

### SCATTER SEEDS OF KINDNESS.

If we knew the baby fingers  
 Pressed against the window pane,  
 Would be cold and stiff tomorrow—  
 Never trouble us again—  
 Would the bright eyes of our darling  
 Catch the brown upon our brow?  
 Would the prints of rosy fingers  
 Vex us then as they do now?  
 Ah! these little, ice-cold fingers  
 How they point our memories back  
 To the busy words and action  
 Strewn along our backward track!  
 How these little hands remind us  
 As in snowy grace they lie,  
 Not to scatter thorns—but roses—  
 For our reaping by and by.

—Old Song.

### PUNCH'S EXAMPLE.

The first class smoking carriage was the emptiest in the whole train, and even this was hot to suffocation, because my only companion denied me more than an inch of open window. His chest, he explained curtly, was "susceptible." As we crawled westward through the glaring country, the sun's rays beat on the carriage roof till I seemed to be crushed under an anvil, counting the strokes. I had dropped my book and was staring listlessly out of the window.

At the other end of the compartment my fellow passenger had pulled down all the blinds and hidden his face behind the Western Morning News. He was a red-faced, choleric little man of about sixty, with a salient stomach, a prodigious nose, to which he carried snuff about once in two minutes, and a marked deformity of the shoulders. For comfort, and also perhaps to hide this hump, he rested his back in the angle by the window. He wore a black alpaca coat, a high stock, white waistcoat and trousers of shepherd's plaid. On no definite grounds, I guessed him to be a lawyer and unmarried.

Just before entering the station at Lostwithiel, our train passed between the white gates of a level crossing. A moment before I had caught sight of the "George" drooping from the church spire, and at the crossing I saw it was regatta day in the little town. The road was full of people and lined with sweet standings, and by the rear end of the bridge a Punch and Judy show was just closing a performance. The orchestra had unloosed his drum and fallen to mopping the back of his neck with the red handkerchief that had previously bound the pan pipes to his chin. A crowd hung around, and among it I noted several men and women in black, hideous blots in the pervading sunshine.

The station platform was thronged as we drew up, and it was clear at once that all the carriages in the train would be besieged without regard to class. By some chance, however, we were disregarded and escape seemed likely till the very last moment. The guard's whistle was between his lips, and as I heard a shout, then one or two feminine screams and a party of seven or eight came tearing out of the booking office. Every one of them was dressed in complete black. They were, in fact, the people I had seen staring at the Punch and Judy show.

A moment later the door of our compartment opened and we were invaded. They tumbled in over my legs, panting, laughing, exclaiming, calling to each other to hurry—an old man, two youths, four middle-aged women and a little girl about four years old. My choleric fellow passenger leaped up, choking with wrath, and shouted to the guard. But the door was slammed on his indignation, and we moved off. He sat back, purple above his stock, rescued his malacca walking stick from under the coat tails of a subsiding youth, stuck it upright between his knees and glared around at the intruders. They were still possessed with excitement over their narrow escape and unconscious of offense. One of the women dropped into the corner seat and took the little girl on her lap. The child's dusty boots rubbed against the old gentleman's trousers. He shifted his position, grunted, and took snuff furiously.

"That was nibby jibby," the old man of the party observed, while his eye wandered around for a seat.

"I thought I should ha' died," said a robust woman, with a wart on her cheek and a yard of crape hanging from her bonnet. "Can't 'ee find nowhere to sit, uncle?"

"Reckon I must shift 'pon your lap, Susanah." This was said with a chuckle, and the woman tittered.

"What new fangled game be this o' the Great Western's. Arms to the seats, I declare. We'll have to sit intimats, my dears."

"This first class," another woman announced in an awed whisper. "I saw it 'pon the door. You don't think they'll fine us."

"T all comes of our stoppin to glare at that Punch an' Judy," the old fellow went on, after I had shown them how to turn back the arm rests and they were settled in something like comfort. "But I never could refrain from that antic—theo' I feels condemned, too, in a way—an 'poor Thomas laid in earth no later than 11 this mornin'. But in the midst of life we are in death."

"I don't remember a more successful buryin'," said the woman with the wart.

"That was part luck, you see—it bein regatta day an' the fun o' the fair not properly begun. I saw a lot at the cemetery I didn't know by face, an I reckon they were mostly excursionists that caught sight of a funeral an' followed it, to fill up the time."

"Well, it all added."

Beautifully

The heat in the carriage by this time was hardly more overpowering than the smell of crape, broadcloth and camphor. The youth who had wedged himself next to me carried a large packet of "fairs," which he had bought at one of the sweet stalls. He began to insert it into his side pocket, and in his struggles drove an elbow sharply into my ribs. I shifted my position a little.

"Tom's wife would ha' felt it a source o' pride, had she lived."

But I ceased to listen; for in moving I had happened to glance at the farther end of the carriage, and there my attention was arrested by a curious little

piece of pantomime. The little girl—a dark eye, intelligent child, whose palor was emphasized by the crape which smothered her—was looking very closely at the old gentleman with the hump staring at him hard in fact. He, on the other hand, was leaning forward with both hands on the knob of his malacca, his eyes bent on the floor and his mouth squared to the surliest expression. He seemed quite unconscious of her scrutiny, and was tapping one foot impatiently on the floor.

After a minute I was surprised to see her lean forward and touch him gently on the knee.

He took no notice beyond shuffling about a little and uttering a slight growl. The woman who held her put out an arm and drew back the child's hand reprovingly. The child paid no heed to this, but continued to stare. Then in another two minutes she again bent forward and tapped the old gentleman's knee. This time she fetched a louder growl from him and an irascible glare. Not in the least daunted, she took hold of his malacca and shook it to and fro in her small hand.

"I wish to heavens, madam, you'd keep your child to yourself!"

"For shame, Annie!" whispered the poor woman, cowed by his look.

But again Annie paid no heed. Indeed she pushed the malacca toward the old gentleman, saying:

"Please, sir, will 'ee warm Mister Barrabel w' this?"

He moved uneasily and looked harshly at her without answering. "For shame, Annie!" the woman murmured a second time; but I saw her lean back and a tear started and rolled down her cheek.

"If you please, sir," repeated Annie, "will 'ee warm Mister Barrabel w' this?"

The old gentleman stared at her. In his eyes you could read the question, "What in the devil's name does the child mean?" The robust woman read it there and answered him huskily: "Poor mite, she's buried her father this mornin; an' Mister Barrabel is the coffin maker, an' nailed 'im down."

"Now," said Annie, this time eagerly, "will 'ee warm him same as the big doll did just now?"

Luckily the old gentleman did not understand this last allusion. He had not seen the group around the Punch and Judy show, nor if he had, is it likely he would have guessed the train of thought in the child's mind. But to me, as I looked at my fellow passenger's nose and the deformity of his shoulders and remembered how Punch treats the undertaker, it was plain enough. I glanced at the child's companions. There was nothing in their faces to show that they took the allusion. And the next minute I was glad to think that I alone knew what had prompted Annie's speech.

For as I looked, with a beautiful change on his face, the old gentleman had taken the child on his knee and was talking to her as I dare say he had never talked before.

"Are you her mother?" he asked, looking up suddenly and addressing the woman opposite.

"Her mother's been dead 'nearly two year. I'm her aunt, an' I'm takin her home to rear 'long w' my own childer."

He was bending over Annie, and had resumed his chat. It was all nonsense—something about the silver knob of his malacca—but it took hold of the child's fancy and comforted her. At the next station I had to alight, for it was the end of my journey. But looking back into the carriage as I shut the door, I saw Annie bending forward over the walking stick and following the pattern of its silver work with her small finger. Her face was turned from the old gentleman's, and behind her little black hat his eyes were glistening.—Arthur T. Quiller-Couch in Speaker.

**The Value of Cats.**

Cats are so common nowadays that people do not realize their value, although they would soon do so if they had to get along without them for awhile and suffer from the plague of vermin which would arrive through unrestricted multiplying of the pests which the pussies destroy and drive away. So late as the Middle Ages cats were comparatively scarce in Europe, and were so highly prized that any person who killed one was obliged to pay a fine. This penalty sometimes was required to be paid in the shape of a pile of wheat big enough to cover the slain animal when it was held vertically by the tip of its tail, the nose touching the ground.—Interview in Washington Star.

Boys with "Business" Heads.

An enterprising street vender has been gathering in the nickels with a fair degree of celebrity in the vicinity of Union square during the past few days by selling small packages of blotting paper. Each piece of blotting paper contains an advertisement of one kind or another and was evidently designed for free distribution. The question of how they came into the possession of the street vender could probably be answered by either himself or the

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### ON THE OCEAN.

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"I especially have a pleasant remembrance of the ship's doctor—a very experienced maritime medico indeed, who tended me most kindly during a horrible spell of bronchitis and spasmodic asthma, provoked by the sea fog which had swooped down on us just after we left San Francisco. But the doctor's prescriptions and the increasing warmth of the temperature as we neared the tropics, and in particular, a couple of ALCOCK'S POROUS PLASTERS clapped on—one on the chest and another between the shoulder blades—soon set me right."

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