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The Mills Have Closed To-Day.

Annie, is the baby better?
Worse! The Lord berisend us all!
Can't live? Oh, God in Heaven!
Hear thy suffering servant's call!
Nearer, dearest, lead the children
Hear the words I have to say;
Put your loving arms about me—
For the mills have closed to-day!
And our little child is dying!
No! no! Not dying yet!
Have you prayed with long beseeching
For the helpless little pet?
Heaven would have mercy sometimes;
Others thrive who do not pray;
Oh, that troubles might come singly;
But the mills have closed to-day!
Other hands have saved up money,
And can give their children bread;
Must our darlings starve for hunger,
When the little one is dead?
Dear! It cannot be she's dying!
Has the doctor gone away?
And I cannot pay him, either,
For the mills have closed to-day!
Why was I laid up last winter?
Reasons why are hard to learn;
It was only this last Sunday
That the head of our concern
Gave away some trifling thousands
To the church—a debt to pay;
He could spare it from his millions—
But the mills have closed to-day!
Laughing? Yes, because I'm jolly!
It's a joke—we dreamed it all!
What's the need to look so ghostly?
Nightmare dreams are troubles small—
Al! the meaning in the cradle!
Merry! Merry! Pray, love, pray!
Death is clenching at our throats,
And the mills have closed to-day!

THE DOCTOR'S LAST SHOT.

Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Brown were having a very comfortable afternoon together. Mrs. Smith, who was an invalid, or thought herself one, was just as bad, was reclining in an easy chair, and Mrs. Brown, who had run in with her knitting work just to see how she was, had been persuaded to spend the rest of the day with her friend.
"Yes, Mrs. Brown, I consider it providential," said Mrs. Smith, "that I was left an orphan on the cold charities of the world, and as I was the only friend she had, she came right here, of course. Well, here I am in such delicate health, needing constant attention, and I couldn't expect my own girls, poor dears, to be sitting around their sick mother all the time. I will let them enjoy themselves while they can. This poor thing needed a home, and I gave it to her at once. I said of course, child, come right here and live with us. You can make yourself useful, no doubt, and I'll be all right." She's been here six months now, and has been a wonderful help to me. I keep her busy from daylight until dark to keep her mind off her troubles, you know, and nights when I can't sleep it's dreadful handy to have her where she can rub my back, soak my feet, bathe my head, and read me to sleep."
"Do you pay her wages?"
"Bless me, no! She said something about it one day as if she expected to be paid for her work, but I told her we couldn't think of hiring our own blood relations to work for us. I told her to be just as easy about that, whenever she needed anything we'd see about it. She gave me a kind of a queer smile that I didn't quite understand or like, but, on the whole, she is wonderful quiet and gentle like, and I consider it a real Providence."
"Where is she?"
"I sent her down to the back pasture to get some blackberries for my tea. I thought I'd relish them if they were fresh."
Down in the back pasture she was, the poor niece, Meta Langdon, but not picking blackberries. She was sitting on a mossy log among the bushes, crying as if her heart would break. It did her good; it cooled the fierce fever in her heart, and she finally grew quiet and slipped softly down upon her knees and prayed long and earnestly for patience and wisdom and help from her heavenly Father. Then she caught up her hair and rose to commence her task. But it so happened that Doctor Chester, who was spending a few weeks in that delightful country place, was out hunting that day. A fine plump partridge flew up from the bushes just at that moment, and the doctor fired. To his astonishment the bird escaped, but a shrill scream and heavy fall beyond the bushes made him throw down his gun and bag and rush furiously through the sharp briars, never heeding the rents they made in his fine hunting suit or the cruel scratches upon his face and hands.
There lay the game he had brought down, in the shape of a young girl who was in a dead faint or killed for aught he knew. He quickly loosened her dress and dashed water in her face from the full canteen which he carried with him, and finally forced a few drops of brandy between her lips. At length she opened her eyes, to his great relief, and tried to rise, but a sharp cry of pain showed there was something more serious than a mere fright.
"What is it, where are you hurt?"
"My arm," she exclaimed.
Here the faded pale cheeks opened to the shoulder, and sure enough the soft, white arm was covered with blood and seemed to be riddled with shot.
"Dear, dear, what have I done!" he exclaimed, hastily tying his own and her handkerchief tightly around it.
There's no time for apologies or explanations. I thought I was shooting a partridge, and in some unaccountable way I have shot you. Now tell me where you live so I can get you home as soon as possible. I am a physician, and we'll soon have the poor arm all right again."
"My home is just over the hill; I can walk if you will help me a little." With a set, resolute face, and lips tightly closed to keep back the moans of pain, Meta walked hastily towards home leaning upon his arm. But just as they reached the gate she faintly again, and taking her in his arms he bore her rapidly to the house, and without any ceremony pushed open the parlor door and laid her upon a sofa.

Mrs. Smith screamed murder at the top of her voice, and went into violent hysterics. The doctor frowned scornfully at her, and said to Mrs. Brown: "There's no time for nonsense; bring me some cold water and bandages at once, and send somebody to the hotel for Dr. Chester's small case of surgical instruments."
Mrs. Smith, left to herself, soon recovered, and insisted upon an explanation of the affair.
"It's nothing serious, I hope. I have accidentally sent a charge of shot into this young lady's arm. Are you her mother?"
"No, indeed, she is a poor dependent creature that we've taken in for charity's sake; a niece of mine, and what I'm to do with her now I can't see. I can't take care of her, and indeed, sir, it's mighty inconvenient to have her laid up just at this time. She is very necessary to my comfort. I need a sight of care and waiting on, night and day."
"Well, madam, she'll need a sight of care and waiting on herself now for awhile, and must have it."
By this time the young girl revived again under the vigorous treatment she received, and the instruments were brought to him.
"Now, madam, will you tell where to take this young lady, for she must be put to bed at once."
"Well, she sleeps in a little closet off my room."
"That will never do. Show me the largest, best room you have in the house." Taking Meta gently in his arms, the doctor followed Mrs. Smith up stairs to a large, pleasant chamber. She groaned in spirit as she turned down the white counterpane, and assisted the doctor in getting Meta undressed and into bed; but he was not to be trifled with at such a time. "Now, madam, I will excuse you, but let Mrs. Brown bring me plenty of warm water and soft, old linen, and remain to assist me. And I want a servant close at hand to get whatever else I may require while dressing the arm."
It was a terrible hour to Meta while he probed each wound and removed the shot that were deeply imbedded in the tender flesh. Fortunately no bone was broken, and at last it was neatly bandaged with soft linen and wet with cool water. She felt as if she were Mrs. Brown proved an efficient helper, and as they passed quietly out of the room the doctor said:
"My patient must have the best of care and attention. Could you stay and nurse her for awhile?"
"Yes, I might."
"But mind what I say; you must not see her, nor must any one else see her but Mrs. Brown and myself for a week at least, for she will have a serious time of it at the best. I regret it exceedingly, more than I can tell you, that I have been the cause of all this suffering, and will do my best to have her about again as soon as possible. So saying, the doctor wished them good-day, and soon disappeared from their view.
"Well, now, if that isn't cool! And what am I to do all this time?" groaned Mrs. Smith, rocking herself vigorously in her great arm-chair. "And my best spare room, too! Say, did he mean everything by dressing that arm?"
"Oh no! he was very careful about that."
"Well, that's a comfort any way. To think I should have such trouble with that girl just when I needed her most! I think it is a very mysterious dispensation of Providence."
The next morning the doctor found Meta in a high fever, moaning with pain and delirious. The arm was badly swollen and inflamed, and altogether her case had assumed a very alarming aspect. He did not go hunting or fishing that day, but stayed by her bedside administering medicine with his own hand, and doing everything in his power for her relief. He was greatly distressed over the accident, and inwardly vowed he would never fire off another gun as long as he lived.
But what a revelation of toil, hardship, and cruel wrong the unconscious Meta made in her delirium! She fancied the doctor, as he bathed her head and hands and soothed her as he would a child, was her mother, and she drew his hand close to her lips and whispered:
"O mother! I'm so glad you have come for me! I'm tired to death, Auntie has no mercy or feeling for me! She has kept me at work over her night and day, and I've gone hungry many and many a time, because I couldn't bear to eat the food so grudgingly given. O, I am so glad you have come!"
Now Meta was not a beautiful girl, though she had a sweet, pure, womanly face, and great, wistful eyes, and an abundance of dark, silky hair. But her small hands were brown and hardened with toil; she was poor, dependent alone in the world except for this selfish, unfeeling aunt, and the consoling words she would utter, the fire off another gun as long as he lived.
Doctor Chester was a rich, old bachelor, not so very old either, only thirty-six. Why he had never married no one could tell, but true it is he had remained heart whole these years in spite of the many beautiful women who had smiled gracefully upon him. But somehow his poor suffering orphan won his heart completely during that week of unconsciousness. He was charmed with her sweet prattle about her childhood; and her innocence and helplessness, together with the suffering he had so unwittingly caused, appealed, strongly to his sympathy, and he fully resolved to win her love and make her his wife if possible. Never had a patient a more assiduous doctor than did poor Meta. Mrs. Smith fumed and fretted over all the fuss that they made about "that girl," until the doctor frightened her into silence by telling her that he knew how she had treated the poor child, and that if she didn't keep quiet and have everything done that was needful for her comfort he would have her arrested and tried for inhuman cruelty.
Under his watchful care the danger was soon over, and Meta was pro-

nounced convalescent. The doctor took her out to ride as soon as she was able, in the easiest of all carriages. Rare delicacies were sent every day from the hotel to tempt her returning appetite. The sweetest and most fragrant flowers that could be found adorned her room. Meta reconstituted with him for all this lavish kindness, but he would silence her by saying he was the cause of all her suffering and she must allow him to atone for it in every way he could. How eagerly he watched the faint color that crept into her cheeks at his approach! How tenderly and delicately he ministered to her comfort and pleasure day after day, until at last he ventured to tell her of his love and his great desire to have her for his own. He had become very dear to her during all those weeks of suffering, and she acknowledged it and promised to be his wife. He hastened to inform Mrs. Smith of their betrothal, and asked her forbearance for another week when, he assured her, he would relieve her from all further care and responsibility of her niece. Imagine if you can her astonishment! She was completely dumbfounded, and had not a word to say; though doubtless in her heart she thought it another most "mysterious dispensation."
The next day a notable dressmaker from the city arrived with various wonderful and costly fabrics, which she had orders to make for Miss Langdon in the latest style. Such a time as there was then of cutting and basting, of trying on and trimming! Two other seamstresses kept their sewing-machines running at the highest rate of speed, until at the close of the week there was enough of a winged procession to fill a huge Saratoga trunk. The doctor made daily pilgrimages between that chamber and the city, until at last he could not devise another thing which his darling could possibly need for dress or ornament during the trip to Europe which he had planned. Never was there a happier bride and groom than those who were made one in Mrs. Smith's parlor that bright September morning. They went immediately to his home on the Hudson, where his mother received the new daughter with open arms, and soon after went to Europe, where they remained a year. Meta made good use of the time by putting herself under the care of the best private teachers, and when on their return the happy doctor presented his wife to his friends, there was not among them one more highly accomplished or more elegant and refined. The doctor was very proud of her, and never tired of telling his intimate friends how he found his wife, or the result of his last shot.

CHRISTMAS SNIPPE HUNT.

"I am so glad to see you, Henry, and so surprised too; for you know you expected to remain in St. Louis till after Christmas. It has been awfully stupid here at Helena since you have been gone. There has not been a single party of any kind that I should have done out for that connected coxcomb, Raymond, who has been trying his very best to do the agreeable, and I must say amused me exceedingly."
"What, you don't mean that foppish New York drummer? Why, he is greener than cucumbers; if he were turned loose out in the meadows the cowboys would follow him. He comes down here to Arkansas selling Yankee notions and gimcracks, and struts about in his new store clothes as though he were a heap better than any fellow in the State. And so, Kate, he has been shining around you, has he?"
"Yes, but I only laugh at him; a lady must have company of some kind, you know, Henry. If none come along whom she can laugh with, she sometimes is content with one she can laugh at. This fine New York gentleman—Mr. Augustus K. Raymond he calls himself—has invited me to the grand Christmas night party at his house."
"But you surely did not accept, Kate; why, I heard of this party, and hurried home from St. Louis before my business was half over, on purpose to ask you to go with me."
"I am extremely sorry, Mr. Morgan, that you should be so disappointed; but I was with the girl to do it. I wouldn't have missed going for the world, and how could I know that you would put yourself to so much inconvenience for my sake?"
"Now, Kate, this is cruel in you. Why do you call me Mr. Morgan, and not this lovely girl to do it? We are old schoolmates, and I love you, and—and I had flattered myself that we were very good friends. I had even ventured to hope that some day we might be still better friends. In fact—but I am making myself as great a fool as that top of a notion peddler. My dear Kate, I sincerely know that I am never going to see you again, and I do so devotedly, and that if you will give me the least assurance that you love me in return, I shall be the happiest fellow in Arkansas. Can you give me just one word of encouragement?"
"Yes," replied the roguish girl with a provoking brevity, "a serious look immediately stole over her countenance, and after a few minutes of silence, while the young man ardently pressed her hand, she added, as her downcast eyes were raised again to meet his: 'You knew all the while you were the only one of my acquaintance who for whom I really cared anything.'"
"I was bold enough to think you preferred me, dear Kate, or I should never have been brave enough to declare myself. But what's to be done now about this Christmas party? That young knight, Raymond, shall not love you if I have to run him out of town."
"Never fear, Henry, I will get rid of him in some way. He bored me terribly before. He would be insufferable now."
"I know how we can get rid of him, Kate. We young fellows will get up a sniping party for Christmas eve, and make him hold the bag."
"Oh, that will do," said Mrs. Morgan, Kate, gayly. "That's just the thing, but there's the bell now, and no doubt it is he himself. Just wait and see how nicely I shall dispose of him. You are to be my cousin, mind."
A card bearing the name of Augustus K. Raymond was handed in, followed by a young gentleman with waxed moustache, hair parted in the middle, and the air generally of one who has got himself up to make a stunning impression.
"Good evening, Mr. Raymond. Permit me to introduce you to my cousin, Mrs. Morgan."
"Delightful to have the pleasure of your acquaintance, sir. You reside in Helena, I suppose," said Mrs. Morgan, curtly.
"Ah, then, perhaps you are in the mercantile business. I have the honor to represent one of the leading notions houses."
"No, I am not in the trade, interrupted Mrs. Morgan, dryly.
"My cousin explained the lady is in the game business; and, apropos of game, he has just been telling me that he is going with a party of our young gentlemen on a grand snippe hunt to-morrow evening—Christmas eve."
"Yes," added Mrs. Morgan, and she should like to have you join us."
"Do go with them, Mr. Raymond. I do so want a snippe feather to wear in my hair at the party. They are all in the rage with the girls now. Such beautiful feathers they are, too! Long and drooping, with the richest red and yellow colors. You must go with them and get me a snippe feather, for I can't think of going to the party without one. My cousin Henry here, even when he goes, is never smart enough to secure me a good feather. Somebody else always gets the privilege of holding the bag, and so secures the finest of the feathers."
"Certainly I'll go, with great pleasure, Miss Andrews, that is, if the gentlemen really desire that I should honor them with my company."
"Of course we'll feel greatly honored, Mr. Raymond, said Mrs. Morgan, and you will condescend to join us in one of our simple Western sports. I can even promise you the post of honor on the occasion."
"Really, you quite overwhelm me. I shall not fail to be with the party, if I can be of service; I am not familiar at all with—with what did you call the game?—snippe; but if they possess such beautiful feathers as Miss Andrews describes, they must form a conspicuous mark, and no doubt I shall be able to bring at least one down at every shot. They call me a good marksman on the shooting galleries in New York. You may rely upon me, Mr. Morgan."
So saying, Mr. Raymond bowed himself out in an impressive manner, and had scarcely closed the hall door be-

hind him when both the others broke out in a paroxysm of laughter.
"That joke of yours, Kate, about the red and yellow feathers, was excellent. It couldn't have been better managed. I'll get the boys together to arrange for the hunt. By 10 o'clock to-morrow night you'll be ready to be standing up to his knees in the mud and water, out in one of the creeks, holding the bag, and expecting that the rest of us will drive the snippe into it. But he will be as likely to see Santa Claus himself out there as any snippe. When he gets tired of waiting for the game, and for us to return, he can sneak off home alone. It will spoil those striped pantaloons of his, though, and ruffle his temper, so that this climate will not be apt to agree with him any longer."
The just-accepted lover, however, did not seem in a hurry about going, and it was considerably later in the evening when he finally made his betrothed "good-night." The latter, we should have explained, was the belle of Helena, Arkansas.
She was a high-spirited, dashing young lady, as might be inferred from the foregoing, and, withal, unusually handsome. She had numerous admirers, and, as is usually the case with her kind, she was completely content with one she can laugh at. This fine New York gentleman—Mr. Augustus K. Raymond he calls himself—has invited me to the grand Christmas night party at his house. He was bold enough to think you preferred me, dear Kate, or I should never have been brave enough to declare myself. But what's to be done now about this Christmas party? That young knight, Raymond, shall not love you if I have to run him out of town. Never fear, Henry, I will get rid of him in some way. He bored me terribly before. He would be insufferable now. I know how we can get rid of him, Kate. We young fellows will get up a sniping party for Christmas eve, and make him hold the bag. Oh, that will do. That's just the thing, but there's the bell now, and no doubt it is he himself. Just wait and see how nicely I shall dispose of him. You are to be my cousin, mind. A card bearing the name of Augustus K. Raymond was handed in, followed by a young gentleman with waxed moustache, hair parted in the middle, and the air generally of one who has got himself up to make a stunning impression. Good evening, Mr. Raymond. Permit me to introduce you to my cousin, Mrs. Morgan. Delightful to have the pleasure of your acquaintance, sir. You reside in Helena, I suppose. Ah, then, perhaps you are in the mercantile business. I have the honor to represent one of the leading notions houses. No, I am not in the trade, interrupted Mrs. Morgan, dryly. My cousin explained the lady is in the game business; and, apropos of game, he has just been telling me that he is going with a party of our young gentlemen on a grand snippe hunt to-morrow evening—Christmas eve. Yes, added Mrs. Morgan, and she should like to have you join us. Do go with them, Mr. Raymond. I do so want a snippe feather to wear in my hair at the party. They are all in the rage with the girls now. Such beautiful feathers they are, too! Long and drooping, with the richest red and yellow colors. You must go with them and get me a snippe feather, for I can't think of going to the party without one. My cousin Henry here, even when he goes, is never smart enough to secure me a good feather. Somebody else always gets the privilege of holding the bag, and so secures the finest of the feathers. Certainly I'll go, with great pleasure, Miss Andrews, that is, if the gentlemen really desire that I should honor them with my company. Of course we'll feel greatly honored, Mr. Raymond, said Mrs. Morgan, and you will condescend to join us in one of our simple Western sports. I can even promise you the post of honor on the occasion. Really, you quite overwhelm me. I shall not fail to be with the party, if I can be of service; I am not familiar at all with—with what did you call the game?—snippe; but if they possess such beautiful feathers as Miss Andrews describes, they must form a conspicuous mark, and no doubt I shall be able to bring at least one down at every shot. They call me a good marksman on the shooting galleries in New York. You may rely upon me, Mr. Morgan. So saying, Mr. Raymond bowed himself out in an impressive manner, and had scarcely closed the hall door be-

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Facts and Fancies.

A Milwaukee company has imported 180,000 bushels of barley and 300 bushels of hops from Italy.
A big ear of corn, surrounded by thirteen little ones, lately entered an editor's sanctum in Iowa.
Peter Shambo, the first licensed navigator of Lake Superior, still lives, and is ninety-eight years old.
Men were farmers long before they could read; and they never could have read had they not first been farmers.
A police justice in Chicago was somewhat astonished when a vagrant tried before him counted out \$28,000 in greenbacks.
If the united power of all agricultural colleges would teach us how to grow good crops of potatoes, we would be thankful.
Many farmers complain that their occupation does not pay. What is the use of saying so? Nine merchants in ten fail, but they never brag about it.
If hard work bends the body, swells the joints, and blisters the hands, it yet gives expertness and power to the muscles, such as gentility may seek in vain to exhibit.
When plows, reapers, and other implements are left in the field over winter, the greatest loss is not in their decay but in the evil habits established in the farmer's mind.
If every planter would grow 50 bushels of corn for each bale of cotton, he would get more money than now. There would be less cotton, but it would bring more, and the corn would be clear gain.
Western farmers have discovered that it is cheaper to haul grain 50 miles with their teams, if they have a load back, than to ship by rail, and they are doing it. Railroads are getting behind the times.
The weight of the new fractional silver coin is metrical, that of the half dollars being just twelve and one-half grammes, the quarter dollar six and one-quarter grammes and the dime two and one-half grammes.
An Irish nobleman, attended by twenty-six dogs, passed through Indianapolis, lately, on his way to Florida on a hunting expedition. He had a car attached to a freight train devoted to himself and attendants.
When you go into a new country don't be too smart. Listen and watch and find out how things are done, and be careful not to insist on your own way. The farmers of every section have, as a general thing, good reasons for their practices.
The sailors of the Tornado were compelled to shoot Captain Fry and his crew, but fired with excessive haste, inflicting frightful tortures on the condemned. The bodies were carried off to the cemetery and thrown into the graves, six persons in each, clothes and all.
An old, rough clergyman once took for his text the passage of the Psalmist: "I said in my haste all men are liars." Looking up apparently as if he saw the Psalmist standing before him he said: "You said it in your haste, David, did you? Well, if you had been here, you might have said it after mature deliberation."
Perhaps one of the oddest elections on record occurred at the last general election for members of the General Assembly in Germany. A certain district had only one legal voter, who walked proudly up to the polls and voted for himself, the only eligible member in the district. But when his name was announced as the elected member, he pompously arose, and said, "Messrs. Commissioners, I do not accept the election!" and walked gravely off.
Over the Edge of the Wagon.
Emigrants must not stand upon wheels. Many a wedding on cereals has signaled the passage of Western trains through the last "cities" on the great frontier. The Warrenton (Mo.) Standard says:
Last Friday afternoon, as one of our popular justices from Ashbury was in meditation deep among the papers pertaining to his law cases, a swift and heavy step was heard on the stairway and along the hallway leading to his office. The door was opened without any ceremony, and in rushed a man in a state of high excitement not usually seen in our quiet city.
"Are you the 'Squire'?" he asked, as he wiped the perspiration from his heated brow.
"I am," replied the Justice.
"Well, I want to get married, and want the thing done right away."
"It got noised around that he had this amount of money in his possession, and late in the evening three men, without doubt, the murderers, went to where he was stopping, pretended that they wished to purchase some territory. They made remarks to the effect that they doubted the truth of the report that he had buried ninety feet in one day. They induced him to accompany them to the place where the hole was, one of the men carrying a lantern and cord for the purpose, they said, of measuring the depth themselves. That was the last we saw of poor Watson alive.
We had not, however, heard that he had been missing, and early this morning we rigged up the auger for the purpose of going still further down in our prospecting. Imagine our horror when the first auger full was brought to the surface; it contained the head and part of the torn remains of your agent. The face was easily identified by those present. Whether he was dead when the auger reached him or not we cannot tell, though I think we have some clue to the body was yet warm. He was doubtless robbed and thrown into the hole he robbed himself the day before.
Of course we did not attempt to go any further, but, after satisfying ourselves that the remains were those of Watson, we placed the mangled parts back into the well and filled it up. It has caused great excitement in our camp, and I think we have some clue to the hands who perpetrated the cold-blooded and horrible murder. I feel certain that the robbers secured the \$1,000 which was paid your agent, as he told me that he would not remit it until he got to an express office,