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A Reflection.

[Original.]

Happy day for me, this 17th of May, 16—, that I am to be a free man. Mayhap a dozen times the trees have shed their leaves since I came within these dingy walls, these rusting bars. I have been kept from despair only by the remembrance of the sweet young face of my beloved. True, the waves have rolled between us, but she has sent me messages writ with her own hand to tell me that her love can never be quenched and that she longs for the day when I shall return to my own country to make her happy.

It seemed that the clock of my life stopped on that day I was thrust in here, falsely charged with being a spy of the king of England, one month before what was to have been my wedding day. Since then there has been but one long day of many summers and many winters, one long day of horror. Barbara was seventeen and I twenty-eight. I wonder how she looks now. She was then in the bud; now she blooms, while I have come to middle life. Let me but have my freedom, and I will show that I can still wield a halberd or a pike and am worthy of a blooming woman.

* * * * * * *

Oh, the delight of roaming in the fields, in the woods, in the meadows, by the stream! I see the beautiful world with the sunshine upon it and listen to the lowing of cattle and the songs of birds. Every breath of air seems to have been sent me from heaven to invigorate me after breathing a prison's dampness. Oh, the agony of those long years!

There is a house yonder. I will go there and sit on the porch while my eyes feast on the glorious outward expanse. "Madam, will you permit me to occupy this bench? What? Come in and partake of refreshment? Hardly. Your hall is spacious, and there is an air of comfort in your rooms. I see no moisture on your walls, and your floors are soft to the tread.

"Who is that old man? There are furrows in his face, his cheeks are sunken and his eyes glitter. His hair is white, and his figure is curved like an archer's bow. Surely a hundred years have whitened the one and bent the other."

"Myself? I? That tottering old man! That my reflection?

"It's false! A dozen years agone I was straight like the arrow, not bent like the bow, and my hair shone like the raven's wing. No, I will not eat. Let me go out into the world. I was a prisoner; now I am an outcast."

She stood looking at me in wonder, while I went—anywhere to get away from that picture. Alas, I know it was myself! Not a young man thinking of his wedding day, but old, with melancholy stamped on every feature. Where shall I go? To claim my bride? Never. Fasten myself upon a woman not yet out of her twenties, I an old bent, frost headed man? But what message shall I send her? Thank God, I wrote no letter telling her of my freedom and that I was coming, though late for the nuptials. I will go to her—she will not know it is I—and tell her that her lover died in prison of a broken heart.

* * * * * * *

"I have come, fair maiden, with a message from one who a dozen years agone was to have been your bridegroom. Do not start. Do not shudder. You still bloom. Had he been permitted to come to you now he would have been like an oak stricken by the lightning, its branches withered and bearing no green leaves. But during those dreary years he lived only in the remembrance of your fair face, in the hope that he would one day come to fulfill his promise—to claim you for his wife.

"No, no, no! I am not he. Unwind your arms. They are round and white; mine are withered. You are still in your youth; I am a stricken old man. I am the snow of winter, you the verdure of June. I came to bring you a message—a message that would turn your thoughts from your bereavement, that you might yet mate and be happy. I tell you he, your lover, is dead—dead to you, dead to the world, dead to himself."

* * * * * * *

Years have passed since our belated wedding—a wedding against which I protested in vain—and every year has been a blessed contrast with the loneliness, the sufferings, the heartache of those I passed in prison. I seem to grow no older. While in prison my body was worn three years for every one. Now tender care seems to be taking from my age. It is like a stream which, meeting the invigorating tide waters of the ocean, flows back on itself.

And every now and again Barbara comes to me to show me a new gray hair that has come into her head or a new wrinkle about her eyes, and but yesterday I caught her practicing the walk of an elderly woman. Then my children are now of an age when I play with them the games I played as a boy, and this adds to the backing tide of age.

Those years of suffering are fading. They are becoming one uneventful day, one suffering, one dreadful dream, which under happy love grows fainter in the distance. Meanwhile my dear wife is growing up to my age, and in time we shall sleep side by side in the churchyard. F. A. MITCHEL.

THE ELECTRIC CRATER.

How the Arc Light Is Produced Between the Electrodes.

Everybody knows that an arc light is formed by causing an electric current to pass between the points of two carbon rods. One of these is called the positive and the other the negative electrode, and the current passes from the former to the latter. Particles of carbon are carried on from the positive electrode until its end becomes cup shaped.

To the little cup thus formed the name of crater is applied, and from this crater four-fifths of the light is emitted. The negative electrode does not become so hot as the other. Between the two a little cloud of vaporized carbon is formed, rising from the crater, and this vapor gives forth a golden yellow light. But it is overpowered by the light of the crater itself, which has a violet tinge due to the incandescence of solid particles of carbon. The arc of light extended from one electrode to the other also has an axis of violet color which is its most brilliant part. The fact that most of the luminosity comes from the crater explains the reason why the light does not appear equal in all directions. It is brightest from that point of view which shows the largest portion of the crater.

An interesting effect is often noticed when flies or other insects flutter about an arc light. Their shadows cast on a neighboring wall appear gigantic. The reason is that the light of the crater is concentrated in a point smaller than the bodies of the insects, and the boundaries of the shadows consequently widen with increase of distance.—St. Louis Republic.

THE WARRANT CAME.

So They Took the Woman From Her Washtub to the Gallows.

The hanging of a woman, which in these days calls forth public protests, was apparently a matter of indifference to our grandfathers and grandmothers. It was in the nineteenth century that a woman found guilty of some trifling offense was sentenced to death. By chance the warrant for her execution was not sent to the high sheriff, and she remained in prison for about three years, acting as a jail washerwoman and occasionally, as a favor in acknowledgment of her good behavior, going out, as was then the custom, as washerwoman to private houses. But a clerk looking through the home office records found the warrant that had never been dispatched, and it was thereupon promptly forwarded to the sheriff for due process.

The woman was found by the turnkey at the washtub in a house in the town—Aylesbury. "Well, missus," said he, "you are to be hanged. The warrant has come at last, and we must carry the sentence out tomorrow morning at the latest." "Werry well, then," the wretched woman submissively replied, "I suppose I must go," and, having washed the soapsuds off her arms, departed with the official. She was duly hanged the next morning, from all which it would seem that barely a century separates us from a condition of primitive barbarism.—London Chronicle.

Not Good Twice.

Lincoln's stories grew better and better as he grew older. One of the best was told to a visitor who congratulated him on the almost certain purpose on the part of the people to reelect him for another term of four years. Mr. Lincoln replied that he had been told this frequently before and that when it was first mentioned to him he was reminded of a farmer in Illinois who determined to try his own hand at blasting. After successfully boring and filling in with powder he failed in his effort to make the powder go off, and after discussing the cause with a looker on and failing to detect anything wrong in the powder the farmer suddenly came to the conclusion that it would not go off because it had been shot before.

A Point of View.

The new steamer City of —— was laid up for repairs, and one of the rickety old timers of the line was sailing in her place. A passenger who was somewhat irritated by the fact remarked to another, an Irishman, by the way, "The City of —— always gets in at 2 in the morning, and this old tub never gets in before 6."

The Irishman thought for a moment and replied: "It's all right. The distance is just the same, and we get a longer sail for our money."—New York Press.

Needed a Cloudburst.

Staying at an inn in Scotland, a shooting party found their sport much interfered with by rain. Still, wet or fine, the old fashioned barometer that hung in the hall persistently pointed to "set fair." At length one of the party drew the landlord's attention to the glass, saying, "Don't you think, now, Dugald, there's something the matter with your glass?" "No, sir," replied Dugald, with dignity, "she's a gude glass and a powerful glass, but she's no' moved wi' trifles."

Such Is Fame.

A learned correspondent writes: "I was examining a witness, an elderly woman, the other day. On my inquiring her name she said it was Mrs. Bardell and that she came from Gravesend. I asked, 'Did you know Charles Dickens?' She replied, 'Do you mean the undertaker?' Such is fame."—London News.

Make use of time while it is present with you. It depends upon your will and not upon the number of days to have a sufficient length of life.—Montaigne.

Priscilla's Philanthropy

By Martha Cobb Sanford.

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"Will you be kind enough to tell me where Murphy street is?"

It was the fifth time that Priscilla had asked the question that afternoon, but turn and twist as she would at each new jumble of directions she seemed no nearer the clearing house of domestic panics.

"Two blocks back, miss, then three blocks east and"—

Priscilla frowned. She did not wait for the policeman to finish, but, thanking him hastily, retraced her steps with the energy born of despair.

"Is there anything more inhuman on the face of the earth," she put to herself, "than a maid of all work? To think of it—running off the day before New Year's without deigning to invent an excuse even! I wouldn't have thought it of Della after being with us six whole months."

Here she stopped her mental soliloquy long enough to get her bearings and turn east, as directed.

"It wouldn't matter so much if only Gerald Hollister were not coming to dinner. Relatives don't count. Oh, why did I invite him? He's so accustomed to having everything absolutely comme il faut. Catch me letting my sympathies run away with me again just because a man's family happens to be out of town! And he could have asked our whole family over there to dinner and with all his servants never bothered to lift his finger! But that wouldn't occur to him. It's the one thing I don't like about Gerald Hollister anyway. With all his wealth you never hear about his doing any big, generous thing."

Just here Priscilla's rapid little monologue stopped short.

She suddenly remembered that she had come to the end of her directions. For the sixth time she was about to frame automatically the monotonous inquiry for Murphy street when a bright blue sign of "Female Help" flaunting itself down a side street caught her eye.

Priscilla made a precipitate dash toward it, which ended in an ignominious collision with a corner newsstand. When both had regained their equilibrium, Priscilla, giving her fur boa a careless toss over her shoulder, started a second time toward the garish symbol of her hopes.

This time a plaintive little wail restrained her. Where did it come from? There was not a child in sight. She walked a step or two in the direction of the sound, and there, curled up under the shelter of a newsstand, was a mite of humanity, blue and pinched with the cold.

"Why, you poor dear!" exclaimed Priscilla. "Where is your mother? Are you lost?"

But the mite didn't move, only moaned pitifully.

Priscilla looked about perplexed. Seeing a shopkeeper watching her curiously from behind his show window, she beckoned him to come to her.

"Do you know who this child is?" she asked almost accusingly.

"Shure," replied the shopkeeper. "He tinds the shtand and does a smar-rt business too."

"But he's only a baby and sick and cold," pleaded Priscilla.

"Oh, he oftin cr-rawls undher ther-re t' git war-rm. The men takes their piper-rs just the same an' laves their pennies."

"Where does he live?" demanded Priscilla imperatively.

The man pointed to a dingy looking tenement house next door to the employment office. To his utter amazement, Priscilla stooped down, gathered the whining waif in her arms, wrapped her fur boa around him and walked toward the house with her burden.

From the curious tenants she soon found out which particular door led into the child's home. The key was hanging in a dark corner near by. Once inside, Priscilla laid the child down on a broken, disorderly bed and then shivered as she stood helpless in the gloom and chill of the place.

There was neither fire, fuel nor food. Priscilla knelt down beside the child and chafed his little cold hands till there was some degree of warmth in them. Then she summoned up her courage, knocked at the door of the adjoining flat and begged the woman who answered to take the child in beside her fire while she herself went out to get food for him.

She had just returned with her arms full of bundles when she bumped into a man in the dark hallway equally incumbered. An avalanche of paper bags followed.

"I beg your pardon," came simultaneously from both.

Then as they stooped to the task of picking up their respective belongings the man ventured an inquiry.

"Can you tell me where the Horrigans live, I wonder?"

"I haven't the least idea," replied Priscilla. "I'm a stranger here myself."

The commotion had caused the sudden apparition of several tousled heads from behind half opened doors. In the dim light that flickered out Priscilla stole an inquisitive look at the man beside her.

"Gerald Hollister!" she exclaimed excitedly and in her amazement dropped all her paper bags again.

"Priscilla Ballad!" he exclaimed, and his paper bags followed Priscilla's.

It is quite probable had not the squeaking doors stretched their curiosity a bit too far that Priscilla and Gerald would have spent the rest of the Flagstaff! They're at the top now. I did so want you for a brother-in-law, and now I'll never have a doctor in the family."

"Stop them; stop them!" cried Folsom, dancing up and down. "Do, please, Georgie, toss over those glasses!"

"Couldn't do it. This is a sight one doesn't see every day. There he goes, flopping down on his knees before her. Farewell, Brother-in-law Folsom; farewell forever!"

Desperately Abbett went to the bank, removed his coat and shoes and rolled up his trousers.

"Look out," cried Gaitley; "he's going to swim for it!"

Abbett plunged in and had hardly taken two steps when he slipped and fell. Immediately he arose again, splashed across the stream and clambered up on the opposite bank.

"Now," he grated, "I'll show you what it means to torment a peaceable man."

"Walt," called Georgie from a safe distance; "he wasn't flopping on his knees, after all, so don't be angry. You wouldn't raise black and blue lumps all over our pure, white bodies, would you, Folsom?"

"You'll see," retorted the angry young man as he took up the chase.

The two led him along a devious path, through thickets and over rough prairie grass and rocky stretches of plain. But his blood was up, and he doggedly kept on. They easily continued in the lead and frequently stopped to shout back mocking comments and to report what could be seen by looking through the glasses.

"Say," cried Georgie after one such look at Flagstaff hill, "I wish we were nearer, so we could distract Allie's attention from what Ramage is saying to her. I know she'd be pleased to see you unbending a little."

"That's all she's afraid of," Gaitley took up. "She's told my wife as much lots of times. She thinks you're a born stiff—er—were born stiff, I mean."

"No," bawled Callander; "he means she thinks you're so wrapped up in your profession that you look upon even her love as a secondary affair, and she wants you to consider it the whole thing."

"She thinks," began Gaitley as he dodged a piece of granite which Abbett hurled at him, "that you can't enthuse over anything but strange bugs or fossils or a new disease. We've often told her that she's wrong"—he ducked to avoid another stone—"but we couldn't convince her, and this is our reward—to be—stoned—to be chased across country like innocent rabbits.

They were obliged to take up the cross country again, for Abbett was well upon them. Down the creek was another log from bank to bank, and they darted across toward the cottages, with Albert in full cry at their heels.

There was no more opportunity for extended banter, although Gaitley now and then flung back a stentorian wish that Alice might see them at the present moment.

When they drew near the cottages, the hares endeavored to shape their courses so that the hound must cross the foot of Flagstaff hill, but he gave up and ran to kennel at the Evergreen inn.

He came out an hour later with all marks of the chase removed from his clothing. But the banter of his friends still rankled, and he determined to see Miss Alice at once, then if he had been refused to go back to the city. So he bravely charged up Flagstaff hill to meet his fate.

He found Alice, and at the first opportunity he told her of his love. When, to his unspeakable joy, he found himself accepted he demanded to know whether or not he had heard the truth from his friends in regard to her estimation of his character.

"Y-es, I did think that until this morning," answered the young lady. "But I know now that I was wrong, Folsom, dear. Mr. Ramage had a pair of powerful binoculars with him this morning, and I watched you every minute from the top of Flagstaff hill."

A Congonial Occupation.

"It isn't everybody that gets a place in life that's just suited to him," said Ma Hobart thoughtfully, "but I declare it seems as if Jed Loring had landed in the very spot he'd choose above every other."

"I didn't suppose anything would ever suit Jed," remarked Mrs. Hobart, "a man that always thought everybody was better off than he and never appeared to enjoy anything except other folks' misfortune. Where in the world is he?"

"While I was visiting Henry's folks," said Mr. Hobart, "they took me across the ferry to the island one day. I thought the face of the man that worked the gates looked kind of familiar, and he gazed at me real searching as Henry and I stood there.

"'Aren't you Jim Hobart that used to live in Bushby?' he asked me at last.

"'I am and still do,' says I, 'and it's just come to me who you are. You're Jed Loring.'

"He nodded that I was right.

"'Got a job that suits you here, I guess,' I said, for he's grown stouter and looks considerable cheerfuler than he used to when he was here in Bushby.

"'Yes, I have,' says he, real hearty. 'Why, this ferryboat runs back and forth every half hour all day long, and there's hardly a trip but what somebody misses it and gets as mad as fury!'"

A Question of Temperature.

Husband—What is the difference between the love of a lover and the love of a husband?

Wife—About 390 degrees F.—Harper's Weekly.

ICEBERGS.

They Are Useful as Well as Grand and Menacing.

When an iceberg is launched upon its long journey its bottom parts are barnacled with sand, bowlders and other detritus gathered from the land surface over which it has made its tedious march to the sea. This burden is gradually cast off as it melts while drifting down along our continental seaboard.

As a result of the deposits thus made through countless centuries, combined with the products of erosion carried seaward by the rivers, the sea bed for many miles off shore has been gradually filled up, creating those vast submerged plateaus, known as "banks," which extend from Labrador to the bay of Fundy and form the breeding grounds of innumerable shoals of cod, herring and other valuable food fishes. In this way the bergs have performed an economic service of incalculable value, laying the foundation for one of the world's most important productive industries and affording a means of livelihood to those hardy bands of "captains courageous" who each year reap the harvests of the sea.

The bergs serve a further economic purpose in that to their tempering influences are largely due the climatic conditions prevailing over a great part of the interior of North America.—Alfred Sidney Johnson in the World Today.

ABSENTMINDED.

A Story of Bunsen, the Great German Scientist.

In the autobiography of Sir Henry Roscoe there is a capital example of the absentmindedness of Bunsen, the great German scientist.

He had had his evening clothes put out that he might attend a card party to which he had been invited, but forgot all about it until the next morning, when his man pointed out that the evening clothes had not been worn. And then he remarked to himself, "I know what I'll do." That evening he put on his dress clothes, went to the lady's house at the appointed time and walked in as if it were the day upon which he had been invited. The hostess, much too polite to tell him that he had mistaken the evening and that the party had taken place on the previous night, sent to her friends asking them to come in to play a rubber again. They did so. In the course of the evening the conversation turned on absentmindedness, and Bunsen began to tell them what had happened to him a long time ago—how that he had forgotten an invitation and how he had made up his mind to go the next night—and thus he told the party the whole story, forgetting altogether that he was giving them an account of what was happening at the very moment.

Brought to Terms.

In the Drayton household it is said that the father of the family has a way of presenting alternatives to his children that never fails to bring them into line.

"I wish you would speak to Bobby," said Mrs. Drayton one night. "I've told him to take his medicine and then jump into bed, and he won't do it. He just hops around and says he doesn't want to take the medicine and he doesn't want to go to bed."

Mr. Drayton stepped to the door of Bobby's room and stood there, tall, grave and impressive.

"Bobby," he said firmly, "if you don't take your medicine at once and then jump into bed you will be put to bed, do you hear me, put to bed, without having your medicine at all."

Upon which Bobby, alarmed and confused, swallowed his allotted portion and meekly retired for the night.—Youth's Companion.

"Scouring the Land."

I have just been examining an old book containing the accounts of the charity estate of West Haddon, embracing the years 1773-1850. Under date Aug. 17, 1776, is the following entry:

"Paid Richard Worster seven days' work, cutting thorns and scowering and stoping of gaps, 10s. 6d."

The term "scouring the ditch" is used on Jan. 8, 1781, and appears many times after this date, the last instance being on April 28, 1820.—London Notes and Queries.

Justified.

"You are charged with having knocked your wife down, blacking both of her eyes and loosening two of her teeth. Have you anything to say for yourself?"

"She had it comin' to her, your honor."

"What did she do or say that could in any way justify such treatment on your part?"

"She said I didn't love her no more."—Houston Post.

Cut With the Rest.

Showman—Look here, your paper said the biggest snake in my show was twenty feet long when it's really thirty-one feet. Editor—Sorry, but we were pushed for space yesterday and had to cut everything down.—London Tit-Bits.

Frenzied Arithmetic.

Teacher—Now, Tommy, if your father had twenty dozen eggs in his store and found that eighteen of them were bad, how much would he lose? Tommy—Nothin'. I guess you don't know pa.—School Board Journal.

Careful Mr. Smith.

Dr. Pill (meeting former patient)—Ah, good morning, Mr. Smith! How are you feeling this morning? Mr. Smith—Doctor, does it cost anything if I tell you?—Philadelphia Inquirer.