THE WORLD OLD QUESTION.

Joy, shame, disaster, passion, love and grief—
Prey what are these to him who stands aloof
Within the desert of a shadowy world,
And marks the shadow of his own life fall
Across the sands that hold no footprint yet?
To him, that shadow is so great, it fills
The widest margin of the earth and sky;
And yet he questions: is he grain of sand,
Or shadow vague, and the shadows there,
And all the grains of sand?

—David A. Curtis in Drake's Magazine.

A SILENT THREAT.

I made up my mind twenty-five years ago that Private Gray would sometime kill Capt. Ross.

When the war ended the two men drifted apart, but my conviction remained unshaken. I knew as well as I knew anything that they would come together at the proper time.

The assassination of Capt. Ross last week in a western town did not surprise me in the least. It was just what I had looked for—just what he had expected. A detailed account of the murder apparently throws no light upon it. The newspapers merely state that an unknown person fired at the captain through the window of his office at night and made his escape.

The inquest brought out no clew. It was in evidence that a stranger—a stout, squarely built man—had been seen in the village that afternoon, and that he had not been visible after the killing. That was all. There was nothing to connect the stranger with the murder.

And yet when I read this brief item at a distance of a thousand miles from the scene of the tragedy, it was all very plain to me.

The newspaper dropped from my hand and my thoughts traveled backward to the last year of the war.

Private Gray first attracted my attention under very peculiar circumstances. When I saw him he was in disgrace, and was suffering the penalty.

Between two posts a barrel was nailed in a slanting position. It had no head, and no bottom—nothing but the sides. Private Gray, closely guarded by a soldier, was hard at work shoveling sand into this bottomless barrel.

It was a very hot day, and it was very unsatisfactory work. As fast as the sand was shoveled in it ran out, and the job was apparently endless.

People stopped to look at the prisoner, and I joined the crowd. It struck me then that Private Gray was a dangerous looking man. He was short and stout, with a square body, square shoulders, a square head and a square face, with bulldog jaws.

He did not shirk his disagreeable work. He went on steadily, without looking either to the right or to the left.

Finally I turned away and walked off. My friend, Capt. Ross, followed me.

"What do you think of it?" the captain asked.

"Who is he, and what is it about?" I inquired.

"Private Gray of my company—he was impertinent and I had him punished," was the reply.

"He has a sullen, determined looking face," I said.

"Yes," responded the captain, "he will bear watching."

Later in the day the soldier was released. I sat talking with Ross and a group of officers in front of their quarters when Gray came in sight.

The man did not stop, but he slackened his pace and looked straight at the captain.

A dead silence fell upon the group. That square, resolute face, with its deep set, blazing eyes, fascinated us.

It was only a second or two, but the look that Gray darted at the captain was full of deadly meaning.

"Ahem! That was Gray, wasn't it?" said a young lieutenant.

Ross did not answer. His face was very pale, and, muttering some excuse, he rose and went to his room.

"Did you notice that fellow's look?" said an officer.

"Yes," replied one of the party; "it was more than a look—it was a silent threat, and there was murder in it!"

The next day I spoke to Ross about Private Gray.

"Oh, that's all right," he answered, with an air of relief, "I have had him transferred—detailed to work in the quartermaster's department in Mobile."

I did not meet the captain again for years. He talked very freely about old times, and then his face clouded.

"Do you remember Private Gray?" he said.

"What! has he turned up again?" I queried.

"Several times," replied the captain. "On three different occasions he has met me in out of the way places where he was evidently waiting for me. Each time the sudden appearance of other persons prevented him from making any demonstration. He did not even appear to recognize me, but quietly passed on.

"What do you think?"

"I think," said the captain, "that he means to kill me, and I think that he will do it some day."

We turned our conversation to more pleasant matters, but I did not forget what my friend had said.

A long time after our meeting Ross wrote a business letter to me, and in a postscript mentioned the fact he had been shot at one dark night while he was going home from his office. He had learned that a man resembling Gray had been seen in the town that day, but nothing further could be ascertained.

I thought over the captain's letter a good deal. It was true that Gray had been punished by the captain's orders, and that he had looked very strangely afterwards, but all that was in war times. The man had uttered no threat, so far as anybody knew.

It struck me as I thought about it that Ross was in a bad fix. If Gray should lay his plans well and secretly shoot him, sometime, no jury would convict him on such evidence as we had. The old war time episode would go for nothing.

With this outline of the inside history of the case, the reader will understand why the assassination of Capt. Ross did not surprise me.

Still, I do not expect everybody to jump to my conclusion that Private Gray was the assassin. Possibly I would have some doubt about it myself if I had not seen that deadly look when Gray passed by the captain just after he had been released from his disgraceful punishment.

The newspaper statement concerning the short, squarely built stranger who was seen in the town where Ross lived just before the tragedy is enough for me. I know that the stranger was Gray, and I know that he killed the captain.

And yet all of this is too light and airy to rise to the dignity of even circumstantial evidence. It would not justify an arrest, to say nothing of an indictment.

But never mind about the evidence—from a legal standpoint I know that Private Gray killed Capt. Ross!—Wallace P. Reed in Atlanta Constitution.

Sulphur as a Remedy.

Sulphur is a very popular domestic remedy, much overrated, its medicinal effects when taken internally being less than is commonly supposed. Generally held to be harmless, it is often taken in large doses, and rarely indeed are very unpleasant consequences recorded. But that it is capable of doing harm is shown by the following case, recently reported: A man took internally one ounce of sublimated sulphur, and the following day repeated the dose. Some twenty-four hours after he became utterly prostrate and partially insensible. At lucid intervals he complained of intense headache, with aching, griping pains in his bowels.

There was a very high fever and rapid pulse, tongue dry and deeply furred, breath fetid and smelling strongly of sulphuretted hydrogen, papils strongly contracted and insensible to light, skin bathed in a profuse clammy perspiration, abdomen swollen with gas and very tender on slight pressure. The patient retched and vomited almost continuously, and had severe diarrhea; the intestinal discharges mainly consisted of bloody mucus, mixed with fine particles of sulphur. Blood also appeared in the discharges from the kidneys. This patient recovered after a short but painful illness. His case illustrates, what physicians are constantly trying to impress upon people, that there is no kind of medicine—even the simplest—but what is capable of doing harm if improperly used.—Boston Herald.

To Prevent Consumption.

It is now pretty certain that consumption is in a degree a contagious disease, and not inherited, though we may inherit feeble constitutions and render its attacks more certain. Dr. Chapen says: "The contagion must be destroyed. Fortunately, in this disease there is no need of isolation; disinfection is enough. The consumptive patient gives off the poison only in the sputum, or perchance the other excretia, if the disease extends beyond the lungs. The virus is not given off from these while moist. We must therefore disinfect all sputum at once with mercuric bichloride.

Cloths must be used instead of handkerchiefs, and then burned; or if the latter are used they should be often changed, and immediately put into a bichloride solution and boiled. Bed linen should be treated in the same way. Frequently disinfection of the entire person and fumigation of the apartment would be safe additions to the preventive measures." Of course, in addition to all this, a wise physical culture must be given to our boys and girls. Corsets must be abandoned and a love for out door life encouraged.—Herald of Health.

Strangled by a Dog.

By a most singular accident a baby lost its life in Kentucky. John Howard, a farmer, lives about two miles below Ludlow, opposite Riverside. His wife, while engaged in her household duties, set her 13-month-old child on the floor. The little one began playing with a puppy that happened to be in the room at the time. Fastened around the puppy's neck was a long, light chain that dragged on the floor. The baby and puppy were having a lively time when Mrs. Howard heard a bump. She looked around and saw the little playmates tangled up in a heap, the puppy having pulled the baby over. The mother started to pick the child up, when she was horrified to find that its face was distorted and its body limp. She also found that during the play the loose end of the chain had in some way become wrapped around the baby's neck, choking it to death in the presence of its mother. Every effort was made to restore respiration, but it was too late.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Eternal Vigilance Is the Price.

Penelope — Don't go away, Jack. They'll take us for wall flowers.

Jack—Aw, naw! I never converse with ladies unless another man is swound. I'd be engaged in a week if I did.—Munsey's Weekly.

UNCLE DEMPSY'S DREAM.

Through the Good Nature of Some College Students It Comes True.

On the waters of Buzzard's bay plies busily from one fishing ground to another a little boat which has a peculiar history.

Several years ago an old negro went to the shores of this bay to make a living for himself and his wife. They were very poor, but their cabin was clean and Uncle Dempsy was the most honest and jolly of fishermen, with all the kindly courtesy of his race.

He knew every foot of the shore, could tell by certain mysterious signs known only to himself just when the bluefish would go out or the squeteagues come in, and could guide the boats directly to the ledges where the rock bass had hidden.

The boatmen who took out parties of amateur fishermen always secured Dempsy as a helper when they could get him, in order to use his marvelous skill. They paid him but a trifle for his services.

The old couple did not grow rich. Indeed, they had a hard struggle to live. One summer Dempsy was hired at a low rate by a boatman, who took out almost every day the same party, a half dozen young men from Harvard on their vacation.

The young fellows became fond of the patient, kindly old man to whom they owed the success of their fishing. One day they said to him, "What do you want in this world, Dempsy?"

His eyes twinkled.

"A boat, sah," he said promptly; "a big boat. Hold twenty gem'men. I dreamed 'bout flat boat las' night. I dreamed I come out in my cabin, 'n' dah it was in de cove, anchored. Dat boat 'd cost two hundred dollahs, sah! Fit foh de king to go fishin' in. Painted white, wid a blue stripe 'n' a white 'n' blue flag, 'n' a cabin all complete. Ef dat boat had been real Uncle Dempsy 'd been rich foh de rest ob his life."

The young men laughed and left Dempsy in his cabin. Then one of them said:

"We have plenty of money to waste on our own amusement. We can afford to do this thing. We owe much to the old man, and this boat will give him a livelihood for the rest of his days. What do you say, boys?"

The result was that one of them ran down by train to New Bedford that afternoon. It was easy to find a boat answering the description which the old man had given, and to order her to be painted white and blue.

A week later the old negro was roused at daylight by a tremendous pounding on his door. He came out. No human being was in sight; but on the bay, anchored just in front of his cabin, was a big boat, painted white and blue, and on the stern in gilt letters the name Dempsy's Dream.

She still floats, a pleasant reminder of the kindly good will that gave and the honest service that earned her.—Chicago Mail.

Men Are Still at It.

More than a century ago the Academie Royale des Sciences at Paris passed a resolution that they would no longer entertain communications about discoveries of perpetual motion. They included in the same prohibition the duplication of the cube, the trisection of the angle and the quadrature of the circle. Men had worked for centuries on the theory that the discovery of perpetual motion was possible, nor did this authoritative opinion to the contrary alter their views. And they are still working at it, and probably will to the end of time. Hundreds of patents have been granted for machines for the purpose, and the widespread and continued existence of the fallacy is clearly shown by the scores of designs and incomplete models in the patent office at Washington.—Chicago Herald.

She Was Funny, Too.

"Really," she said, after a mutual friend had introduced them, "you must call on me, Mr. Duede. I shall be very pleased to see you."

"But my experience in calling has not been a very pleasant one," he said, trying to be funny, "for what with irate fathers, listening brothers, athletic dogs and inquisitive mothers, I am nearly worn out."

"Then I know you won't object to call on me," she said sweetly, "for we never had a dog; father was shot while stealing chickens; mother is paralyzed and cannot speak a word, and my brother is serving a life term in Auburn. I know you'll come."

But he didn't. He went around asking his friends if the girl was crazy.—New York Evening Sun.

Workmen are just finishing what is claimed will be the longest board fence in the country. It surrounds J. O. Stuyvesant's new deer park at Tranquillity, N. J., and will be when completed twelve miles long. The sawmill at Allamuchy has been running continually cutting out the boards. The fence is ten feet high, and is made of hemlock an inch and a half thick. It will cost $20,000.

MONOTONY IN FARM LIFE.

Farmers Themselves to Blame for Their Humdrum Existence.

That "variety is the spice of life" is very generally admitted. Yet farmers, as a class, do not get as much of the spice of variety as they should. Their lives are often monotonous almost beyond endurance. It must be confessed, however, that farmers are themselves largely to blame for this monotony. The isolation of the farmer's home is one of the greatest obstacles in the way of social enjoyment he has to deal with. It is our duty to one another to cultivate social habits! to visit each other's homes, compare notes and make suggestions as to the best methods of farming, etc. Nor does our duty end at this neighborly intercourse. Our first obligations, like charity, begin at home. We should make the farm home just as attractive as our means will allow.

How many farm homes are utterly devoid of attractions! The house is unpainted and uninviting; the fences are dilapidated; the gates have sagged down to the ground; the entire surroundings are dreary in the extreme. In the yard grow noxious weeds, where roses and other ornamental plants should be seen. Scrubby bushes stand where a neat grass plat should be. Instead of an orchard of beautiful fruit trees we see here and there, at long intervals, a few broken limbed, neglected apple and peach trees and a dense thicket of plum bushes hard by.

The adjacent fields have been cultivated for years in the same crops, plowed by the same shallow running plows, and producing their steadily decreasing little crops of corn or cotton. No manure has ever been applied since the land was first cleared. The same round of drudgery has been gone through with year after year; the same cry of "hard times" has always been heard on this farm, and the same doleful expression has been seen on the farmers' face for years past. Indeed, this lugubrious expression seems to have settled down to stay, and stay it doubtless will until the grave shall close over his weary form.

The work stock receives but a scanty and monotonous ration of corn and fodder, while the milch cows have to subsist upon what they can glean from the bare forests and old fields.

Is it at all strange that boys should abandon this kind of sordid, wearisome life and flee to the city as soon as they become of age? It would indeed be strange if they remained there.

But think of the hardships the poor wife must endure upon such a cheerless farm as this! Oftentimes without even the common luxury of a vegetable garden, and, perchance, little or no poultry or milk to aid her in her culinary cares. Is it not enough to run a sensitive woman crazy? There are thousands of just such dreary, monotonous, cheerless farm homes in the west and south, and perhaps elsewhere.

Executive ability is not confined to men by any means. I know plenty of women who have more practical common sense in a minute than their incapable husbands will have in a lifetime. Such women should hold the tiller and guide the agricultural ship. Had they full control of things there would be far less monotony of farm life. They would supply both the spice of variety and the sugar of sweet contentment to the boys and girls of the household.—Country Gentleman.

A Hairless Horse.

Now and then a very curious specimen is found among the desert horses of Australia. The oddest of these that I ever saw was a huge, ungainly beast without a hair upon it. It was cut out of a wild herd and roped in by a station hand, who sold it for a plug of tobacco to some man riding along the road past the homestead. The latter tamed the hairless horse, taught it a few commonplace tricks, and showed it all over the colonies. He was said to have taken $100,000, though he spent it as fast as he got it. I saw the animal many times. It was rather well shaped when it filled out, and having no mane, but a high neck and crest, it had something of the appearance of horses in antique sculptures or bronzes. Its skin was perfectly smooth and shiny and a dark mottled brown in color, and the poor thing seemed very intelligent and docile.—Forest and Stream.

Why Hair Turns Gray.

The hair retains its natural shade up to middle life if nothing interferes with its growth, and after that period it begins to lose its color. Graying after that time cannot be checked, and no medicines should be taken to check the process. If before this period it changes it is probably due to some local or general cause that should be removed. If the hair becomes gray in places and not in others it is due to the disturbance of nutrition, and the best thing is to get the blood to circulate there more freely. The only advice that can be given in premature graying of the hair is to get the scalp into as healthy a condition as possible, and see to it that the general system is good.—Yankee Blade.

Adventure of a Sagacious Mule.

Mollie, an old piebald mule, had a remarkable adventure in Cincinnati. Her owner, Charles Cole, had led her into the stable yard. Suddenly the treacherous earth caved in and buried the animal under a mass of rock and dirt twenty feet high. Cole escaped falling into the pit. An hour later the exhausted mule showed her head 200 feet away at the mouth of a sewer only two and one-half feet in diameter. She was assisted in emerging from the sewer. She had been almost skinned alive. Her rough hide was seamed and dotted with numberless gashes from which the blood flowed. Great bruises appeared on her sides and abdomen, while her legs were so strained that she could hardly stand.

Nevertheless Mollie was very much alive, as she betrayed by a "Yee-haw-w!" of triumph and a nonchalant twirl of her short tail. The animal had emerged in a ravine near Gilbert avenue. Her trip through the rock bound sewer was somewhat aided by the downward slope of the channel and by the slight stream of water which lubricated the masonry of the lower side. Nevertheless, Mollie's escape was a most surprising one, and probably never equalled in the line of animal adventure.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

He Didn't Like the Dead March.

Among those who watched the Sherman funeral procession was a little boy to whom soldiers are a delight, but too young to see in the Grand Army veterans anything except a lot of tiresome old fellows whose endless lines were so long in getting by that his mother took him home before he had seen the glittering uniforms for which his soul hungered. This of course displeased the boy, and that night he bitterly criticised the arrangement of the procession. His father's attempt to explain matters availed nothing. Other processions, he said, were much better, for in them the soldiers came first and the Grand Army last, and little boys and their mammas didn't lose anything by going home early.

"I could have stood it," he said at last, "if those old men hadn't made their bands play over and over a tune that sounded like 'You've got to see us! You've got to see us! You've got to see us!' That made me mad!"—New York Times.

Mr. Redpath's Sympathies.

The truth is James Redpath was a man of intense feelings and strong sympathies, which were always ready to go out to all whom he believed to be wronged and oppressed. He was an ardent abolitionist. Few men ever labored more for the cause of the Irish people. His regard for President Davis was of the same sort. It was sympathy for the one southern man who was disfranchised and proscribed for a political act in which he had been engaged in common with many thousands of his countrymen. Mr. Redpath in all he did was consistent with his own ardent nature and overpowering tenderness for the weak and the oppressed. He never violated its unities, no matter how strange his conduct in some instances may have appeared. He was true to his own heart all the way through.—New Orleans Picayune.

Hunts Foxes Though an Old Man.

Brisbin Skiles lives at the Gap, Lancaster county. He is at least seventy-five years of age, and is yet able to sit well in the saddle, and when he goes fox hunting, which is almost daily at this season of the year, he eats but one meal and then dashes off with as light a heart as the next one and only eats again when he returns late in the evening. He always makes it a rule to never eat between meals. He has now twenty-seven foxes penned up. He usually catches from thirty to forty in a season and then lets them out in the spring. He has been as successful this winter as in any winter past. There are few who can ride better or have a keener sense of the fun which fox hunters experience in a hunt or chase.—West Chester (Pa.) News.

Marriage of Two Blind Persons.

The Rev. William G. Herbert, pastor of the High Street Methodist Episcopal church, was called upon Thursday night to unite a blind couple in wedlock. They were Mr. W. Tuck Levely, of Annapolis, and Miss Mary Lee, of Baltimore county. The marriage was performed at the bride's home, and was witnessed by several relatives. Mr. Levely, the groom, is young and has a beardless face. He is a piano tuner. The bride is young and handsome. She is an accomplished performer on the piano and is well educated. Both were educated at the Maryland School for the Blind, and it is said that the courtship began while they were in that institution.—Baltimore Sun.

Pity the Blind.

A blind man who plays sacred music upon an accordeon is perambulating the streets of Windsor. His affliction attracted some time ago the attention of her majesty the queen, who while taking a drive saw him in the street and compassionately gave him a gratuity. He now bears upon his breast a placard with the rather ambiguously worded inscription:

"Blind from inflammation. Assisted by her majesty the queen."—London Tit-Bits.

Professor John Tyndall, the famous British scientist, did not marry until he was 63, when he wedded Lord Hamilton's eldest daughter. He is now in his eightieth year.