

WITH A PRESSED FLOWER.

BY JAMES HUSSELL LOWELL.

This little blossom from afar Hath come from other lands to thee; For, once, its white and drooping star Could see its shadow in the Rhine.

Perchance some fair-haired German maid Hath plucked one from the selfsame stalk And numbered over, half afraid, Its petals in her evening walk.

"He loves me, loves me not," she cries; "He loves me more than earth or heaven!" And then glad tears have filled her eyes To find the number was uneven.

And thou must count its petals well, Because it is a gift from me, And the last one of all shall tell, Something I've been glad to see.

But here at home, where we were born, Thou wilt find flowers just as true, Down-bending every summer morn With freshness of New England dew.

For Nature, ever kind to love, Hath granted them the same sweet tongue, Whether with German skies above Or here our granite rocks along.

AN UNLUCKY RAID.

In the good old days of the Brown street runners, when highway assaults were rare, and solitary postchase never journeyed without pistols in pockets and tremor at their hearts; when strange feats in the shape of starlight robberies were boasted of, and a "knight of the road" aspired to be called a gentleman, the following incident occurred:

One afternoon in early autumn, close upon sunset, a couple of well-dressed men driving a light gig in which was a poor, jaded-looking horse, stopped at a wayside posting inn, not a hundred miles from Bath, and requested accommodation for the night. They were fashionably attired and spoke in condescending tones to the landlord and servants, using a few words now and again of town slang, as young bucks of the first water were proud to do in that day.

Giving the horse and gig over to the care of the hostler, they adjourned to the public room and called for some light refreshments in the shape of drink, ordering a supper to be served later. The landlord himself brought in the brandy and water.

"What's this story about a highway robbery here last night, landlord?" questioned one. "We heard of it on the road coming along. Is it true?"

"Quite true, sir. Ah, gentlemen, it is a dreadful thing—though clever, I must say. My Lady Cuttifer with her two daughters, was driving home across the heath an hour or two after midnight, having been to a ball, when their carriage was stopped by four mounted horsemen with cocked pistols. The old lady screamed and fainted and the young ones screamed and kicked; and gentlemen, those audacious robbers proceeded politely to rifle the ladies of every ornament they wore."

"Scoundrels!" interjected one of the guests. "More than that, your worship. What should these bold blades do but invite the damsel to tread the measure with them? It was a fine night, as you may remember, sir; the moonbeams shining bright on the bare heath; out of the coach they handed them, and footed it in a minute; dancing, it is said, to perfection, as though they were used to lead to the king's own daughters every night of their lives. The young ladies' screams ended in laughter; the baroness woke up from her faint and abused them all, robbers and daughters together. Oh, they are all bold, those gentlemen of the highway!"

The two gentlemen, listening to this, had gone into bursts of laughter. "But what of the men—servants?—what were they doing?" sputtered one. "Only two were in attendance, sirs, it seems; my lady's footman in the dickey, and the postilion on the horses, and while two of the robbers were thus doing their dancing, the other two stood guard over the men, each with his pistol cocked and his hand on the trigger, ready to fire at the least movement."

"And the upshot?" "The young ladies bowed into their coach again, all with stately ceremony, and the robbers, after wishing them a very courteous good-night, rode off at a canter, with every jewel they had possessed, small or large, costly or simple, and my lady's purse into the bargain. They may boast that they lead bold lives, those men. Fine commotion the news has caused around us to-day, as you may imagine, gentlemen. Everybody's talking of it."

The landlord, being called for elsewhere, retired; the travelers sipped at their glasses, laughing away and conversing with one another in an undertone. Dusk came on, and the elder and taller of the two addressed his friend in a different tone. "About time to see after the horse, isn't it, Jim, it's just dark enough."

"I was just going to," answered Jim. And draining his glass, he went away to the stable yard. Looking about him, with the air of a connoisseur, after watching his horse eat up his oats, he made himself acquainted with the arrangements of the stables. Some five or six horses are in them. In the box next to his own stood a splendid animal; evidently valuable. "A better steed nor yours, sir!" cried the ostler from behind, in a quiet voice; and the gentleman gave a stare, not thinking anybody was near.

"Ay; mine has seen good service, and he has been worked hard lately, answered the stranger, good-humoredly. "A very fine animal this, as you observe. And yet," stepping back to look critically at it, "were my horse in good condition it might not be much inferior to this. They are not altogether unlike; about the same height, and much the same color—brown."

With the last words, the stranger went back to the house whistling. The ostler peered after him through the dusk while he made his comments. "You have got a check, master, whoever you may be; and impudent cheek it is. Going and comparing of the two horses like that—this fifty-guinea beautiful animal, and that this wretched old hack o' theirs! What next? I wonder who they be, when they be at home?" And, with that he locked the stable door.

"Well!" cried the old traveler when the other one returned. "Any chance?"

"Never had a better chance in all our lives," was the answer, "in the next box to ours stand one of the grandest animals you ever saw—same color, same size or about it, worth a little fortune. And sort of silver-mounted harness hanging up by him."

"Silver-mounted?" "Think so. Looks like it. We have got a rich chance, I tell you, Wade."

Supper was announced in due time, and the two hungry men did justice to it. Afterward they sat over the fire with pipes and grog, and retired to their room about 11 o'clock.

The room, a double-bedded one, was not exactly on the ground floor, but it was not much higher. A few steps leading off from the staircase conducted to it. The travelers had chosen it in preference to one at first assigned them on the second floor; one of them observing that he liked to sleep near the ground in case a fire broke out in the night, of which he had a peculiar dread.

The first thing they did on entering the chamber was to double lock the door and put the candle out; the second was to softly open the window, to stretch their necks out of it as far as they conveniently could, and to wish the moonlight was "hanged."

"Nothing of a drop that," observed Wade, measuring with his eye the space to the ground. "A child might jump it. Shut down the window, Jim, and let's have a pipe. Hang that moon again! I thought you were wrong in foretelling it would be a dark night."

Shutting the window as softly as he had opened it, Jim and his friend, each taking a short well-worn pipe from his pocket, sat down to smoke. From another pocket came forth a flask of some kind of liquor. Thus they made themselves comfortable and seemed to forget all about bed.

At any rate, neither of them attempted to go to it. They smoked and took a pull at the flask occasionally, and whispered together in hushed tones. At last the clock struck two. One of them rose, drew aside the window curtain and looked out.

A suppressed shout of ejaculation broke from him. "Wade! Wade! the night has changed. It's raining, and the moon is gone. I knew rain was coming."

"Man alive, don't make that roar," returned the other. "We don't want the house woke up."

Putting away their pipes and flask, they opened the window with crafty gentleness, and dropped down on the ground outside, one after the other. The night was very dark, no light, or glimmer of it, was to be seen anywhere.

Making their way round cautiously to the coach house and stables, Jim produced a master key, which unlocked the stable door he undid was the one that had the valuable horse in it, and he was surprised to find what an easy lock it was. Then, while the other kept watch, he hastily and noiselessly attached the horse to their gig, using the harness he had admired so greatly. The rain was dashing down smartly, which tended to deaden other sounds.

When all was ready they cautiously led the horse and gig out of the yard and to a distance beyond it, got in, and drove away at a spanking pace.

So far they were well satisfied with their night's work, and congratulated themselves on the valuable prize they had captured in the horse and harness. It's true the horse appeared to require the whip pretty frequently, and Jim, who was driving, did not fail to administer it.

"Lazy beggar! he has stuffed himself out with corn," he cried. "You shall fast all this day, my gentleman, and that will bring you into working order. What a pet it is!" looking up at the pouring rain. "Should say this was the clearing shower."

"What will the job bring us in, Jim?" "Twenty pounds, clear, I reckon, and an old hack thrown into complete the bargain."

On the heath now, they began laughing over the past night's adventure there, as related to them by the landlord. They had no fear of the highwayman themselves, not they, such gentry do not prey upon one another.

"Hang it, Jim! can't you drive faster?" cried Wade, suddenly. "Jim made no answer. He was beginning to feel somewhat puzzled, for unless he was mistaken the beautiful horse showed signs of giving in. Their own wretched animal could do as well as this. Presently it stopped—stopped dead from exhaustion."

"What the devil's the matter with him?" demanded Wade. "Be shot if I know. He seems a dead beat. It's so dark one can see nothing. Wish that moon would come out!—the rain has ceased."

"Well, this is a pretty go!" exclaimed the other, as the horse, in spite of whip or word, refused to move. "Brought up before one's half beyond danger, with a stolen horse! You must have been mistaken in the worth of the animal, Jim; never knew you to make a mistake before."

"It beats me hollow," returned Jim, his crest-fallen tone betraying some alarm. "As to being mistaken in him, I know I never was; there. Something extraordinary must ails the horse. He jumped out of the gig and began feeling the animal with his hands. At the same moment the coy moon burst forth from behind the clouds and shone now in all her splendor. Jim felt the horse, stared at it and stared again. The other one in the gig was also gazing curiously. Simultaneously a shout of dismay, followed by an imprecation, burst from both of them. They had stolen their own horse!

anywhere. Certainly this night's anticipated spoil was not lucky in any way.

Next morning the landlord of the inn was intensely surprised at the disappearance of the travelers, and at the spitting use of some harness that belonged to the young Viscount Dare. He stood in the stable yard talking with his ostler.

"But for me his lordship's boss would ha' gone too," cried the ostler stolidly. "When I see one o' they two gents a poking and peering about here last night under cover of the dusk, and see him gazing at the fine animal with hungry eyes, and next watched him a fingering the stable lock, it struck me what he might be after—the wanting to have a try at changing their own sorry hack for this one. So the last thing at night, before turning in, I changed the horses; putting them in the best stable, and o'other here, and made him safe with my bar and padlock, which can't be picked. And they've just been and gone away with their own."

"I didn't you change the harness as well?" "Well, I never thought of the harness."

But in the course of the day a messenger brought the harness back—and did not wait to ask for that of the travelers. So the landlord, by the bargain, got a set of plain harness, which really was not bad, and he let the un lucky thieves alone.—Argosy.

ESKIMO WEAPONS.

If you were to examine the queer weapons by which Eskimos capture seals,—specimens of them are in the National Museum at Washington,—you would be astonished at their roughness. It is very difficult, especially for the northern hands, to get any wood, excepting small bits that wash ashore, and a piece long enough to make a good spear handle is extremely rare. In most cases, therefore, they are obliged to splice two or three short pieces together, and this they can only do by slanting both ends, and binding the pieces at their juncture with strings of rawhide or strips of intestine.

The striking end of the spear usually consists of a long and pretty straight piece of bone, such as can be procured from a whale's or walrus' skeleton, and this is tipped with a sharp point of bone or flint, or (nowadays generally) of iron. Sometimes this tip is movable, so that when it penetrates the prey it becomes detached and is left in the line, while the handle floats, secured by a loop. Other spears have each a skin buoy attached, this making it more difficult for the poor animal to swim away, and also helping to float the weapon if the hunter misses his aim. The stout lines are made of seal-hide, or sometimes of braided spruce roots.

"Hooks" mentioned above, wooden or bone shafts, to the end of which a curved and sharpened hook of bone is firmly bound. Besides, there are other rough weapons, and a kind of net, in all of which the seal's hide and bones contribute to his tribe's destruction, and which are marvels of savage ingenuity.

Many of them are used later when the seal breaks, and the Eskimos can go out on their kayaks. The kayak is about 20 feet long, but can be carried by the one man who forms the crew. It is all decked over, excepting a little round hole through which the young Eskimo squeezes his legs and sits down. Then he puts on a tight oilskin coat over his garments, and ties it down to the deck all around him, so that no water can pour in "between decks." But, on the other hand, he must tuck the knots before he can get out; so if by chance he capsizes, he must either be content to navigate head down and keel up, or else must right himself by a sort of somersault, which shall bring him up on the opposite side—and this he often actually does.—(St. Nicholas for June.

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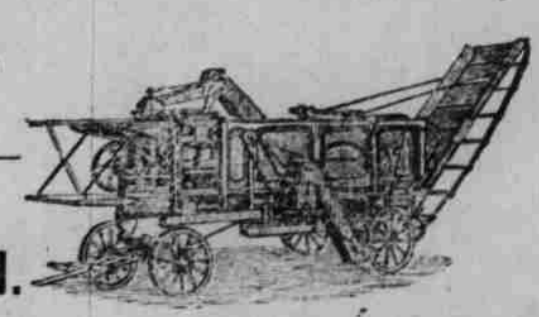
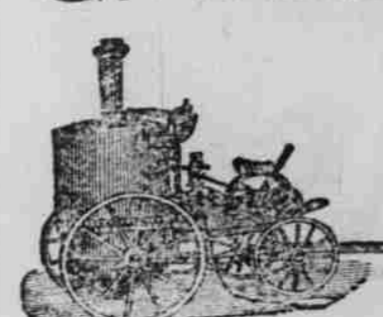
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