled. That is more to the purpose. Do you mind my asking what troubles you?"

"Do I mind? Didn't I just want to tell and see what you can make out of it?" and he drew his hand over his forehead and across his clear eyes as though it were nightmare that threatened to unman him.

"It beats me." "I wouldn't let it," smiling to cheer his distressed face.

"You are too broad shouldered to stand that sort of treatment from anything," at which he laughed a little.

"You just pitch in, Ned," and Ned pitched in.

"As for a story--it isn't much of a story, you'll say--but--well! You see, I was coming down the road the other day--a good two weeks ago--a road I've been over hundreds of times and know every foot of it--I saw, off there, at the right, instead of that pancake region, a regular hilly country, wild and green-looking, plenty of trees, and among them, on top of a sort of ridge, there was a shambling tavern, painted red.

"It was growing dusky, and I could see lights in the tavern and hear loud voices, laughing and rowing. Directly a fellow came plunging out of the door with his hat off, a flannel shirt, and a buttoned at the throat and one sleeve loose and hanging, holding a whisky bottle. He reeled down the hill, stumbled, and struck his foot against a log near the bottom, and pitched forward into the ditch, half-way across the track.

"I saw what was coming, and had whistled down brakes and reversed the engine. The man could have got on his feet easy enough if it hadn't been for his cursed whisky bottle; but he grabbed it and held it up so as to save it, and couldn't get his balance, of course, with out both hands, and so pitched forward again, and this time flat across the rails, and we went over him.

"It was all done in a minute, you see, and the train stopped, and I staring at Jim here, and he at me.

"What did you do that for?" said Jim, "jerked her up like that for nothing."

"My God! man, run over a human creature, and smashed the breath out of him, and ask what I stopped the train for?"

"Run over a man!" cried Jim. "Are you crazy or drunk?" But I didn't wait to answer. I streaked up the track to where the conductor was out, and the brakemen and passengers all had their heads out of the windows, and everybody wanted to know what was the matter, and there--well, you know just as well as I, there was the open country and the track as flat as my hand, and nothing else near or far to be seen.

"Drunk! No I wasn't drunk. I don't drink--ever. And it happened just so, turning to Jim.

"Just exactly so," answered the sooty fireman.

"Yes, just exactly so," echoed the engineer, "and just exactly so I've seen it every day--and done it regularly since then. And I can't stand it much longer. I've got to quit. Look at that!" holding up his strong hand that was shaking in a way that didn't belong to his muscles, nor to the clear blue eyes that had no drink nor craze in them. "Maybe I can make a change with a friend of mine who wants to come West. Anyway, I'm going out of here, lively."

I sat and pondered. "Do you believe me?" said he. "Believe you. Of course I do. I'm not a fool. I know when a man has truth in his face, and you've got truth in yours--voice, too, for that matter."

He smiled and thrust out his grimy fist. "I'd like to shake hands with you for that--if you don't care."

"But I do care," said I, smiling in turn. So we shook hands. "Can't you explain it?" "No--no more than I can tell you how a flower grows."

We reached our destination and each went his or her way, and so far as I knew there was an end of mystery and explanation.

Five years afterward I was at New Brunswick, aiming for the 10 o'clock train for Philadelphia.

"Drawing-room car," called I, as I ran down "the long, dark platform."

"Drawing-room car this way?" was shouted from the blackness.

"Ah, is it you, Miss Dickenson? Plenty of room to-night," and I scrambled in.

About every official and employee on the road knows me. So I turned to see with which conductor I was going, but did not recognize him.

"You don't know me?" "No," said I, yet I found something familiar in his face or voice. "You are a new man."

"Yes," he answered. "Let me see, let me see," thought I. I don't like to be thwarted. I always remember people's faces and forget their names. I could forget my own. "Who is he? When and where did I ever travel with him?"

"You were not a conductor when I saw you before. I am sure of that," I ventured. He laughed at my puzzled face and answered, "You're right there."

All at once I placed him. "Ah!" cried I, "how's the ghost?" The man had a fine ruddy color, but he turned pale at that--pale as this paper.

"Why, you don't mean that anything did really ever come of it!"

"Yes, but I do." "What?" "Well, I'll tell you all in a breath--that the best way, and I don't like talking about it. You know I wanted to get away? Yes, Well, I got my transfer, came to the Philadelphia and Erie road, and my friend went West."

"Maybe I didn't draw a long breath as I got under way that first day, and thought I had left my bugaboo so far behind me. Everything about me was so different from what I had quitted, it made me feel like a new man. You know the country the Philadelphia and Erie runs through?"

"I know it. Beautiful, fresh and lilly, and full of streams, with a rough looking road and curving track."

"Just so," he assented, "and I went along it cheerful as a cricket, looking at everything and full of interest, till toward nightfall--and then--well--I shut my eyes and drove ahead. What else could I do! But my fireman was dragging at the rope like mad and raising me, and the train was jarring and jolting along, and presently stopped."

"What did you do that for?" "My God, man, cried he, 'run over a human creature and mashed the breath out of him, and then ask what I stopped the train for--are you drunk or crazy?' and he plunged off, and I after him.

"I didn't expect to see anything, but at the right, you see, as the train ran--there was a bit of a hill, and a shambling red tavern, with some lights shining on top of it, and a ditch at the bottom, and a lot of people with the conductor and passengers gathered about something on the road, and as I came up--there was a man with his hat off, and open shirt, and the whisky bottle in his hand, across the track--dead."

A Woman and a Cow.

It is now over one hundred years since an American philosopher pronounced the query: "Why is a woman afraid of a cow?" And yet no one has ever succeeded in giving a satisfactory answer. There is once in awhile a woman who doesn't seem to have the slightest fear, even when passing a cow with one horn twisted out of place; but follow that woman home, you will find that she kicks the dog, cuffs the children, jaws her husband and knows how to sharpen a butcher knife and use an ax.

The real woman has a mortal terror of cows, and the real cow seems to have an antipathy for her. Friday forenoon a lady was walking down Cass avenue, when she suddenly came upon a cow. The animal was feeding on the other side of the street, and the boy sent out to watch her sat under a shade tree and played a mouth organ.

The lady halted. "Lost something, ma'am?" asked the boy, as he removed the music from his mouth.

"I--I'm afraid of that cow," she replied.

"What fur? Cows don't bite nor kick, same as a horse. All they can do is run their horns through you and pin you to the ground."

"Oh! my--she's coming!" "No she hasn't! She's just making believe that she wants to get at ye and hook ye over the fence."

"Oh! but I dare not pass." "You you dare. Cows know when a woman is afraid just as quick as anybody. The mink you give cows to understand that you are able to catch 'em by the heels and mop the ground with them then they go to hunting for clover."

"Dear me, but I guess I will go back!" "I wouldn't. If ye'll only spit on yer hands and shake yer fist at her, she'll wilt right down. Cows know who's boss just as well as men do. Now then, I'll hold yer parcel while you spit on your hands."

"Oh! I can't--I'm going right home!" "Well, my little brother swears at them instead of spitting on his hands. See if you can do that."

"No--no! I'm going now!" "If I was a woman and I couldn't swear or spit on my hands, I should carry a sword-cane to stab cows with, observed the boy as he looked across the way.

"My soul! but there's another cow up there!" exclaimed the lady as she looked up the street.

"Yes, lots of cows around these days, but I never heard of two cows attacking a woman at once. I guess one generally hooks 'em up at pieces first, and then the other comes up and paws the mangled remains. If you--"

The lady uttered a first class scream and made a jump for the nearest gate. It opened hard, and after one pull she went over the fence and up the front steps of a strange house, there to remain until her husband could be summoned by telephone to come and act as body guard.

"I'd just like to be a woman," mused the boy, as he sat down to punish his mouth-organ once more. "I'd carry a bowie-knife down the back of my neck and the first cow that tried to hook me would feel that ere knife playing mumblety-peg around her vicious heart-strings."--Detroit Free Press.

A place for everything and everything in its place--The baby's mouth.

An Editor's Appeal.

People never tire thinking how easy it is to run a newspaper. Few know anything about the dilemmas that are written on a daily journal are constantly printed in. Here is a sample. A theatrical troupe arrives on the morning train and by the same mail the following letters from San Francisco. The first is from a some-shifter at the Bush Street Theatre:

ED. APPEAL: My sister, Miss Clara De Lancy Vivio (who you will remember once loaned you a pair of tights to go to a masquerade at Horticultural Hall), will be in Carson this week playing "Ophelia." Her rendition of the part is considered as taking the cake down here by the best judges. She's the boss, and don't forget it. Give her a snorting send off and send me six copies of the paper. If there's any charge, let me know when you come down again. Miss Julia Livingstone plays the part of the "queen," and she's very "queer," the worst out; give her a deal. Yours, BILLY BOOGS.

The next comes like this: PALACE HOTEL. ED. APPEAL: Excuse the liberty I take in addressing a perfect stranger. I have a friend, Miss Julia Livingstone, who has just made her debut upon the stage. She is a lady of rare personal attributes, a splendid elocutionist and her dramatic genius is pronounced by all competent critics to be something such as has never been seen on this coast. She is destined, so Col. W. H. L. Barnes tells me, to be a rival of Modjeska. As she is just starting she depend a good deal upon the press to assist her. I am sure that you would not refuse to help so deserving a lady, whose whole soul, so to speak, is bound up in the drama. She is much annoyed by a woman in the company named De Vere, who has a knack of obtaining flattering press notices. I hope you will sit down on this De Vere woman (if I may be pardoned for using the expression), in the way she so richly deserves. If you give Miss L. a favorable notice, which I am sure you will, please send me 20 copies of the paper, and if there is any charge, my husband, who also takes a great interest in Miss Livingstone, [Yes, exactly] will call at the office on the way to Boggs and settle the bill.

Mrs. --- Then the editor attends the show and on seeing the two worthies act, wishes he was in Arizona working on a railroad with a gang of Chinamen, for 90 cents a day and board.

"Angels' Urawares."

The Rev. Mr. White, a black man of Passamawhuck, N. H., has founded and runs a new religious sect, called "Angelic Believers." The Angelics at present consist of Mr. White and two other black brothers, and five sisters to match. White professes to believe in the disposition of angels to visit and be sociable with earth's people, if they were only properly received, entertained and encouraged. He thinks men have driven away the angels, first by treating them coldly, and then by refusing to believe in their existence at all. His object is to restore the old sociability between men and women and certain beings with wings, whose pictures still grace some of the good books in memory of the old times. In a Sunday sermon lately White said that it would not surprise him at all to have a troupe of wandering angels call upon him at any time, and he held himself in readiness to give them a warm welcome. Three beardless Boston boys who are Summering in Passamawhuck were present and heard the remark, and resolved that White's faith should be rewarded. One of them borrowed, without her knowledge or consent, three of his sister's nightgowns and got three pairs of chickens' wings, which were fastened on the shoulders of the white garments with sealing wax and stitches. With some other fixings by way of disguise the boys started out one night for the cottage of old man White. They knocked. He had gone to bed and did not want to be disturbed. They said they were angels. He told Mrs. White to lie still while he got up and entertained the angels. He examined their wings and raiment and was satisfied. They were hungry and asked for food. White had no kids. A fat calf would do. White had no calves, and offered them pork at which they turned up their noses. Some cold chicken was set before them and hard cider, and they were enjoying the meal, when Mrs. White came and made trouble. She was suspicious, and examined the wings and flowing garments. The wings were too small and on the gowns she saw the name "Blodgett" marked, and said, "O! man, I've washed all three of them nightgowns ago." The chickens were hatched. The Whites looked the door, took off the angelic robes, used up two broomsticks on the boys, and turned them out to go home like common mortals. And the frolicsome Boston boys have had enough of the Society of Angelic Believers in Passamawhuck.

"I must do more for my mother," says a sentimental writer. Yes, sonny, so you must. You must get right way from home and support yourself. You can do more for your mother in that way than in any other.

Law in Ireland.

No Irishman ever breaks the law without having one eye watching over his shoulder, to be sure his way of escape is open. I remember when I first went over, a characteristic story was current. A man was under sentence of death for some bad crime. A gentleman whom he used to live near chanced to know that the man had meant to shoot him. He went to the jail the day before the man was to be hanged, and said to him: "You might as well tell me Pat, since it can make no difference to you, why you did not shoot me, for I know you meant to do it." The gentleman was a capital shot, and always carried arms, and was known to be very resolute. The answer was: "Well, your honor, it is true it will make no difference now, so I'll tell ye. I had ye covered twice from behind a ditch, and as I was going to pull the trigger the thought went through my head, 'By ---, if I miss him, it's all up with me.'"

Whenever the law is enforced, it is vastly powerful for good, all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding. The unmixed and unvarying hatred shown in Parliament by all Irish patriots to the law, and police, and to all that helps to make these efficient, shows that they know who are their real enemies. The curious readiness to go security for neighbors who borrow money, etc., comes from the same clan feeling. It is nothing short of folly, and ends in the ruin of numbers.

It is sadly certain, too, that untruth toward all the rest of the world gravely prevails. It is the most painful part of living in Ireland. It meets one at every turn and among all sorts and classes. One is forced to become as hard as the nether mill-stone and simply believe nothing at all, if one would not be the prey of every schemer. No doubt there are individuals who speak the truth. God forbid there should not be. And there are degrees of truth (or untruth) that one learns to recognize. There is a common expression which I can never hear without laughing. When any one wishes to convince you that another may be believed about something in which his interest is not concerned, he will say: "You know, sir, Jack is a man who would not tell ye a lie for nothing." There is no doubt a distinction in this, though the moral distinction of Jack may not be of very high value. One has to judge mainly by probabilities. It is not only the deliberate falsehoods, but the unreliable ness throughout, that has to be met. There is an atmosphere of untruth and half-truth surrounding everything, so that those who are true themselves, but have been brought up in this atmosphere seem unconscious of it, and treat want of truth with a forbearance it does not deserve. Nobody seems to expect that truth and right shall prevail. When, as magistrate, one has decided against a man, there is no wonder he should think you have decided contrary to truth and right; but when one has decided in a man's favor, it is a hard case when he meets you and says: "God bless your honor; it was only through you I got the better of that blackguard." The man does not believe in the truth and right of his own case, and thinks he won by favor.

A Scotch Fester.

A Scottish lady happened to be conversing with a Courier-Journal reporter the other day, when the subject of Dr. Tanner's fast came up. She did not think the Tanner experiment wonderful. Then she went on to tell of a case of fasting in Scotland. The River Clyde one day broke through its bed, and the water rushed into the mines below. A number of miners were drowned, the suddenness of the flood cutting off all escape. One miner got into an old shaft that had been abandoned, and here he hid himself safe from the water. A worse fate, however, now stared him in the face. It was impossible for him to climb out, nor could he make himself heard. There seemed no possible means of communication with the world above. At the end of sixty days some slow-going person of an inquiring turn took it into his head to examine the old shaft, as he felt a little curiosity to know whether the waters of the Clyde had found their way there. Tying a piece of lead to a rope, this investigating person let it down into the shaft, and he thought, after he had lowered it, that he could hear a human voice, but the tones came faintly, and he might have misheard. After awhile, he hauled up the lead, and was surprised to find a piece of clothing attached to it. The poor wretch below was still alive, and had managed to make this sign. Assistance was immediately called, men were lowered into the shaft, and the starving man was brought to the surface nearly dead. He had been all the time without food, but had been within reach of water, and had tenaciously clung to the hope that he would be rescued. The greatest interest was excited in the case. It was thought that the unfortunate man would lose his life, but with careful nursing, he at length recovered to tell his remarkable story, and to be the wonder of his day.--Louisville Courier-Journal.

A Georgia woman, who is still on the sunny side of 40, has just announced marriage for the fifth term.