

The Minstrel.

I am no gifted child of song, No harper old and gray, To win the smiles of courtly throng, With some enchanting lay; Yet still to friendship old and true, I'll touch the tuneful string, And o'er thy heart as blissful dew, Its music softly fling.

I would bring back the youthful page, His true love, time and place, The proud old father in his rage, And put them face to face; And humbly though the gift may be, And weak my minstrel skill, 'Tis all I have to offer thee, And am thy debtor still.

Lady, the silent hours of night, When starlets twinkle free, Are fraught with visions of delight, And memories of thee; And when the pale moon softly smiles, Upon the other main, And glides among the starry isles, I list thy voice again.

I would recall some lovelit green, Where island lovers smiled, And bring again the festal scene. At Moorish Ivanild; I'd bring them from earth's fairest spots From island, lake and sea, Yet lady, all my waking thoughts Are evermore of thee.

Ah! vain it were some glad refrain, To other theme than this, For I would have no note of pain, In this sweet dream of bliss; Dear lady, as I kneel to thee, And pen this tuneful line, Let love so changeless plead for me, Oh! wilt thou not be mine?

A Doctor's Story.

I am a doctor. I live in London, and in one of the most crowded localities.

I had been in my present abode two years, and had never had a patient from the more aristocratic circles, when one night, about 11:30, I was startled by a violent ring at my bell, and having just got to bed after a hard day's work, I can't say the summons was agreeable.

However, I ran to my window at once, and, thrusting my head out into the rain, cried, "Who is there?"

A voice answered, "Only I, doctor. It's an urgent case. Please come down to the door."

I hurried on some clothes, sped down stairs, and opened the door. There stood, in the full light of the hall lamp, an elderly lady, dressed in mourning.

She put out the smallest of hands, in a fine, black kid glove, and said, piteously, "Are you the doctor?"

"Yes," I said.

"Then come with me," said she. "Don't delay. It's life or death. Come!"

I hurried on my overcoat, caught up my umbrella, and, offering my arm to the old lady, walked down the wet street with her.

"You must be my guide, madam," I said. "I do not know where you live."

She instantly gave me a street and number that surprised me still more. It was a tolerably aristocratic quarter of the town.

"Who is ill, madam," I inquired, "a grown person, or a child?"

"A young lady—my daughter," she said.

"Suddenly?"

"Yes, suddenly," she answered. "Do you keep a brougham? You should have had it out if you do. We would have been able to go faster."

"I keep no conveyance," I said.

"Perhaps you are poor!" she said, eagerly.

"Certainly not rich," I said.

"Cure her, and I'll make you rich," she said, in a sort of suppressed shriek. "Cure her, and I'll give you anything you ask. I don't care for money. I am rolling in gold. Cure her, and I'll shower it on you."

"You are excited, madam," I said.

"Calm! be calm!" she said. "Calm! but you don't know a mother's heart."

We had reached the street she had indicated, and were at the door of one of its houses. The old lady ascended the steps, and opened the door with a latch key. A light burned in the hall; another in one of the parlors, the furniture of which was draped and shrouded in white linen.

"Wait here, sir, if you please," she said, as she led me into one of these.

I waited what I thought a most unreasonable time in that gloomy parlor. I began to grow a little nervous, when a stout, short, red-faced woman, bustled into the room.

"I beg your pardon, sir," she said, in a singular tone, such as one who had committed a speech to memory might use; "but my mistress—the lady who brought you here—is very nervous, and needlessly alarmed. She begs your acceptance of the customary fee, and there is no need of your services."

Thus speaking, she handed me a guinea, courtesied, and opened the door for me. I bowed, expressed my pleasure that the patient was better, and departed.

It was a queer sort of adventure, rather amusing than otherwise; besides, I had a good fee.

I rose early next morning, and paid a couple of visits before breakfast. Returning to my astonishment, I found sitting in my consulting-room the lady

of the night before. She rose as I entered.

"What must you think of me?" she said. "But no matter. My daughter is very dear to me, and I have heard of your skill. She is worse again. Can you call some time to-day, as early as possible, at my house?"

"I will be there in an hour."

The lady took out her purse.

"I am an old-fashioned woman," she said. "I retain old-fashioned habits. In my day the doctor received his fee on the spot. It was, in ordinary cases, a guinea. Will you receive it now?"

I did not know what to say, but she laid the money on the table, and departed.

I ate my breakfast, and, having dressed myself carefully, made my way to the old lady's house. I knocked. The door was opened by the stout female who had dismissed me the night before.

"The doctor," I said, by way of explanation.

"Ah!" said she. "Has missus called you in again?"

"Yes," I answered.

"There is no need, I assure you, sir," she said. "I can't really ask you in. There's no one ill here. It's a whim of missus'. I'm a better judge of illness than she. No need of a doctor!"

I left the house, of course, partly in dudgeon, partly in amazement.

Three weeks passed by, when, lo! the old lady again.

She walked into my consulting-room, dressed as before, as greatly agitated, as carefully polite.

"Sir," she said, "again I trouble you. My poor daughter! Come at once."

"Madam," I answered, "it is a doctor's duty, as it should be his pleasure, to obey such calls; but you are aware that I have been sent from your door twice without seeing the patient. Allow me to ask you a question—are you the mistress of that house?"

"Heaven knows I am," said the old lady. "I have lived there for forty years. I am the only person under that roof who has the right to give an order."

"And the person who sent me away?"

"My old servant, Margaret."

"Did she do it at your order?"

"No, sir; it was a piece of presumption. But Margaret means well. She loves us."

"Then, madam, if I accompany you, I shall see the patient?"

"Assuredly, sir."

I put on my hat again, and we went out of the house together. We exchanged very few words as we walked the streets. At the door of her house the old lady paused.

"Don't mind Margaret," she whispered. "She means well."

Then she ascended the steps.

At the last one the door was opened to us by the woman I had twice seen before.

"The doctor must see my child, Margaret," said the old lady.

Margaret stepped back.

"Walk in, sir," was all she said.

The old lady beckoned me to follow her. I did so. She went up stairs, and opened the first door we came to. It was an empty bed-room. She closed it with a sigh. The next room into which she led me was also empty. So were all the others. In effect, we visited six apartments, only one of which seemed to be regularly occupied as a sleeping chamber; and at the last the lady turned to me with a strange glitter in her eyes.

"Stolen," she said, "stolen; somebody has stolen my girl. Sir, do you know, I think it must be Satan!"

Then a steady step crossed the sill. Margaret came in, and the old lady, bursting into tears, suffered her to lead her away.

As I made my way down stairs, Margaret rejoined me.

"You understand it now," she said. "You see this poor lady is not in her right mind."

"I do, indeed," I said.

"She had a daughter, once," said Margaret, "and the girl—a pretty creature of sixteen—ran away with a bad man. She came back home one day, and begged forgiveness. Her mother turned her from the door, in a fury. It was night; the rain and hail beat down on the poor thing, and the wind buffeted her. There is no knowing what happened to her that night; but, next morning, she lay dead in the police station. Her mother's address was pinned to her baby's clothing, and they brought her home. From that awful day, sir, my mistress—who, in her remorse and delirium, called in twenty doctors to bring her dead daughter to life—has always been doing what she has done to you. I try to keep the secret generally, but some find it out, and others think hard things of us. I thought I would let you know the truth. If she contrives to come again to you, you can always promise to call, and so be rid of her. Poor soul! She has nobody in the world but me now. She's punished for her hardness, at any rate, and you'll excuse her conduct."

I bowed. I could say nothing. Margaret opened the door for me, and I walked out into the fresh air.

As I looked back upon the house, with all its elegance, it seemed to me to have a haunted air, as though the ghost of the poor girl still hovered about it.

"God only knows how many fearful secrets such handsome homes may at times shut in," I said to myself, as I turned my back upon it gladly.

I have never seen the poor old lady since that hour. Probably Margaret has kept too close watch upon her.

THE peculiarity of the fly is that he always returns to the same spot; but it is the characteristic of the mosquito that he always returns to another spot. Thus he differs from the leopard, which does not change his spots. This is an important fact in natural history.

The Dead Letter Sale.

THE CURIOUS THINGS SENT BY MAIL THAT NEVER REACHED THEIR DESTINATION.

In all cases where letters and packages contain valuables, they are returned to the writer or forwarder, if there is any clue to his address, and when none can be found they are of course retained in the dead letter office. The money alone which yearly finds its way into this office ranges from \$75,000 to \$100,000.

During the last fiscal year the amount received was \$77,066.66, of which \$54,637.17 was returned to the forwarders, and \$22,527.47 remained in the hands of the department. Some idea of the articles accumulated may be gained when it is stated that the list embraces 2,219 miscellaneous articles (including wearing apparel of all kinds), 1,375 pieces of jewelry—some very valuable—1,585 books, treating on almost every subject, 269 chromos, 217 pieces of sheet music, and 102 stereoscopic views. Among the mechanical implements are organ valves, sewing machine tools and needles, buttonhole cutters, tuning forks, saw files, steel wire awls, scissors, spirit-gauges, siphons, screws, pruning-shears, shoemakers' and blacksmiths' tools, surgical instruments, etc. The list of wearing apparel is very long, including as it does thousands of articles, from a pair of stockings to a lady's dress. The miscellaneous articles embrace harmonicons, pocket compasses, needlework, sunglasses; book-marks, keys, needle-cases, papers of pins, razors, spectacles, hair switches and chignons; baby shoes, foreign stamps, shoe buckles, fishing tackle, scapulas and Agnes Deis, butterfly fans, crimpers, scent bags, watch cases, rosaries, bullet molds, cloth charm, bird wings, glass eyes, wessel, wolf and coon's skins, napkins, dolls' clothing, air-gun and pop-gun ammunition, artificial teeth, tooth-picks, buckles, sardines, boxes of shells, pipes, butcher knives, wax candles, glue pots, shot pouches, corn-huskers, night caps, poker "chips," crucifixes, baby rattles, chewing gum, gas burners, one china angel, one pie-cutter, hats, corkscrews, whiplashes, dog collars, rattlesnakes' rattles, pepper boxes, scythe stones, three a what-is-its, one squirrel tail, wings of a bat.

Steam on the Erie Canal.

That steam can be applied economically to canal-boats admits of no question, always provided that the vessel is of a certain size; and just here is the difficulty—the Erie Canal boat is too small. No practical man would dream of applying steam to a canal-boat of fifty tons, nor would he hesitate to apply it to one of a thousand tons. Experience alone must be the guide in determining the smallest-sized vessel in which it can be used to advantage, and there has been a large experience in this matter. Steamers have been plying on the Delaware and Raritan and the Delaware and Chesapeake canals for over thirty years, and the result has proved that steam is not economical when applied to boats of two hundred tons, and this is confirmed by recent experiments on the Erie Canal itself.

For steam implies skilled, and consequently, expensive, labor, with additional capital, greater wear and tear and less capacity for cargo, and these the gain in time does not offset. No power for a small vessel has been found so cheap as a pair of horses and a driver. A steamer towing one or more barges has decided advantages, but the serious loss of time occurring at the locks, where each boat has to be passed separately (thus delaying the others), will prevent this plan from being adopted to any extent. The same objection holds to the Belgian system—which involves the laying on the bottom of the Canal a wire cable, to which a steamer with a tow of boats is attached—though an economical use of power is undoubtedly attained thereby. But even if the application of steam to the existing class of boats met with partial success, yet the reduction of expense would be too slight to meet the difficulty. To enable the Canal to compete with the rail some radical change is necessary.—John G. Stevens, in Scribner.

DIRECT experiments by Dunham, Hammond and others show that sleep in the brain is promoted by absence of blood therefrom. This is proved also, indirectly, by the greater quantity of blood which circulates in the skin and extremities during sleep, because there is a greater radiation of heat from the skin. Whatever tends to abstract blood from the brain favors sleep, hence digestion tends to cause sleep, as do hot drinks, etc., by drawing the blood supply from the brain to the stomach. So, conversely, whatever tends to keep up the activity of the brain cells and the circulation, tends to prevent sleep; this being, therefore, the effect of any stimulus applied to the senses, sights, sounds, thoughts, and anxiety and the like, while the opposite tends to favor sleep.

ON THE FLY.—"Landlord?"

"Yes, sir."

"What's that?"

"Butter, sir."

"Does it belong to the league?"

"Sir?"

"Has it any ambition to excel as a base ball?"

"I don't grasp your meaning, sir."

"Well, it should, for it's the best fly-catcher I ever saw."

"Oh, I see! John, take this away, and bring the gentleman some of the muffin butter."

Silence prevailed.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

THE reduction in the public debt last month amounted to \$4,315,500.

A Case for Indignation.

For many months England has rung with indignant protests against the barbarities wrought by Russian upon Turk, and Turk upon Russian and Bulgarian. Yet these barbarities, terrible as they are, and deserving of the sternest reprobation, are but the legitimate fruit of a bitter war between nations that are scarcely more than semi-civilized. At the very worst, their effects are limited, both as to time and the numbers affected by them.

But indignant England has been, for scores of years, inflicting upon a helpless nation a wrong beside which the barbarities of Turk and Russian sink into comparative insignificance—a wrong which has affected the physical and moral welfare of millions of human beings, and will prove fatal to millions more in coming years. We refer to the opium trade, which commercial England has forced upon the Chinese for more than a century past. That terrible traffic, which has increased from a few thousand pounds a year at the beginning to ten or eleven million pounds at the present time, has proved, like intemperance in our own country, incalculably more destructive than war in its most barbarous forms.

The Chinese Government has always frowned upon the traffic, and resisted the admission of the fatal drug by every means at its command. Its energetic attempts to do this in the early part of the century brought on the infamous "Opium War," waged by England solely to compel the Chinese authorities to admit opium to the kingdom. All that Christian missionaries have been able to accomplish since their first entrance into China, glorious as their achievements have been, has been a thousandfold overbalanced by the fearful misery and degradation which nominally Christian traders have brought upon the people of that dark land. While Christian teachers have sought to introduce the blessing of the gospel, these merchants, backed by the land and naval forces of Christian England, have succeeded in forcing in their baneful drug, in spite of every barrier raised against it. The Chinese authorities have done their best; but they are no match for the cunning and power of their formidable adversaries.

Recently, according to the London Friend of China, the Government has been making a renewed attempt to stem the tide of intemperance in the use of opium. An imperial edict has been promulgated, which points out that although stringent regulations have heretofore been made which forbid magistrates, scholars, soldiers and others to smoke opium, the smokers are daily increasing in numbers. All civil and military officers are therefore enjoined to consider the circumstances, and take such measures as may be necessary to check the growing evil. One of the provincial governors, it is noted, has already entered upon the work of suppression, by shutting up all shops except on the main thoroughfares, restricting these to doors, three feet high, forbidding the use of beds, and compelling smokers to lie on the floor. He fears an uprising, it is said, were he to shut up all the shops at once. But by thus making opium-smoking disreputable from the surroundings, he hopes to deter all who have any regard for respectability from frequenting the shops.

These are laudable efforts on the part of the Chinese rulers, and they deserve in making them the heartiest sympathy of every Christian nation. Especially ought they to receive the sympathy of that nation which is mainly responsible, through its encouragement and support of the Indian opium trade, for the enormous growth of the traffic with China. Some of the righteous indignation so freely poured out upon Cossack and Bash-Bazouk might well be visited upon those who are engaged in perpetrating so foul a wrong upon a defenceless nation.—New York Examiner and Chronicle.

WOMEN AND HOME.—There is a bundle of delight bound up in the sweet word, home. The word is typical of comfort, love, sympathy, and all the other qualities that constitute the delights of social life. Were the every-day enjoyments of many of our intelligent and affectionate families faithfully portrayed, they would exceed, in moral heroism, interest and romance, most of the productions of the pen of fiction. The social well-being of society rests on our home, and what are the foundation stones of our homes but woman's care and devotion?

A good mother is worth an army of acquaintances, and a true-hearted, noble-minded sister is more precious than the "dear five hundred friends."

Those who have played round the same doorstep, basked in the same mother's smile, in whose veins the same blood flows, are bound by a sacred tie that can never be broken. Distances may separate, quarrels may occur, but those who have a capacity to love anything must have at times a bubbling up of fond recollections, and a yearning after the joys of by-gone days. Every woman has a mission on earth. There is "something to do" for every one—a household to put in order, a child to attend to, some class of unfortunate, degraded or homeless humanity to befriend. That soul is poor indeed that leaves the world without having exerted an influence that will be felt for good after she has passed away.

DISRAELI'S epigrammatic remark in Lothair, "you know who the critics are—the men who have failed in literature and art," may have been an unconscious plagiarism from Landor's Imaginary Conversations. In the dialogue between Southy and Porsen the latter says: "Those who have failed as painters become picture-cleaners; those who have failed as writers turn reviewers."

A THOUGHTFUL GOOD MAN.—A middle-aged woman has called at the postoffice two or three times daily for the past week to see if there was any mail to her address. Her anxiety finally became so great that she explained that she was expecting money from her husband, who was off on his annual vacation. Yesterday morning she was made glad by receiving a postal card from him. She retired to one of the windows and read aloud to herself:

"DEAR WIFE—I'd send you twenty dollars with this, but you see I'd have to pin it on, and some one might take it off, put a counterfeit in its place, and when I got home you would be in jail."

She read it over again, and there were tears in her eyes as she mused: "He's the best man on earth. Few husbands would have been as thoughtful as that. I don't know good money from bad, and but for his thoughtfulness I might pass this very night in jail. I see now what a narrow escape I've had, and I'll take the children and go and board with my brother-in-law for the next two weeks."

In Germany it has been strictly forbidden to build school-rooms with windows on both sides, such illumination always having proved injurious to the eyes of the pupils.

The "Bone and Sinew"

Of our country have often—especially about election time—been made the subject of laudation; but when those useful parts of the human structure become too visible in consequence of leanness they can scarcely be called graceful. The eye delights not to dwell upon angles and ridges in either man or woman. Moreover, extreme emaciation is a sign of imperfect digestion and consequent poverty of the blood. Both these evils are remedied by Hostetter's Stomach Bitters, which render digestion an assimilation certain, in consequence of which the blood acquires richness and the body substance. Thus are the hollow places filled up and the angles rounded off. Through the instrumentality of this peerless aid to digestion and promoter of physical well being, the body rapidly gains in vigor, color returns to the hollow cheek, the appetite improves, nervous symptoms vanish, and a healthful impetus is given to every vital function.

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