

VENICE.

Guidet the dust of our's midnight sky
Strike down and campanile, sharp and clear,
Jangling sweet bells on the still city's ear.
Strange scent of musk and myrtle bower high,
The frail pomgranate blossoms, hanging blith,
Above the dark canal, drop straight and
sheer,
Drift on, a crimson fleet, then disappear.
High heaped with sun-kissed fruits the boats
go by
With cadenced oar to the gay market place,
Where purple, bloomy grapes, for very stress
Of swollen sweetness, burst and spill their
wine;
Where bronzed melons lie in shade and shine,
And the sea city's definite impress
Glows in swart splendor from each dusky face.
—Benjie Gray.

A MODERN ELIJAH.

He was small and black—a child of an inferior race. There was nothing in his appearance to suggest the hero, and if you had told him that he was a hero he would scarcely have known what you meant. An uneducated, illiterate, ugly, bullet-headed negro, he had nevertheless been baptized by the same spirit which had caused the face of St. Stephen to shine as the face of an angel.

One winter day—almost a year before the event which gave him a chance to show the stuff that was in him—he came into the hotel looking for a job. The office was brilliantly lighted and filled with a crowd of handsomely dressed men. There were politicians, club men, men about town, reporters, many members of the sporting fraternity, the usual loungers and hangers-on, an occasional hayseed—all forming a very startling background for the ragged and filthy of the poor, shivering, half-starved little darkey. It was no easy matter for him to steer his course to the desk, and when he got there the splendor of the man behind it dashed him so that his voice almost failed him. He had, however, even at his early age, reached the point where he had to work or starve. So his necessities made him eloquent. His eloquence prevailed. He was on the next day placed on the payroll of the great hotel.

An a bull boy he was not a success. I fear I must confess that he was lazy. People liked him—I do not know why—and for some reason or other he was a favorite with his employers. If he had not been they would have dismissed him before his first week was out. Instead of doing that, they concluded to find more congenial work for him, so they put him in charge of one of the elevators.

Among the passengers who used to ride up and down with the boy was a little five-year-old girl, the daughter of a family living in the hotel. She was as perfect a type of her race as he was of his. With her fair, white skin, golden hair, deep blue eyes and pretty womanly ways, the child was a general favorite. Every one knew her; every one loved her.

Between her and the boy a great friendship had sprung up. He was devoted itself, and his attentions to the little Caucasian were so grotesquely chivalrous as to be almost pathetic. She accepted them all with a dignity and grace that were charming. Her family lived on the top floor of the house, and as she always rode in his elevator when she could manage to do so, the boy and girl saw much of each other. Once she was ill. The medicine that helped her most was a wretched little bouquet sent her by her dusky friend.

It was winter again. The evening of which I write was very cold and clear. The stars were diamondlike in their brilliancy. Everything was frozen up—the wheels creaked on the snow.

The hotel was crowded with guests. Not more than two or three of the hundreds of rooms were unoccupied. A belated traveler, who had been on a weather-bound train, came in at 1 o'clock, tired and cold. He ordered a fire in his room and then went to the bar for a drink. A few minutes later he stepped into the boy's elevator and was carried to the top floor.

The great house was quiet. Most of the lights in the office had been extinguished. Two night owls were talking in low tones on one of the settees which lined the walls of the lobby. The bell boys were most of them asleep. The clerk was drowsing.

Two o'clock! The night owls got up and walked out into the cold air. A drunken man poked his nose in the door. The sleeping porter seemed to scent him, for he hustled the poor fellow out.

The quiet depended till it became almost oppressive. The air was heavy with it.

Suddenly, without a note of warning, the cry of "Fire!" rang through the house. There was life enough now. Scantly clad people were scurrying wildly through the smoke-filled corridors. They came plunging down the stairs to the office, and so out into the freezing night. Shrieks and curses and groans and prayers—it was Babel broken loose. All the bells in the house were ringing. The smoke grew denser. It seemed to come from everywhere—above and below. Great black volumes rolled through the long halls. Outside, the streets were jammed with people. The engines, with their clanging gongs, hurried to the scene. Ladders were raised and the work of rescue began.

It was time, for there was a white figure at almost every one of the multitudinous windows. The awful wall loomed up in the darkness, story on story, dimly seen as to its upper half, for that part of it was wreathed in the blinding smoke. The smoke turned to flame—

flame bursting through scores of windows. The terror-stricken creatures began to jump. The people in the street below were frantic.

"Back! back!" they shrieked. "Wait! we'll save you! don't jump!"
Which is the pleasure-trip to be roasted alive or to be smashed out of shape on the stone pavement? If there is to be any saving done, it must be done quickly. Many people were busy saving themselves. The sleeping clerk and porter and bell boys had gotten out.

But what of the little black fellow in the elevator? He, too, had been asleep. He had been awakened as the others had been by the first cry of fire. Unlike them he had that "two-o'clock-in-the-morning courage" which Napoleon said was the rarest sort. In an instant he decided that it was his duty to stick to his post. And stick he did.

Up and down he went, and every time his car touched the office floor it was loaded with people. The journey was a frightful one, but he did not shrink. How long he could continue to make the trip he could not tell. The elevator might drop any minute. Very well, let it drop. Some of the people in it might survive the shock. It was sure to catch fire sooner or later. Even then he would be on the way to safety with his passengers. And at any rate he knew that he could bring some people out of the fire burning above.

He had not been good at going up-stairs, but he could run his elevator. Trip after trip he made, each worse than the last. The fireman at the bottom of the shaft to whom he turned over his living freight sought to stop him in his dangerous work. The whole well was full of smoke, and far up toward the roof the fire could be seen.

Still he kept on, and it did seem that every time he started skyward he was going to certain death. But he knew that the rooms and halls were swarming with people, and he would take any chance to save a life. The firemen were doing their best outside; death was busy within; and he finally made up his mind that it was no use to go back again, till all at once he remembered that he had seen nothing of his little friend.

Could he weather the storm and flame once more? He could try. He pulled the rope, and the journey began. It was slow, oh, how slow. The smoke was terrible—worse even than the fire—but he held his breath and fixed his mind upon the business in hand.

The flame kindled the woodwork of the car. He fell on his hands and knees, but he kept his hold on the rope. At last he reached her floor. He found her room, and found her. She was asleep and alone.

Wrapping her in the blankets, and throwing about her a rug which he snatched from the floor, he struggled through the flame and smoke back to the burning car. "Back from the jaws of hell!" it was that he brought her, fighting the fire away from her every inch of the way down. He had just strength enough to stop the car.

The children were taken out and carried to a drug store across the street—the girl alive and well and the boy seemingly dead.

He was horribly burned. Among the people who stood around were the parents of the little girl. They had been out to an evening party, and returning after a long cold drive found their home on fire. Every effort had been made, in response to the agonizing appeals of the father, to save the child—and now here she was, safe and sound, laughing in her mother's arms.

And the hero? He opened his eyes. "Did I bring her froo all right?"
"Yes, yes," said the father, "and how can we ever thank you for what you have done?"

"Nebber min' bout dat, boss. Ef she's safe dat's 'nuff for me"—and he closed his eyes.
Dead? Yes, dead and gone to heaven in a chariot of fire.—Richard Yorke: Romance.

At a Wedding.

The wedding in question was, in many ways, the most brilliant event of the season. Nothing which could serve to brighten the grace and significance of the affair had been spared. The church, fittingly decorated by a Boston artist, was filled with interested guests. The faint strains of Mendelssohn floated through the still air, and the beautiful bride stood before the altar with her chosen one.

The pastor of the church, ritual in hand, read the solemn service until he came to the critical moment, when he said:

"Repeat after me, 'I, William, take thee, Frances.'"

He did not proceed at once, for to every one's astonishment, before the bridegroom could find his voice, the bride, in clear, firm tones, repeated:

"I, William, take thee, Frances."

There was a dead silence, till the second officiating clergyman, unable longer to control himself, laughed outright. This was the signal for a contagious wave of merriment.

As soon as the pastor could compose his features and resume his dignified voice, he said:

"Repeat after me, 'I, William, take thee, Frances.'"

This time the bridegroom spoke up bravely, and there was no more blundering.—Youth's Companion.

It is said that a number of fine hotels have been erected during the past year that have omitted the number 13 in numbering the rooms. Many hotels long in operation also have this peculiar omission.

A SOLDIER HERMIT.

General Pleasanton's Life of Utter Seclusion in a Washington Hotel.

"Alone in a great city; practically a hermit amid the throngs of the nation's capital; living a life of comfort and contentment, but a life of seclusion and exclusive retirement."

Such was the answer given in reply to an inquiry a few days ago regarding the welfare and whereabouts of Major General Alfred Pleasanton, whose name and fame a few years ago were on the lips of nine-tenths of the American people, and the records of whose exploits as one of the greatest cavalry leaders of our late war would fill volumes of graphic history.

Apparently in the full possession of all his mental faculties, and with no serious physical ailment, this man of genius, a soldier of two great wars, and explorer nearly fifty years ago of the then unknown domain of our great western territory—an Indian fighter of great renown, a traveler whose face and figure were at one time well known in every court of all the great powers of the Old World, a scholar, bon vivant, wit and most companionable of all the agreeable public men of his day—voluntarily betook himself to his private apartment in a snug little hotel in the very heart of Washington on May 15, 1890, and has not since been seen or talked with by, all told, more than a dozen of his fellow beings. And, with two or three exceptions, those who have seen or talked with him since that date have been of those necessary to him in administering to his personal wants.

There was a bill pending in congress to retire him as a brigadier general. He felt that so much as that recognition was his due at the hands of the country he had served so faithfully. He had been a major general in command of the cavalry corps of the Army of the Potomac; he had fought the first real cavalry fight of the war at Brandy Station, June 12, 1863, and then and there proved his superior abilities as a dashing and almost invincible commander; had met and thwarted the advance of the enemy upon Gettysburg, holding Lee's armies in doubt and abeyance until Meade's infantry came up to fight the decisive battle of the war, and had never been found wanting when duty and patriotism required his presence either in camp or in the field.

The canvasback, the terrapin and all the dishes he relished so highly in days of yore have been abandoned, but he has everything his appetite may crave, and with good digestion waiting upon it he eats to live and contentedly remarks that he no longer lives to eat. In other matters his habits are regular, for, like clockwork, he gets all the daily papers, keeping well posted regarding the affairs of the world of which he is part and parcel, but which he holds away off at arm's length, and with which he associates as little as possible.

No one of the few who see him ever thinks of asking him a reason for this most marvelous change in his manner of living, for they know it would be useless. In fact he has resented several inquiries of that kind in such a manner as to show that they are extremely distasteful to him. General Rosecrans wrote to him about a year and a half ago asking about his health and other questions that any old time friend would be apt to ask, but he did not answer the letter for months.—Washington Star.

Character in the Walk.

To the attentive eye none of the ordinary gestures or movements betrays peculiarities of individual character more plainly than the gait—the sailor's rolling, the soldier's stiff, the countryman's jolting gait are immediately recognized. Slow steps, whether long or short, suggest a gentle or reflective state of mind, as the case may be, while, on the contrary, quick steps seem to speak of agitation and energy. Reflection is revealed in frequent pauses and walking to and fro, backward and forward. The direction of the steps, wavering and following every changing impulse of the mind, inevitably betrays uncertainty, hesitation and indecision.

The proud step is slow and measured; the toes are conspicuously turned out, the leg is straightened. In vanity the toes are rather more gracefully turned, the strides a little shorter, and there is very often an affectation of modesty. Tip-toe walking symbolizes surprise, curiosity, discretion or mystery.—Fall Mall Gazette.

Some curious pipes have been found in the vast guano deposits of Peru, the date of which is fixed by scientists, to whom they have been submitted as co-equal with the famous Peruvian pottery, the Eleventh or Twelfth century.

If the sun gave forth sounds loud enough to reach the earth, such sounds, instead of reaching us in the space of about eight minutes, as light does, would only arrive after a period of nearly fourteen years.

A New England college numbers among its students scholars from Kioto, Japan, Thessalonica, European Turkey and Iceland.

Henry of Navarre was saved from death at the massacre of St. Bartholomew by hiding under his wife's immense fardigale.

General George B. McClellan, who was a prime favorite with his men, became endeared to them as "Little Mac."

MOURNERS BY THE SEA.

By the side of the sea three mourners pale sat hilly waiting an idle sail.

"Where sank your ship?" One turned her head.
"By the sweet Spice Islands it lies," she said.

"And often I fancy on days like these
Their breath floats to me o'er southern seas."

"Where sank your ship?" "By tempests tossed,
On a shore of amber and pearls 'twas lost."

"Oh, often I dream of its beautiful bow
And the rainbow gleams that are round it
shed!"

"Where sank your ship?" Oh, woe, white face,
Does she know not, then, her lost love's place?

"My ship sank not," she said, and cast
A tiny shell on the waters vast.

No haly odors nor gems of price
Her dreams to its resting place entice.
Her ship lies frozen in arctic ice.

—Christian Register.

The Action of a Spinnet.

The spinnet instrument was an improvement upon what was known as the clavichord, the tone of which, although weak, was capable, unlike that of the harpichord or spinnet, of increase or decrease, reflecting the finest gradations of the touch of the player. In this power of expression it was without a rival until the piano was invented. The early history of the clavichord precedes that of the Fifteenth century rests in profound obscurity, but it is said that there is one bearing the date 1520 having four octaves without the D sharp and G sharp notes. The spinnet was the invention of the Venetian Spinetta.

The action is unique. The instrument is similar to a small harpichord with one string to each note. The strings are set in vibration by points of quills elevated on wooden uprights known as jacks, and the depression of the keys causes the points to pass upward, producing a tone similar to that of a harp. Springs are used to draw the quills back into position. The keyboard is arranged in a manner after the present modern piano.—Providence Journal.

Similarity in the Names of Peers.

Several peers have names nearly alike. There are Lord Ashurst of Hackney, and Earl Ashurst. There are two peers with only the difference of a letter in the spelling of their names—the Earl of Lindsey and the Earl of Lindsey, the former being a Scotch representative peer and the latter an English peer. There is only the difference of a letter also in the names of Viscount Middleton and Lord Middleton, but there is a difference in rank which makes the distinction easy.

There are several instances in which the territorial title is necessary to distinguish peers, the more notable being Lord Stanley of Alderley and Lord Stanley of Preston, and Lord Howard de Walden and Howard of Glossop. Formerly Lord Willoughby de Broke and Lord Willoughby de Eresby sat in the house, but the latter has been made an earl, and will henceforth be known as the Earl of Ancaster.—London Tit-Bits.

The Titles of Books.

A book title, like a woman's face, ought to be pretty. And if a bewitching, diaphanous veil, in the shape of a slight curiosity rousing cloudiness of meaning can be thrown over it, so much the better. Readers delight to be half taken in by books, just as men do by women, so long—and this is a most important proviso—so long as their vanity is not piqued. The object of a title should be to seem simple, artless, naive and quite naturally charming, but this—as in the case of so many of its feminine analogues—is often to be attained only by the most consummate art.—Blackwood's Magazine.

Two Greatest of Stamp Collectors.

The two greatest stamp collectors in the world were M. Philippe Ferrari, son of the late Duchesse de Galliera, and the czar, whose collection is said by experts to be worth 3,000,000 francs. He began to make it when he was czarowitz, and has been adding to it ever since. M. Ferrari, who cast away a fortune, or rather several fortunes which he conceived to be ill gotten and said he had no right to inherit, hoards stamps as misers hoard money. He has quantities, which he says will be valuable to his heirs should he live to a great age.—London Truth.

The Value of a Russian Beard.

The Russians had an old law by which any one who drew hair from another's beard should be fined four times as much as for cutting off a finger; and the importance and value of the appendage is further illustrated by the fact that, although the loss of a leg was estimated at 12 shillings, the loss of the beard was estimated at 30.—English Illustrated Magazine.

A Girl Colonel.

Little Dot—You think girls ain't brave. The queen of Holland is a little bit of a girl, and mamma read in the paper that she was a colonel—so there!

Little Dick—Huh! The paper said she was only a colonel of infantry. Mum's a baby regiment.—Good News.

Policemen's Lot Not Happy.

The Portland police are not allowed to carry umbrellas. They have also been ordered to report daily the electric lights that do not burn. The result of this attempt to make the policeman useful as well as ornamental will be carefully watched by other cities not less anxious to experiment in the direction of reform.—Biddford (Me.) Journal.

An Eminent Politician.

How any one should ever desire to become an eminent politician passes one's comprehension. It is amazing. He is everybody's slave. He is the slave of his party, he is the slave of the wire pullers, he is the slave of the press, he is the slave of the great British public. Let him refuse obedience to any one of his owners, and before he can say Jack Robinson he is out of the running, smashed, done for. We are told from the house-tops that the great Mr. Blank is going to make a declaration of his policy—his policy mind.

I doubt if the great Mr. Blank has very much to do with the declaration or the policy either. It is the wire pullers who inform him that the moment is opportune for its declaration; it is the press which has warned him of the direction in which the wind is blowing; it is the great British public from which he receives the doctrine, hot pressed, cut and dried, which he is to preach. One may venture to doubt if he ever had a policy which he could legitimately call his own. He would scarcely be the great Mr. Blank if he had.

It is the rank and file of the party who have policies, ideas, theories of their own. The great Mr. Blanks are like sponges. They are sponges with moisture which they receive from every side. It is rained on them from a thousand waterpots. This mixture of all the rains of all the heavens, when squeezed out by their several proprietors, drop by drop, is called their policy. Surely an eminent, a truly eminent, politician is the most wonderful work of man.—All the Year Round.

The Matter of Car Fares.

Speaking of embarrassment in the matter of car fares when a male friend going the same way as yourself is encountered en route to bridge or ferry, a woman says: "I really wish there was an inviolate rule, as there is among Englishmen. I remember soon after my arrival in England happening to meet as I was boarding an omnibus an English friend, to whose house I was bound at the moment by appointment with his wife. He was a reserved and distant man, though scrupulously courteous, and I wondered whether I ought or ought not offer to pay my fare through the three changes of transportation we must make to reach our destination.

"All doubt, however, was quickly removed by the cause himself, who leaned over, after finding his own coin, with the inquiry, 'Got your tuppence ready?' I found over there that even when a man was taking you about by invitation car fares, etc., were to be individually looked after. I wish the matter were so absolutely fixed here."

It would seem as if the question is readily settled in a doubtful case by leaving it to the man. Part of the matter is disposed of absolutely. No man in America would think of asking to escort a woman on a trip about the city without assuring all its expenses. In the matter of a chance encounter there can be no harm in making the effort to pay one's fare, which, if the man prefers to do, may be permitted without protest.—Her Point of View in New York Times.

The Heart of England.

In the midst of the old city of London, where the heart of human life beats fastest, stands the church of St. Swinburn's, an old edifice rebuilt by Wren upon its ancient foundations, but recently reduced by modern taste to a most commonplace air of comfort and newness.

If the curious traveler will step out of the passing thorough and edge his way through the hucksters of flowers and stale fruit squatted around the church, he will find imbedded in the bluish slabs of its foundation a large oblong stone as gray as the beard of Time himself.

This is London stone, erected by the Romans half a century before the birth of the Saviour as the central milestone or point of their positions in Britain. From it all roads, divisions of property and distances throughout the province were measured.

It has been recognized as the heart of England, from which all its articles flowed, "by every historian, dramatist or antiquary known to English literature."

A feeling has always existed among Englishmen about this stone which was not altogether superstition, that, as all distances were reckoned from it, so it was in a certain way the base of the stability of England.—Youth's Companion.

Oldest House in Washington.

Down at the foot of Seventeenth street, away from the usual route of the guide-book sightseers, stands the oldest house in Washington. The moss had grown thick around its humble roof long before quarreling congresses wrangled and disputed over the location of the future "Federal City," and when at last the dispute was ended and a definite site selected it was found that the unpretentious home and paternal acres of sturdy old Scotchman, David Burns by name, occupied a large portion of the proposed situation. The homestead itself was located almost upon the immediate bank of the Potomac, here a mile or more in width, and only a little distance away from the beautiful hill upon which the observatory now stands—the hill upon which, it is related, Braddock's forces camped on their first night out from Alexandria, in that ill-starred march into the wilderness.—New England Magazine.