

### THISTLE-DOWN.

Now lightly floats yon thistle down,  
By wandring breezes blown;  
Gay, careless rovers of the air,  
With source and goal unknown;  
But in their silvery filaments,  
Deep moral we may read—  
Upon each airy, reckless flight,  
Is borne a living seed.  
—Emma Cartleton, in the Current.

### THE GYPSY QUEEN.

"It's easy enough to be a queen," said Congreve Harrison. "All you have to do is to inherit your rights, and make the most of them when they come to you. Now, I am a hereditary prince, and ought to be President of the United States to-day. My grandfather was. But my rights don't come to me. This government multiplies hereditary princes without giving any of them a chance. And your tribes are particular to let every heir enjoy his title to the utmost."  
"Yes," replied the fat gypsy woman. "But, young gentleman, there is much more that you ought to know of your own future. You are rich and generous. Put silver in my hand again, and you will be fully repaid by what I tell you."  
"Oh," said the young man, with lazy satisfaction, balancing himself luxuriously upon the stump, "I love to think that the contest is not yet decided between the fair young lady and the dark one. If you showed which was to be crowned and blessed with me, I should feel as if I must reverse your prophecy from sheer contrariness."

The woman cast a shrewd and black-eyed look at him, half enjoying his impudence, but not the less determined on more fees.

The encampment of tents, wagons, dogs, children, men, women, and horses stretched quite into the woods. Smoke from a number of fires, and several dirty table-cloths were spread in the long perspective. Around these the children rolled with those wolfish dogs which the gypsy makes his brethren. It was warm summer sunset, and the mosquitoes were abroad, twanging their instruments of torture, while on that very earthen table the fortune-teller had forsaken for her subject, flies greedily covered the beefsteak, or risked their lives in waiting cups of coffee. A ruddy, swart young man, very sparkling in eyes and mouth, when he opened his lips or widely separated his eyelids, lounged at his length on the wagon tongue, and kicked at two dogs whenever they attempted to deliver the beefsteak from the flies. He was too youthful to be the woman's husband, and too old to be her son, for she had several small, dirty children knocking their heels among the tea-cups. Yet he staid by, as if the kettle on the crooked iron was his own, the table-cloth his individual board, and the space about the woman his sky-roofed dwelling.

Young Harrison enjoyed his surroundings. He had passed a season among the Assiniboin Indians; was a good hunter and canoeist; he had run on snowshoes, and jogged in the Assiniboin carts; he had seen the barbarian of the tropics, clothed only in flowers; he thought he knew life, and he felt an honest love for everything that dwelt close to the ground. The children of the road were like grimy and Ishmaelish brethren to him. He had a finer life, lived quite over their heads, but he flattered himself Congreve Harrison could get down to deep sea level with the monsters, and enjoy the rude delights of simple existence. Especially was such fellowship a delight when it let him look at the tent-and-wagon-dwelling type of a beautiful woman.

"And she's the queen," he repeated, scarcely taking his eyes off the distant figure. "By all that's handsome, she ought to be! What's the extent of her kingdom?"

The fortune teller cuffed a dog which was just in the act of gulping one piece from her beef p'atter. She then looked at young Harrison, and used the same hand to point eastward.

"We have farms over there," said she. "Do you see that house on the hill? And we have other land in Ohio. And we have land in the South."

"You let it out to tenants, and live on the road yourselves?"

"Yes," with a nod which made her heavy earrings swing.

"But I mean over how large a tribe of people does your Queen Emeretta rule?"

"Are you making a book?" said the swart young man from the wagon tongue.

"There was a man made a book about us," explained the fortune-teller, her recollections kindling. "I never see it. You have much to do with studying. You are a gentleman that meditates."

"I am only making a book of my own experience," replied Harrison, to the young man on the wagon tongue. "How large did you tell me your tribe is?" he asked the woman.

A stolid look covered her face. She fanned away a fly with one ring-laden hand, and said, with the air of a duchess preserving court secrets: "There are many families. There are families in England, and families in this country."

"Yes. In short, the whole human race is one compact and prodigious family," said Harrison, laughing. His laugh shaded off through smiles to interest, to seriousness and finally to an enthusiastic narrowing of the eyes, for the young queen was coming down toward this table-cloth at his feet.

Her own feet were in low shoes and scarlet stockings. He did not remember ever seeing such another pair of little innocent, unaggressive feet. Her dress was black. She had a scarlet silk handkerchief around her neck, and a scarlet and blue one crossed on her head. Her hair was a mighty fleece of shining black rings, frizzling to minute tendrils around her ears and temples. The high cheek-

bones of the gypsy were perceptible only because at these points the glow of her color was richest. She was all black, gold and scarlet, in flesh tints, hair, glance and dress, the clear whites of her eyes being emphasized by their warm-lidded lids and dark lashes. This little queen was probably seventeen years old. She carried her shoulders and head as if she felt the crown and robe which her people of the road have never given to any of their sovereigns. She was slim and perfectly shaped rather than tall. And just noticing the stranger by an indifferent turn of her eye, she said something to the fortune-teller about the chivvy and kekavi. Harrison detected the words by which the gypsy always tries his Philistine intruders.

He took off his cap and bowed, standing up from the stump against which his gun leaned. He was large and handsome in his hunting clothes, as even the swart fellow on the wagon tongue must have seen.

"Oh, I can rakker a little Romany," he put forth. "I learned of your folks over in New Jersey. They were Coles, camped near Camden."

The fortune-teller relaxed, the fellow on the wagon tongue relaxed a little, but something like a ripple passed through the teeth of their sovereign. She flashed out her teeth in a laugh, and covered them instantly with decorous, beautiful lips.

"Come, now, we will take you in, Rye," said the swart young man, rising, a jocular light breaking over his face. "You've a good gray tied to that tree. Let's look at him."

"He isn't mine," said Harrison, glancing toward his horse and resolving to keep an eye thereabouts. "I borrowed him to hunt to-day. You see I can't trade."

"Maybe you'll buy," continued the gypsy.

"Tute wants to pooker mandy," said the young man, at whom the brown fellow laughed with a shout.

"Romany chals never cheat," he declared. "And Romany dyes tell true fortunes. Don't they?" he appealed to the queen.

"Always true," she replied, with the sincerity of a child. "We know the future by the lines in the hand."

"I wish you'd look in my hand," said Harrison, ardently.

Queen Emeretta put her own arms behind her. "I never yet read a man's palm. Mother Joel knows all the secrets. Show it to her."

"She's already looked at it, and pronounced her oracle. She gave me a good fortune, but kept something back. I want the queen to read my final fate. I think I can bear whatever she gives me," said Harrison, foolishly.

The brown fellow uttered a grunt and sauntered behind the wagon.

Queen Emeretta and the fortune-teller exchanged a quick look, and ambushed by Harrison's back, the elder woman made some signs with her hands. Returning thereupon to her neglected supper, she cut the gravied steak and gave portions to her children and dogs, and placing a huge piece upon some bread, leaned against a stump to chew it. Her eyes followed the stranger and the queen with complacent amusement. Once or twice she drew the back of her hand across her mouth, perhaps to wipe away grease, and perhaps to smooth its twitching corners.

"We must go to one side by ourselves," said Queen Emeretta, with childish respect of the ancient rite of fortune-telling.

"Of course," said Harrison, enraptured to have her lead him by the hand. She did influence him strangely, demure and curt though her manners were. They were both young, however different their races might be, both handsome and both conscious of a peculiar freemasonry between their temperaments.

Queen Emeretta took him up to the camp rather than aside, but no dogs or children rolled quite to their feet, and Harrison turned his shoulders squarely against the gaze of several tormented witches.

Queen Emeretta opened her lips and breathed half audibly before beginning his fortune. Without releasing his right hand from her he felt in a special pocket with his left, and got a piece of gold to press against her palm. It seemed a sacrilegious thing to do. She stood like a divine young oracle, her presence fragrant with the scent of fern, in spite of all the camp's ill odor.

Her palm received the money, and she dropped it into her pocket as if that were part of the process, not with the greedy and satisfied scrutiny the fat woman had given his silver. And then she bent her head, turning her inner hand toward the light.

"You were born to be lucky," murmured the young queen.

"I believe it," said Harrison, regarding the fleece of black ringlets not far from his own face.

"So far you have lived a happy life with very little care. You had plenty of money, but all your care was to have money to have a good time with."

"True as gospel."

"Your life-line shows that you will live long, and enjoy great happiness. Here are some crosses."

"Yes, I've had my crosses," confessed the young man, with a sigh of which he knew not the source.

"They were caused by a young lady."

"I hope it'll never happen again," said Harrison.

"Be quiet, and listen while I read your fate," said the sedate queen. "Do you or do you not believe my words?"

"I believe you, certainly."

"You are about to have a great piece of good fortune. There are two young ladies who love you. One is fair and one is dark."

"Yes, that's what the other one told me."

"You have not yet decided which you will give your heart to."

"Oh, yes, I have," said Harrison, impressively. He felt borne along in spite of himself, and ready to commit any absurdity.

"You have enemies who wish you ill, but they will not be able to work you much harm if you mind what I say. You were born to be lucky, and will never die in debt or in poverty. To keep out of the clutches of enemies you must be careful what you say. Within three years you will be married to the young lady you love."

Harrison smiled down at his supple palm. Under her low monotone he was carrying on a separate train of thought without losing a word. He broke through the fortune-telling to say at this point.

"It's pleasant to live in wagons in the open air, isn't it?"

Queen Emeretta threw her glance up at his face, and replied, as a matter of course, "Yes."

"White—I mean outsiders have sometimes married among your people, haven't they?"

"Oh, yes. There was an Irishman," she said, "married one of the Jeffreys. But he turned out a bad traveler."

"I heard of another such marriage in New Jersey," said Harrison, hardly knowing what impelled him to talk so, "and it was very happy. Seems to me it ought to be the ideal life, living close to nature, and so on, with a beautiful face always before one. Don't you feel the changes in the weather very much?"

"We go south in winter," replied the queen, dropping his hand.

"And return north with the birds."

If he was about to utter a lengthy poetic sentiment, the sight of a dog absorbed to the shoulders in a dinner pot sealed his mouth. He wondered if the the gypsies did eat pigs found dead, and in the same thought-heat he wondered if there was a lovelier creature on earth than this queen.

"But was that all?" exclaimed Harrison, offering his hand to be held again.

"Have you told me my whole fortune?"

"No," the gypsy queen replied, without taking his hand. "Now, fold your arms across your breast, and wish. Whichever you wish will be granted. Have you wished?"

"Yes," said the young man.

"Then your wish shall be granted. And that is all."

"What I wish for more than anything else in the world is a kiss from you. Remember, you said it would be granted."

While he was speaking the last words Harrison knew the tawny young man had risen up from the fence corner, and Queen Emeretta had receded from him in a backward slope of her body from feet to head. Still, he knew he would have said it if it involved him with the whole camp, and if she flashed lightning at him. He knew he was going at a tremendous pace upon a foolish track, but he was already under way, and could not restrain himself. And she bewitched him even more by her recoil than by her touch against his hands. This young man, quite a favorite among his social equals, and considered not bad, was for the instant ready to wade among gypsy clubs and dogs and all the artillery of the camp to realize his sincerely expressed wish.

It surprised him when the tawny young man came near without distinct indications of intending to try to thrash him.

The queen did not disappear with a dramatic bound, or utter any exclamation to spur on the tawny young man. As he approached she walked away from Harrison, and stopped at the first camp fire to talk with the old woman who had watched her fortune-telling.

Two or three sticks only were burning under their kettle hook, making scarcely a gleam of flame, but considerable smoke, which kept the mosquitoes at bay. Within this film of blue dimness which nothing but smoldering wood produces Harrison saw his last glimpse of Queen Emeretta. For afterward, if she did not ascend to some leaf-curtained couch at the top of the trees, where the night air could fan her and the dew impearl her perfect cheeks, she must have crept into one of the squat, dirt-stained tents; and the bare thought made him shudder.

The young gypsy man again began to urge horse-trading, and so relieved was Harrison to escape quarreling with these tawny Capulets that he plunged headlong into the subject. He went after his horse and his gun, the young man still beside him, and brought them into the midst of the camp. A dozen dark-eyed fellows with shining teeth gathered around him, and others just returned from town or country foraging, with two or three horses led by one halter, or bags in which suspicious chicken squawks seemed suffocated, added themselves to the examining committee, which seized upon his horse. They felt its limbs, looked in its mouth, pulled out bits of its hair, made it prance, and sprung upon it, one after another, to try its mettle by a dash into the woods.

Dusk had given place to evening. In the gypsy camp, as in the best regulated dwelling, children will utter vesper wails. And odors not rank by day were dampened and rendered almost palpable by the humid night air.

Harrison wanted to get away. Through all the wrangle and jargon of horse talk he had kept a watchful eye upon every quarter of the camp, and Queen Emeretta appeared nowhere. He had a flitting wish to see her seated above the herd playing upon a guitar. She had impressed him as a sincere creature, free from the gypsy's cunning reservations with every man, woman, or child of alien blood. At the same time he never meant to confess to living ears the extent of his folly regarding her. He staid more than an hour in the hope of seeing a whisk of her ringlets at some tent flap.

The fighting dogs swarmed around his legs, the gypsies continued cantering his horse; he was tired of parrying their offers and keeping his head above the successive waves of nags which they poured in one exhausted tide against his resolution not to sell.

When he finally mounted his gray and started toward the road at a foot-pace, three men accompanied him, still picturing the merits of their own animals and his remorse when it would be too late, and he repeated to each separate man what he had already told the entire camp many times, that the horse was not his, and it was therefore impossible for him to sell or trade.

The last one to leave him was the swart young man who had lain on the wagon tongue. He patted Harrison's steed, and admitted there was not a gray like that in the whole camp. He rested his arms across the back of the saddle as if to fondle the gentleman who wished to kiss his queen.

But he was got rid of. Harrison balanced his gun, and took the last look at the floating village. There was no telling whether morning would find it in the same place. He did hope to see it again.

The horse went slowly home, but it was just the sort of a dark, dewy evening to hum along between fences where elders spread their ghostly parasols and made themselves sweetly odorous. He had a few birds in his game-bag, shot in violation of the game laws, and he now and then hummed a bar from Der Freischutz, and perhaps thought of his many follies.

It was ten o'clock by the stars when he led his borrowed horse directly across the lawn to his cousin's stable, noticing that the stable door was open and a light was moving among the stalls. James met him with the lantern.

"What's the matter, James?" inquired Harrison.

"I was just taking a last look at things for the night," said James, "because there's a tribe of gypsies camped two or three miles below here. Them gypsies likes a good horse, Mr. Harrison."

"Well, here's one they wanted," said Congreve, giving up the bridle. "I stopped at their camp, but they're not very formidable. What's the matter with the horse, old fellow?" he exclaimed, as the lantern searched from head-strap to crupper, from hoof to saddle. "I walked him all the way home. He hasn't laid a hair."

"No, sir," responded James solemnly; "and he'll never lay a hair again till some of the gray paint is scratched off'n him. This ain't the beast you rode away from here. What's that?" inquired James, lifting his lantern above the young gentleman's suddenly stern face, "sticking to the back of your coat?"

Harrison groped behind himself, and seized a paper.

"They've played their games on you, sir," said the old servant, grimacing anxiously at the painted horse, and trying the dry coat with his nail. "And now they'll be gone like the bird that flies. We wouldn't took a thousand like this crow-bait for that gray of our'n."

"I wish you'd quit your buzzing and give me that lantern," said Harrison, extending an impatient hand. "Don't mind what I say, James. This is meaner than hazing. But it serves me right, too."

"It don't do to meddle with them gypsies, sir."

Harrison sat against the edge of a manger, and held the lantern to what was written in pencil on a piece of note-paper:

"Mr. —, I told yure Fortune because you knew Romany. But you did not Treet me Wright. My husband the King says he has fixed you in a Horse Traid for it. He will give you this. We are not Different from other because we live on the road. I am just a Young Girl, and it Hurt me. EMERETTA."

"Queen of the the Joels, Stanleys and Jeffreys."—Harper's Bazar.

**Large Investments in Horse Flesh.**

"Caspar," in one of his New York letters to the *Detroit Free Press*, says: Mr. Bonner's investments in horse flesh have been pretty large. His first was \$3,000 for a team that he wanted for exercise. He had no thought then of becoming an owner of famous horses, but the passion gradually grew upon him. He paid \$10,000 for Joe Elliot, \$16,000 for Edwin Forrest, \$15,000 for Lady Stuart, \$20,000 for Edward Everett and the same for Startle; \$35,000 for Pocahontas, and the same sum, I think, for Dexter; \$36,000 for Rarus and \$40,000 for Maud S. Had any man talked of paying \$40,000 for a trotter when Bonner made his first purchase, he would probably have been set down as a lunatic.

**Game in The Arctic Zone.**

From Lieutenant Greely's report of the monthly killing of game in the Arctic regions, the following summary of what was killed during the whole stay at Lady Franklin's bay is made up:

Seven wolves, seven foxes, eight ermines, eight lemmings, 103 musk oxen, nineteen seals, fifty-seven hares, forty-four king ducks, fifty-three long-tailed ducks, thirty eider ducks, sixty doves, one diver, six burgomaster gulls, one Sabine gull, twenty-one Arctic terns, 178 skuas, eighty-four Brent geese, one raven, seventy-nine ptarmigans, 100 turnstones, one sandpiper, one sandling, twenty-seven knots, two ringed plovers, eighteen owls, two phalaropes and one walrus.

In epium joints and hasheesh houses tea or water acidulated with aconite is used to heighten the effect of the drug upon the nerve and brain. This is almost the same excitant that was used by the New England witches, according to Professor Schiele de Vere.

### Animal Plagues.

The plague of rabbits in our Australasian colonies is one of which much has been heard, and it appears that another European animal, the dog, is about to follow the example of the rabbit, and make himself a pest in place of a pet. It appears that the number of wild or semi-wild dogs has recently increased largely in Victoria and New South Wales, and the consequence is a great slaughter of sheep by these nomads. The government has already offered rewards for their destruction. In New Zealand some enterprising people have hit on the idea of importing weasels and stoats from England to keep down the rabbits; but if the former increase in their new habitat as the latter have done, the last state of New Zealand will be worse than the first, for a plague of rabbits must be as nothing compared to a plague of weasels, and a great increase of the latter, from their predatory and destructive habits, must be followed by a considerable alteration in the distribution of the fauna of New Zealand. In Jamaica, according to the last report of the director of public gardens in that colony, the planters suffered greatly from the depredations of rats among the sugar-canes. The rat-eaten canes were good for nothing except rum, and accordingly large sums were spent in poison and dogs to keep down the rats, but apparently without much success. At last an enterprising planter determined to import the mongoose from India to destroy the rats on his sugar estate. The sugar planters, Mr. Morris says, have unquestionably benefited greatly by its introduction, and rat-eaten canes are now hardly known where formerly they were found in large quantities. But the new importation continues to multiply and spread, not only on sugar estates, but on the highest mountains, as well as along shore, even amid swamps and lagoons; and when the sugar-cane rat is wholly exterminated, the mongoose will still go on increasing, and what then? Must the colonists find something else to exterminate the mongoose, and save their poultry, and so on ad infinitum? As it is, negro settlers and persons not connected with sugar estates complain of its ravages among their poultry and even accuse it of destroying fruit and vegetables; and although Mr. Morris doubts whether these complaints are all well founded, he acknowledges that the mongoose is the cause of great disturbance in the animal life of Jamaica. Harmless yellow and other snakes, lizards, ground-hating birds, rabbits, and many members of the indigenous fauna of the island are likely to become extinct at no distant date.—*Nature*.

### A Wonderful Luminous Shrub.

There is a most remarkable tree or shrub in a small gulch near some springs about twelve miles north of Tuscarora. It is about six or seven feet in height, with a trunk which at its base is three times the size of a man's wrist. It has innumerable branches and twigs and resembles somewhat the barberry tree or bush indigenous to certain localities in the Eastern States. But its only remarkable characteristic is its foliage, which at certain seasons of the year is so luminous that it can be plainly distinguished in the darkest night for a distance of more than a mile, while in its immediate vicinity it emits sufficient light to enable a person to read the finest print. Its foliage is extremely rank and its leaves resemble somewhat, in size, shape and color, those of the aromatic bay tree of California. The luminous property is evidently parasitic and consists of a sort of gummy substance, which upon being transferred, by rubbing to a person's hand imparts to it the same apparently phosphorescent light, while that on the leaf entirely disappears. The only reasonable explanation for this phenomenon that we can imagine is that the leaves possess some quality which either generates or attracts phosphoric matter. The Indians regard it with superstition and will not approach it even in the daytime if they can possibly avoid it. They have a name for it which literally interpreted signifies "witch tree." An old Shoshone informed the writer that there were but two others in the entire country, but the closest questioning failed to elicit the slightest information in regard to the localities. He would only shake his head gravely and ejaculate "bad medicine." We do not remember having read or heard of trees possessing this peculiarity before, nor do we imagine that the species is generally known to the scientific world. The specimen we have alluded to is well worth the attention of the naturalists of the Pacific coast.—*Tuscarora* (Nev.) *Times-Review*.

### Oysters Four Feet Long.

In the Bad Lands of the West a late expedition of geologists sent out by the government came upon a bed of extinct oysters whose size was almost beyond belief, says the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. Many were four feet in length, and the animal, when alive, must have been a curious spectacle. Imagine a dozen of these on the half shell! The shells in this locality were strewn about over the plain as if the feast of some Titanic race had suddenly been broken up. Some were partly buried, and rapidly disintegrating under the influence of wind and weather. On the northwestern coast a clam has recently been discovered very similar to the soft clam of the East, with the exception that the new finds weigh about two pounds apiece and are a foot or more in length. They are called geoducks by the natives, and are said to be fine eating, the meat rather resembling that of a crab or lobster than the rest of the clam family.

In making infants' shoes fifteen different machines are used, costing between \$250 and \$400. These turn out ten pairs in the same time as one pair made by hand.