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## The Dead Child and the Mocking-Bird.

[The following poem is in no sense a parody. On the contrary, the strange, pathetic incident is commemorated actually occurred not long ago in the neighborhood of Jacksonville, Florida.]

Once, in a land of balm and flowers,  
Of rich fruit-laden trees,  
Where the wild wreaths from jasmine bowers  
Trail o'er Florida seas,  
We marked our Jeannie's footsteps run  
Athwart the twinkling glades;  
She seemed a Hebe in the sun,  
A Dryad in the shade.

And all day long her winsome song,  
Her frolics and soft trills,  
Would waft like flow, or silvery low  
Die down the whispering rills.

One morn amidst the foliage dim  
A dark gray pinion stirred;  
And hark! along the vine-clad limb  
What strange voice blends with hers?

It blends with hers, which soon is stilled—  
Braver the mock-bird's note  
Than all the strains that ever filled  
The queenliest human throat!

As Jeannie heard, she loved the bird,  
And sought thereafter to share  
With her new favorite, dawn by dawn,  
Her daintiest morning cheer.

But ah! a blight beyond our ken,  
From some far foveous wild,  
Brought that dark shadow of fear  
Across the faded bill.

It chilled her drooping curls of brown,  
It dimmed her bright blue eyes,  
And like an awful cloud crept down  
From vague, mysterious skies.

At last one day our Jeannie lay  
All pulseless, pale, forlorn;  
The sole sweet breath on lips of death  
The fluttering breath of morn;

When just beyond the e'er-curtained room  
(How tender, yet how strong!)  
Rose through the misty morning gloom  
The mock-bird's sudden song.

Dear Christ! those notes of golden peal  
Seem caught from heavenly spheres,  
Yet through their marvelous cadence steal  
Tones soft as chastened tears.

Is it an angel's voice that throbs  
Within the brown bird's breast,  
Whose rhythmic magic soars or soars  
Above our darling's rest?

The fairy passed—but came once more  
When, stolen from Jeannie's bed,  
That eve, along the porchway floor  
I found our minstrel—dead!

The fire of that transcendent strain  
His life-bloods turned apart,  
And, merged in sorrow's earlier pain,  
It broke the verdant heart.

Maiden and bird!—the self-same grave  
Their wedding shall keep,  
While the long low Florida wave  
Means around their place of sleep.

—Paul H. Hayne, in Harper's Magazine.

## WITH THE BEST INTENTIONS.

There's no doubt about it that Robinson was a good fellow at heart, and meant well; but it's astonishing what an amount of trouble a man may bring upon himself by undertaking too much for his fellow-creatures. I don't suppose there was another man in our store that took the interest Robinson did in the different wardrobes of his fellow clerks. If a man got a new hat Robinson noticed it right away; wanted to know where it was bought, when and why, and generally concluded by saying that if the purchaser had consulted him he might have made a better bargain. And I've no doubt he would. Robinson would have made it a point to favor him with his influence and experience, both of which were considerable. The same way with coats, or pants, or boots, or anything! But, notwithstanding all this, very few of our boys consulted Robinson in these matters; they generally bought their articles with a reckless indifference that was painful to a man constituted as Robinson was. It seemed hard, when a man took the interest in his fellow-creatures that Robinson did, that his motives should be misconstrued and unappreciated. I remember when I bought that new ulster of mine, I disliked, for some reason or other, to see Robinson. I had a ridiculous aversion to telling him just where I got it, and when, and how much it cost, and what I did with the other one. It was a kindly sympathy on Robinson's part, there's no doubt about that; but it was wasted, so far as our boys were concerned.

"Why don't the fellow mind his own business?" they said. "What does he want to manage other people's concerns for?" So I was glad when he told me, confidentially, that he was about to be married. I felt then that his interest would be so absorbed in the one object that it would be impossible to diffuse it all over the universe.

Robinson seemed to have found a treasure. Of course everybody thinks so; but I knew that Robinson would know more, and see more, and be less likely to be deceived, than other men, and he had, as I supposed, gained the confidence of the family into which he proposed to marry. I was afraid his projected mother-in-law might object to some of Robinson's ways, but he told me he got on with her splendidly. I thought she was a remarkable woman, not altogether because she got on so well with Robinson, but from Robinson's conversation I imagined she must be very clever.

"The fact is," said Robinson, "we are mutually interested in the same topics. We sit and talk about domestic matters for hours together, while Annie thums over her new piece on the piano, and Mrs. Page has told me, time and time again, if there's one thing more than another she admires in my character it's the interest I take in little domestic details that most men despise or hold in utter indifference. You see, Smith, marriage is a sacred obligation."

If I hadn't inquired into all the little intricacies of our line of business."

"You certainly can judge of a good article," Robinson said.

"Ah, Smith, the one I've secured now is beyond price. She's just the kind of goods a man wants to rest his eyes upon when he's tired of shams and shoddies. Annie isn't brought up to dabble and deceive. Her mother has taught her great pains to inculcate in her daughter qualifications of mind and character that will make her a good wife and mother. Mrs. Page is an excellent woman, Smith."

"And I suppose her daughter is like her?"

"Well, no, Smith. She can't converse and reason as her mother can, nor has she her mother's appreciative qualifications. Annie's mind is less astute."

"Well, she's young yet."

"She's as simple and pliable as a little child. I'm a happy man, Smith."

I was delighted to hear him say so, and told him so, and at the wedding I expressed it as my opinion that his happiness would last, he was charmed with his wife. She seemed such a nice, jolly little creature, so unaffected and simple in her manner, and had a wonderful magnetism about her. She was as plump and round as a little partridge, with big black melting eyes and a pretty little mouth. I can't say I was so much drawn to her mother. She was a fine-looking woman with a deep voice, and something very firm about the contour of her jaw. Mrs. Page had more of what they call character in her face than her daughter would ever have; but I haven't the admiration for a face with character that some men have. Robinson always said he liked that kind of thing, and he certainly had it in his mother-in-law. Robinson spent the better part of an hour talking with her that night, while I was chatting with his wife. I came away convinced that marriage must be a very pleasant thing, with a little wife like Robinson's, and my bachelor quarters looked exceedingly dingy and forlorn.

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"I don't know how it was, but I took an extraordinary interest in Robinson's marriage, and was sorry to see a cloud on the matrimonial horizon before six months were over."

"We've gone to housekeeping, you know," said Robinson. "I was afraid Annie would want to board at home with her mother, but Mrs. Page agreed with her best to build a little nest of our own. She took the kindest interest in everything, and wanted to go house-hunting with Annie and to help her pick out the furniture. But I had already secured a house, and bought the furniture of friends of mine in the business, who would favor me in prices. As to bed-linen, carpets and things of that sort, I got them here in the store at cost. In heaven's name, Smith, is there any reason why a man shouldn't hire his own house and purchase his own furniture?"

"None whatever," I replied, "unless it may be that his wife desires the same privilege."

"But she didn't, Smith. Annie said she was glad to leave it to me. I took the dear little woman in my arms and kissed her, and felt my heart lightened of a very heavy load that somehow had rested there since my last interview with her mother. But Mrs. Page's manner is very unpleasant, Smith—very. I don't want to say that she accuses me of robbing Annie of any legitimate happiness, but she conveys some such impression to my mind, and it makes me feel like a malefactor. I'm so fond of my wife that the thought of depriving her of the smallest joy is misery to me."

"Well, these little trifles will all come right, Robinson. It isn't as if your mother-in-law lived with you."

"I thought of that when I took the house, that it would be so comfortable for Annie to live near her old home, and have the attention and advice of her mother. As heaven is my judge, Smith, I have tried to take every burden from my wife. I've opened accounts with my wife, and the nearest grocer, butcher, baker, and hired an excellent servant. I leave a generous margin for sundries, which I look into rigidly at the first of every month, and settle with the other accounts, when we begin again with a clear fresh record. A woman certainly ought to be happy when she has nothing to do but enjoy herself. I've even persuaded her to put all her little expenses down in my book, so that she knows where every penny of her money goes; and, as I said before, I take care of the household expenses myself. The servant comes to me every morning for orders before I go to business, so that Annie scarcely knows what she's going to have for dinner. Could a man do more than that, Smith?"

"Perhaps he might do less, Robinson. I'm only a miserable bachelor myself, and know nothing about women; but the question is, if you're not erring on the generous side—if you're not taking too much upon yourself."

"A man can't do too much, Smith, for the woman he adores."

Just then a customer came in, and I was glad to get away. Robinson evidently had the best intentions in the world. He loved his wife. He ever esteemed his mother-in-law. I never saw a man work so hard in what he considered his line of duty, and so utterly fail to recommend it to others, as poor Robinson. But he began to be brighter and apparently happier. The anniversary of his wedding was close at hand, and he was interested in a gift to his wife.

"I was puzzled what to get," said Robinson. "You see she's got almost everything, Smith; her wedding presents embraced so many little adornments and knickknacks. At last I hit upon a black silk dress—a woman can't have too many, and I can get a bargain down in the store just now. She said she'd rather have the money and buy it outside; but I persuaded her that it would be foolish. So she's coming in to choose the trimmings this afternoon, and if she comes while I'm out you'll take care of her, won't you?"

"With pleasure," I said. And it so happened that she did come while Robinson was away, and seemed to bring all the sunshine with her.

I told her that her husband had left her in my care, and begged her to use me in any way that suggested itself to her; that it would be my happiness to serve her.

I suppose there was an honest fervor about this declaration that impressed Mrs. Robinson. It had so happened that I was able to show her some little favors and attentions in return for the money that her husband had done for me. I had told her I was under obligations to Robinson. Of course I didn't explain that it was in his desiring to help me select my hat and coats and boots; it wasn't necessary to enter into these little details, but she understood that a natural gratitude on my part led me to send her in return a few little trifles, such as bouquets, neckties, or music, or opera tickets, once in a while. So she knew the declaration of mine that day at the store, that I would be happy to serve her, came straight from my heart.

"You are so good and kind," she said. Then all at once an eager wistfulness leaped into her eyes. "I wish I could dare ask you to do me a favor, Mr. Smith—a very great favor," she said.

"Do," I replied. "I won't abuse your generosity."

"Oh! I wonder if it will be right?" she said, clasping her little gloved hands, and looking up in my face with a charming air of indecision. "I wonder if I ought to do such a thing?"

"The fact that you desire to do it is proof that it is blameless," I replied.

"I do desire it, indeed," she said; "and it is perfectly blameless. I've set my heart on giving my husband a present upon our marriage anniversary."

"Is that all, Mrs. Robinson?"

"All at once this celestial vision was broken by an advancing figure. It was Robinson—and alone. His head was bowed, his hat jammed over his eyes; the only part of his face that was at first visible was one of unutterable misery."

"Good heavens, Robinson," I cried, rushing up to him and seizing his arm. "Has anything happened to your wife?"

"To my wife? Yes," he said; and I sank into one of the iron benches. I thought she was dead, and was relieved to hear the next sentence. Relieved, though startled.

"My wife has left me, Smith. She's gone home to her mother."

"Left you? Gone home to her mother? Why, wasn't last night your anniversary?"

"Yes; that was how it came about; that was the way I found her out, Smith. She's deceived me—shamefully and persistently deceived me, and yet, she is so true to me, that I am, indeed, Robinson, sinking into the seat beside me, and covering his face with his hands, "I love her still!"

"You have deceived yourself in some incredulous way. It is some miserable mistake of your own. I know that your wife's soul is of integrity and honor."

"God bless you, Smith!" he cried, grasping my hand fervently. "Would to heaven I could believe what you say! But the facts are too convincing. Up to yesterday I was the happiest man in the universe. I went home early, and on my way stopped at Mrs. Jones's, my wife's dressmaker, to see if her black silk was done."

## FACTS AND COMMENTS.

Extended crop reports recently published in the Chicago Times indicate that the Northwest will more than make up for the partial failure of the winter wheat crop by an increased acreage and assured yield of spring wheat. Minnesota and Dakota alone promise to make good the deficit.

George Morton, a Canadian cheese exporter, will undertake a scheme for a great dairy colony in the Northwest. There are to be 224 farms of 160 acres each, stocked at the outset with thirty cows each. The novelty will be a narrow-gauge railroad, with a station on each farm, so that milk can be carried to a central cheese factory twice a day.

A dangerous counterfeit of the standard American silver dollar has made its appearance. They have the ring of the genuine metal, the milling is perfect, and there is an absence of that greasy substance which is found by running the thumb over the general run of base coins. They are, however, too light, and a trifle thicker than the genuine.

The days when nothing was sold in San Francisco for less than a dime, and even that minimum price was almost a badge of disgrace in the eyes of people who remembered the golden days of the half-dollar, have passed away forever. Californians have passed their period of contempt for small coins and the chink of the nickel is heard in the land. The Bulletin regards this fact as an indication of the healthy financial condition of the community. People purchase less of what they do not want and, and have ceased to fear the derision of those who still refuse to recognize any sum of money smaller than one "bit."

A writer in a French paper ascribes the exceptional healthiness of butchers to their inhaling the nutritive principles of meat, and a French physician of eminence deduces from this the desirability of vapor baths charged with vitalizing principles. Cooks, at this rate, ought to be amazingly full of vitality. The good health of butchers is probably due to their living entirely in the open air, the same cause which gives so many more years of life, on the average, to the grocer's clerk than to his dry goods brother. Thirty years ago butchers in London never wore hats when at work, but drove all over the town bareheaded, as many young butchers do now. This inhaling idea is, like all others, old. A century ago consumptive patients were sent to live over cow-houses.

The ratio of ministers to members varies greatly in different denominations, as the following table will show:

Churches.	Members.
African M. E., one minister to every.....	224
Lutheran, " " " " " " " " " " " "	221
M. E., South, " " " " " " " " " "	214
Reformed (Ger.), one minister to every.....	212
Colored M. E., " " " " " " " " " "	177
Reformed (Dutch), " " " " " " " " " "	167
Methodist Episcopal, " " " " " " " " " "	144
Baptists, " " " " " " " " " " " "	138
African M. E. Zion, " " " " " " " " " "	127
Evangelical Assoc'n, " " " " " " " " " "	125
United Brethren, " " " " " " " " " "	118
Presbyterian (North), " " " " " " " " " "	114
Methodist, " " " " " " " " " " " "	107
Congregationalists, " " " " " " " " " "	109
Protestant Episcopal, " " " " " " " " " "	86
Methodist Protestant, " " " " " " " " " "	86
Cumberland Pres., " " " " " " " " " "	80
United Brethren in Christ, one minister to every.....	61
Average.....	141

Recent advices speak of the discovery of a new gold field in the most inland part of New South Wales, which is causing some excitement among the gold-mining community. The scene of the find is the Grey Ranges, a wild elevated country in the extreme northwest of the colony, and on the borders of South Australia. Apart from the nature of the deposits, which are said to be rich, the discovery is interesting as a matter of science, as being a deviation from the rule which has hitherto prevailed that all of the mineral wealth, and especially the gold deposits, in Australia have been found within a short distance from the coast. The nearest village to the Grey Ranges is Wilkes, on the Darling river, some 600 miles from Sidney, and 200 miles from the gold field. Water is scarce, and only to be met with at distances of fifty miles apart, so that intending prospectors will have to encounter more than the usual amount of difficulty.

## educating Oysters

Although it has been doubted that an oyster had been so far subjugated as to "follow its master up and downstairs," a consummation which might be accepted as positive progressive steps in the rise toward ultimate civilization, least according to "Lewes Sea-side Studies," oysters are susceptible of being educated to a small extent. In the great establishments on the coast of Calvados the merchants teach oysters to keep their shells closed when out of the water, by which means the liquor retained keeps their gills moist, and they arrive lively in far distant Paris. The process may be worthy of extensive publicity; it is this. No sooner is an oyster taken from the sea than it closes its shells, and opens them after a certain time—from fatigue, it is said, but more probably because the shock it received by removal into the air causing its muscles to contract has passed away. The Calvados men take advantage of this to exercise the oysters, and make them accustomed to be out of the water for longer and longer periods. This has the desired effect; the well-educated mollusk keeps its door closed at least for many consecutive hours, and so long as the shell is closed its gills are kept moist.—All the Year Round.

Miss Eva C. Kinney has assumed editorial control of the Ellis (Kansas) Headlight, and announces in her first number that she is "a girl, with all a girl's love for fun, frolic and romance." If editing doesn't take that love for fun, etc., out of her we shall be mistaken. It has a more sobering effect than a husband could have.—Troy Times.

## FOR THE LADIES.

A Royal Bride's Trousseau. The New York Telegram says the trousseau belonging to the Princess Stephanie, of Belgium, married to the Crown Prince of Austria: It had been exhibited at the royal palace at Brussels, and the descriptions of its fairy-like materials, and the exquisite works of art in gold and silver embroidery and laces of marvelous delicacy, were most exciting. Amid all the bridal glories one table in the middle of the hall was heaped up with linen and household goods, which attracted the attention of the ladies. It may interest lady readers to know that the chemises are fringed over a similarly embroidered under-dress of dead blue satin. It was very tastefully decorated with silver lace, and the draping and arrangements of this matchless robe were such as to send those who have seen it into ecstasies.

How Women Should Dress. An American authority says: No lady need be ashamed to dress plainly or cheaply; she can, with the help of the modern guides to dress, appear like a lady on very little money. She can lay down three rules for herself: Never to pretend to anything, never to wear jewelry, and, affirmatively, always to be neat. A young girl with a white muslin and a fresh flower is dressed for a queen's ball. A lady of mature years, with a well-fitting dark silk, real jewelry or none, and her own hair—all the better if it is white—is also dressed for a ball. True womanhood include all the delicate refinements that overflow in the perfect glove, the well-fitting shoe, the pretty stocking, the neat frills, the becoming bonnet. The American woman, to do her only justice, is not a creature by instinct, and if she occasionally gives too much thought to dress, she is still to be admired and commended for her quaintness.

Scarlet draperies grow in fashion. Vermeil-colored lace is out of favor. Colored Spanish lace is made into hats. Steel lace bonnets are trimmed with ostrich tips. Tuscan cream is the name of a new color in lace. Crosswise draperies are much used for short skirts. Triangular sticks are the newest for sunshades. Surah serge is trimmed with batiste embroidery. Soft tickle ostrich feathers are put on bonnets of steel lace. The frills on summer silk dresses are cut in points this season. Wall flower tints reappear again in flowers, ties and ribbons. The Watteau is the favorite style for illuminated foulard dresses. Paste jewels set in steel are used for buttons on foulard gowns. The pinkish white color of the new laces is called baked earth. Some of the summer piques have designs like those of brocade. Surah is made into blouse waists for children's wear. It washes as well as linen. Chenille dotted net is not tied when used for bonnet strings, but caught by a flower. Flat collars to be worn on silk dresses have a point behind and a point on each shoulder. Watered silk appears as panels in skirts, and also as waistcoats in evening costumes. Black satin parasols are frequently edged with plaited satin ruffles of gold color or scarlet. Shirred cuffs edged with lace, accompanied by shirred collars and fichus of the same material. The fastening used with surplice waists is three buckles placed diagonally at the waist. Some of the light summer mantles are trimmed all around with black lace over white lace. White pique bonnets in the poke shape have muslin crowns which are fastened on by buttons. White waists under overdresses with square neck and no sleeves are to be worn by little children this summer. Summer gowns for young girls have skirts of thin wool, and waists of surah with silk ruffles and ruffles of choice lace. Some time since a letter was received in New Orleans directed "to the Biggest Fool in New Orleans." The postmaster was absent, and on his return one of the youngest clerks in the office informed him of the letter. "And what became of it?" inquired the postmaster. "Why," replied the clerk, "I did not know who the biggest fool in New Orleans was, and so I opened the letter myself!" And what did you find in it?" inquired the postmaster. "Why," responded the clerk, "nothing but the words, 'Thou art the man!'"

Iris colors are the soft hues of the eye, and are becoming to young girls with yellow hair.