

The Parable of the Prodigal Son.

Now there was a certain man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.'

And he divided unto him his living, and the younger son purchased himself an oil-cloth grip sack and got out of that country.

And it came to pass that he journeyed even unto Buckskin and the land that lieth over against Leadville.

And when he was come nigh unto the gates of the city, he heard music and dancing.

And he got into that place, and when he arose and went his way, a hiring at the gates smote upon him with a slung-shot of great potency, and the younger son wist not how it was.

And in the second watch of the night he arose and he was alone, and the pieces of gold and silver were gone.

And it was so. And he arose and sat down and rent his clothes and threw ashes and dust upon himself.

And he went and joined himself unto a citizen of that country, and he sent him down in a prospect shaft to dig.

And he never before day. Wherefore when he spat upon his hands and lay hold of the long handled shovel, wherever they are went to shovel he struck his elbow upon the rail of the shaft wherein he stood, and he poured the earth and rocks over against the back of his neck.

And he waxed exceeding wroth. And he tried even yet again, and behold! the handle of the shovel became tangled between his legs, and filled his ear high full of decomposed slat and the porphyry which is in that region round about.

And he wist not why it was so. Now, after many days the shovelers with their shovels, and the pickers with their picks, and the blasters with their blasts, and the hoisters with their hoists, banded themselves together, and each said to his fellow:

Go to! Let us strike. And they strove. And they that strove were as the sands of the sea for multitude, and they were as terrible as any army with banners.

And they blew upon the ram's horn and the cornet, and the sacbut, and the alto horn, and the flute, and the bass drum.

Now, it came to pass that the younger son joined not with them that did strike, neither went he out to his work, nor on the highway, lest at any time they that did strike should fall upon him and flatten him out, and even send him unto his home packed in ice, which is even after the fashion of that people.

And he began to be in want. And he went out and joined himself unto a citizen of that country; and he sent him into the lurch room to find tourists.

And he would fain have filled himself up with the adamantine cookies and the indestructible pie, and the vulcanized sandwiches which the tourists always did eat.

And no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself he said: How many hired servants hath my father on the farm with bread enough and lots to spare, and I perish with hunger.

And he resigned his position in the lurch business and arose and went unto his father.

But when he was yet a great way off, he telegraphed to his father to kill the old cow and make merry, for behold! he had struck it rich, and the old man paid for the telegram.

Now, the elder son was in the north field plowing with a pair of balky mules, and when he came and drew nigh to the house he heard music and dancing.

And he couldn't seem to wot why these things were thus. And he took the hired girl by the ear and led her away, and asked her, whence cometh this unseasonably hilarity?

And she smote him with the palm of her hand, and said: "This thy brother hath come, and was dead and is alive again," and they began to have a high old time.

And the elder son kicked, even as the Government mule kicketh, and he was hot under the collar, and he gathered up an armful of profanity and flung it in among the guests, and gat him up and girded his loins and lit out.

And he got him to one learned in the law, and he repleved the entire ranch whereon they were, together with all and singular the hereditaments, right, title, franchise, estate, both in law and in equity, together with all dips, spurs, angles, crooks, variations, leads, veins of gold or silver ore, mill-sites, damsites, flumes, and each and every of them firmly by these presents.

And it was so. —Denver Tribune.

"Here is a lot of fans we sold last season at forty cents, but as they are a little soiled and shop-worn, you may have one for fifteen," said a Baltimore saleswoman to a customer. The lady looked at the goods, when another saleswoman, sister of the first, stepped forward and said: "Yes, madam, that lot of fans we sold last season for fifty cents, but as they are a little soiled and shop-worn, you may have one for fifteen." The lady saw the second saleswoman hadn't heard what the first said, but she said nothing. Presently, a middle aged lady, mother of the two others, and evidently proprietress of the establishment, came out and remarked: "That lot of fans were sold last season at seventy-five cents, but as they are a little soiled and shop-worn, you may have one for fifteen." The lady skipped out in a hurry. It was too much. She saw the grandmother coming down the store to remark that they sold those fans last season for a dollar.

A drunken fellow meeting a man coming out of an undertaker's shop with a small coffin under his arm, a short time since, asked him what he had got there. "A new coffin," he replied. "Well," said the bally chap, "can't you afford to treat on it?"

Ophiophagus Elaps.

This dreaded serpent, who is a larger kind of cobra, and at least as venomous as his better known congener, actually performs the deeds told of him. He does not display his armed neck, glittering with a marvelous gorget, like the cobra, but is apparently in a good temper. The reason of this is soon disclosed. The cannibal serpent is about to be fed, and follows every movement of the keeper with keen avidity. The quiet man who knows the snake world, and whom the snake knows perfectly well, presently produces an unhappy serpent of the harmless kind common in our hedges, and throws it quickly down through a glass trap on the floor of the cannibal. In an instant the intruder is smitten. Like a flash of lightning the fangs of the greatest of all venomous serpents plunges into his brain. When snake meets snake the head is always the part aimed at, as with fighting dogs and fighting cocks, and it may be added, snake-eating birds. There are extant various wood-cuts and works of art representing a kite towering with a serpent in her beak, the reptile in the meantime sticking his fangs into the bird just under the wing. This is nonsense, like most "fancy" natural history. Birds who eat snakes always begin by driving their beak through the snake's brain. Before he can erect his head to strike the beak descends upon him, as every-body can observe on seeing one of the hornbills—not nocturnal—fed at his regular hours. And the bird begins to eat at the head, as does the mongoose and the rat, for that matter, when he gets a chance. Everybody has heard the story of the rat who was put into a box constrictor's cage to supply food for the monster. The snake proved sluggish, and the rat, finding that he was not to be eaten, fell to on his own account and ate up the snake from the nape of the neck downward, most probably having bitten the snake through the brain to begin with. Snakes are by turns sleepy and voracious. I have seen two Dalmatian snakes begin to eat the same mouse, one at each end of the little creature, and meet in the middle to have a merry fight over it. Ophiophagus has no more killed his prey than he begins to swallow it head foremost.

In the Water.

The human body weighs a pound in the water, and a single chair will carry two grown persons. That is, it will keep the head above the water, which is all that is necessary, when it is a question of life or death. One finger placed upon a stool or chair, or a small box, a piece of board, will easily keep the head above the water, while the two feet and the other hand may be used as paddles to propel toward the shore. It is not at all necessary to know how to swim to be able to keep from drowning in this way. A little experience of the buoyant power of water, and faith in it is all that is required. We have seen a small boy who could not swim a stroke propel himself across a deep, wide pond by means of a board that would not sustain five pounds weight. Children and others should have practice in the sustaining power of water. In nine cases out of ten the knowledge that what will sustain a pound weight is all that is necessary to keep the head above water, will serve better in emergency than the greatest expertness as a swimmer. A person unfamiliar with the buoyant power of water will naturally try to climb on top of the floating object on which he tries to save himself. If it is large enough that is all right. But it is generally not large enough, and half of a struggling group is often drowned in the desperate scramble of a life and death struggle to climb on top of a piece of wreck or other floating object, not large enough to keep them all above water. This often happens when pleasure boats capsize. All immediately want to get out of the water on top of the over-turned or half-filled boat, and all are drowned except whom the wrecked craft will wholly bear up. If they would simply trust the water to sustain ninety-nine hundredths of the weight of their bodies, and the disabled boat the other hundredth, they might all be saved under most circumstances. An over-turned or water-filled wooden boat will sustain more people in this way than it will carry. It would keep the heads above water of as many people as could get their hands on the gunwales. These are simple facts, easily learned, and may some day save your life.

Scanty Dressing (?)

No one who had been absent from England for three or four years could fail to be astonished at the form and make of the dresses. Even to my accustomed eye they seem to have grown tighter and shorter within the past two months. As the dancers fly past in the whirl of the waltz, one or two figures stand out with startling distinctness. One in flesh-colored jersey cut low in front and at the back, would probably, if seen on the stage, suffer from the intervention of Lord Chamberlain. Another is clad in what appears to be a pink satin corset, laced down the back, and a skirt so tight that at every turn of the troits tempi I expect her knees to come through it. A dress—if that can be called a dress which looks alarmingly like an utter absence of dress—worn by a well developed lady, is of the color called nymphs' emu, which is so exact an imitation of pink flesh tints, that combined with its extra tightness and shortness, it is not a matter for surprise that several dancers, on first catching sight of it, stopped short so suddenly as nearly to upset the couple immediately behind them. The ensemble was none the less startling from the fact that the stockings were also of the nymphic hue, with no lines of embroidery to distinguish them from the veritable cuticle which they so thinly covered and so faithfully imitated.

The law against carrying concealed weapons does not apply to bicycles. They are revolvers, but they avoid cartridges, and never go off of themselves.

Dr. Johnson's Marriage.

The artless manners and rustic prettiness of Lucy Porter, had won Johnson's youthful heart, when she was on a visit to the Rev. John Hunter's, master of the free school, Lichfield, in Johnson's youthful days. The peculiar appearance, however, of Johnson, could not tempt the lady to a return of his passion; and at length she returned to her parents at Birmingham. Business required Johnson's presence in that neighborhood on the death of his father, and calling upon his former mistress there, he found her parent dying. With that affectionate friendship which particular situations always experienced from him, he passed all his leisure hours at Mr. Porter's, attended his sick bed, and a few months after his death, asked Mrs. Johnson's consent to his marriage with the widow.

Mrs. Porter has been represented as very fat, with a red face, and indolent features, and in her speech and manners affected, and bordering on girlish lewdness; while Johnson, on his first introduction to her, exhibited an appearance yet more singular. He was then lean and lank, so that his immense structure of bones was hideously striking to the eye, while the scars occasioned by the scrofula were deeply visible. His hair, which was straight and stiff, he wore separated behind; and he often had, seemingly, convulsive starts and odd gesticulations, which tended to excite at once surprise and ridicule. Mrs. Porter, however, was so much engaged by his conversation that she overlooked all these external disadvantages and expressed to her daughter: "This is the most sensible man that I ever saw in my life."

Johnson's mother, as might naturally be expected, expressed her surprise at a request so imprudent and extraordinary, both on account of her disparity of years and want of fortune.

"No, Sam," she said; "my willing consent you will never have to so posterous a match. You are 25 and she is turned of 50. If she had any prudence, this request would never have been made to me. Where are your means of subsistence? Porter has died poor in consequence of his wife's expensive habits. You have great talents, but as yet have turned them into no profitable channel."

"Mother," replied Johnson, "I have not deceived Mrs. Porter, I have told her the worst of me—that I am of mean extraction, that I have no money, and that I have had an uncle hanged. She replied that she valued no one more or less for his descent, that she had no more money than myself, and that though she had not had a relation hanged, she had fifty who deserved hanging."

After some little lapse of time, however, matters were brought to a conclusion, and Derby was fixed on as the place where the ceremony should be performed, on the 9th of July, 1736, for which place the bride and groom set out on horseback. The singular account of their journey to church on the nuptial morning is given by Boswell in the doctor's own words to him: "Sir, she had read the old romances, and had got into her head the fantastical notion that a woman of spirit should use her lover like a dog. So, sir, at first she told me that I rode too fast, and that she could not keep up with me, and when I rode a little slower she passed me and complained that I lagged behind. I was not to be made the slave of caprice, and I resolved to begin as I meant to end. I therefore pushed on briskly, till I was fairly out of her sight; the road lay between two ledges, so I was sure she could not miss it, and I contrived that she should soon come up with me; when she did, I observed her to be in tears."

This, it must be allowed, was a singular beginning of conjugal felicity; yet he proved a most affectionate and indulgent husband to the last moment of his life. He once told Topham Bealery, with much gravity, "Sir, it was a love match on both sides," and in his Prayers and Meditations we find very remarkable evidence that his regard and fondness for her never ceased, even after her death.

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"One of the most heart-rending cases that ever came under our notice," said a well known physician yesterday to several gentlemen, "was that of a man whose death could not affect his relations, because he had none; and the manner of his dying was so awful that it was a call upon common humanity for sorrow. It was a young fellow who, at the breaking out of the war, when he was twenty years old, enlisted and fought with courage under Confederate banner. His gallantry was so marked that he was promoted from the ranks and became a captain, with the prospect of further advancement as the war progressed. In the terrible warfare about Nashville in the Winter of 186—he was exposed to the rains and colds, and contracted inflammatory rheumatism, from which he never recovered, and which caused his resignation. He returned to his home a miserable creature, and never was able afterward to walk. For fifteen long years he was dying as slowly and surely, and with as much torture, as the most refined cruelties of human invention might have produced.

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"The time shortly came when he no longer lay in his bed, but, sitting in his invalid chair, became the enthroned embodiment of a soul too miserable for life, too sacred to be freed by other hands. If there were in the Sphinx of Egypt an immortal soul and a human intelligence, can you fancy its torture? Day after day looking upon the same hot waste for centuries; day after day with a fixed gaze upon a motion horror of sun and not blind; year after pitiless year smothered in an awful silence which makes every pain so exquisite that it almost becomes audible to a living persecutor. So he sat, year after year, with his muscles fixed in iron, his eyes looking upon a world as dreary as misery could paint it; his voice sinking in his throat, only to be expelled by hunted nature in wild and piteous cries when the pain racked into hopeless cowardice the strong heart that had led his men up to the dreadful caverns of cannons' mouths without a flinch. But there came a time when the restless days, and nights of active torture became to him as a delightful reminiscence. The time came slowly and like eternity. If you were to confine a man and let one drop of water fall on his head every five minutes, it would kill him. But, before death, would come years of suspense that would move like the change of fixed stars. There would come that awful suspense of time when the pitiless drop would fall like the crash of a universe upon the doomed head.

"The time when the very life stood still, and the soul was imprisoned in a mausoleum. Fixed and rigid, the poor boy was a sphinx, endowed with life and deprived of movement. Every joint in his body became ossified by the chalky deposits, and not even a movement that provoked deathless agony became possible. Even the joints of his neck became rigid, the fingers stiff and the limbs petrified. He was a stone frame, with a covering of flesh and the soul of a living man. The muscles of the eye even failed, and the lids, falling upon the weary balls, shut in forever the darkness that hung about him like the gloom of the grave. Then came, with the same steps of measured eternity, the ossification of the joints of the jaw, and he was fed between the rigid teeth. How slowly death moved cannot be described, but when the inflammation had seized his heart in that last prolonged spasm, nature could no longer give warning of its agony. What tortures took place under the drawn curtain of that human mystery can no more be told than the secrets of those horrors in the lowest dungeons of the Inquisition. Death came, but it was like the fading of the mist line into the clouds, and as we stood about that chair no one dared to utter his thought—no one could tell whether the soul still lurked in its prison, or whether death was life, or life was death.

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"The time shortly came when he no longer lay in his bed, but, sitting in his invalid chair, became the enthroned embodiment of a soul too miserable for life, too sacred to be freed by other hands. If there were in the Sphinx of Egypt an immortal soul and a human intelligence, can you fancy its torture? Day after day looking upon the same hot waste for centuries; day after day with a fixed gaze upon a motion horror of sun and not blind; year after pitiless year smothered in an awful silence which makes every pain so exquisite that it almost becomes audible to a living persecutor. So he sat, year after year, with his muscles fixed in iron, his eyes looking upon a world as dreary as misery could paint it; his voice sinking in his throat, only to be expelled by hunted nature in wild and piteous cries when the pain racked into hopeless cowardice the strong heart that had led his men up to the dreadful caverns of cannons' mouths without a flinch. But there came a time when the restless days, and nights of active torture became to him as a delightful reminiscence. The time came slowly and like eternity. If you were to confine a man and let one drop of water fall on his head every five minutes, it would kill him. But, before death, would come years of suspense that would move like the change of fixed stars. There would come that awful suspense of time when the pitiless drop would fall like the crash of a universe upon the doomed head.

"The time when the very life stood still, and the soul was imprisoned in a mausoleum. Fixed and rigid, the poor boy was a sphinx, endowed with life and deprived of movement. Every joint in his body became ossified by the chalky deposits, and not even a movement that provoked deathless agony became possible. Even the joints of his neck became rigid, the fingers stiff and the limbs petrified. He was a stone frame, with a covering of flesh and the soul of a living man. The muscles of the eye even failed, and the lids, falling upon the weary balls, shut in forever the darkness that hung about him like the gloom of the grave. Then came, with the same steps of measured eternity, the ossification of the joints of the jaw, and he was fed between the rigid teeth. How slowly death moved cannot be described, but when the inflammation had seized his heart in that last prolonged spasm, nature could no longer give warning of its agony. What tortures took place under the drawn curtain of that human mystery can no more be told than the secrets of those horrors in the lowest dungeons of the Inquisition. Death came, but it was like the fading of the mist line into the clouds, and as we stood about that chair no one dared to utter his thought—no one could tell whether the soul still lurked in its prison, or whether death was life, or life was death.

"When he was buried his fixed limbs were broken with hammers, in order that he might be placed in a coffin."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

A boy with a business look in his eye recently entered a dry goods store on Monroe avenue and said his mother had sent him for sixty spools of No. 1 thread. "Don't you mean one spool of No. 60 thread?" inquired the clerk, after puzzling over the matter. "Maybe that's it," dubiously responded the boy. "I guess you'd better go back home and find out." The boy departed, but returned in a moment with a satisfied look around his mouth and explained: "Say, it won't make a bit of difference which way we have it, for mother said you've to charge it, anyway."

Petrified While Alive.

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