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It did not seem to him that she was his wife, and when he was questioned on the subject the Count replied coldly:

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THE ONE CERTAINTY.

Lightly I hold my life with little dread,
And little hope for what may spring therefrom.
But live like one that builds his Summer's home
For coolness on a dried-up river bed,
And takes no thought for freed blue or red,
To paint the walls, and paint no golden dome,
Knowing the flood, when Autumn rains are come,
Shall roll their saving waters overhead.
As I therefore should I plant my ground and sow?
Since, though I know not of the day or hour,
The Conqueror comes at last the alien foe
Shall come to my defenceless place in power,
With force, with arms, with ruinous overthrow,
Taking the goods I gathered for his dowry.

The Sister of Mercy.

In the chamber on the first floor in the Avenue Montagne, a woman was dying. From the apartment itself, which was almost empty, it would be difficult to discover to what class of society the dying woman belonged. The salon was empty. Not a single piece of furniture remained in it. Some old blue velvet curtains were still hanging at the windows, doubtless because the brokers had disinclined to take them. It was old velvet, yellow at every crease and eaten away by dust. In what had been the dining room, there remained only a dilapidated cane-seated chair and a little table of white wood, covered with bottles of all kinds. On the floor were two or three dirty towels, still wet, a sponge and a chipped saucer bowl, that served as a washing basin.

The bed-room was evidently the only room that the bailiffs had spared. There, a threadbare carpet still covered the floor. At the foot of the bed was a large arm-chair placed as if it were a sentry-box. The staff curtains had been left, but a practiced eye would have seen by the rents in the muslin curtains that a rapacious hand had torn away the lace.

Two billets of wood were smoking sadly in the fireplace, having for sole companion a kettle, from which emerged two or three wispes of steam. The room was lighted from a windowed courtyard in the midst of which a close-cropped grass plot humiliated itself at the foot of an arched balcony. The leaves had fallen; the black, gnarled branches, twisted into knots, were waiting for the rays of spring in order to put on a little verdure.

"Madame," murmured the sick woman, "I am thirsty."

A woman of some fifty years, who was standing by the window, came up to the bedside and poured a few drops of port wine into a glass. Then she raised the head of her mistress, approaching the glass to her lips, and said:

"Does Madame la Comtesse suffer much?"

"Yes, there is fire there," replied the sick woman, placing an emaciated hand on her breast.

was heard, produced by a bell-rope pulling a broken spring. Madeleine went and opened the door. The Sister of Charity followed her.

"Here are the potions," said Madeleine, "this one every ten minutes, that one every hour. There is still a little wood in the corner."

Madame went to share the bed of a chambermaid, a friend of hers, who lodged in a neighboring hotel, and the Sister of Charity took her seat at the foot of the bed.

Mme. de San Castelli asked to drink. The sister raised her head gently; then the sick woman, instead of drinking, fixed her large black eyes on the face of the Sister.

"How old are you?" she asked.

"Eighteen years, madame."

The Countess murmured to herself: "Eighteen years?" drank greedily, and resumed, as she let her head fall back on the pillow:

"Do you know that I am going to die?"

"The Water Lily."

Down in the depths of the river near the shore where the mud and slime were not swept away by the current, grew a humble plant. The flags pressed about it, and thrust their leaves like green warriors through the water up into the brightness and pure air, and the eel-grass made a tangled network above it.

No one expected the little plant to amount to much.

But lying there in the ooze, it thought: "The water is luminous over my head. There is more brightness above than I have had. The flags and the rushes swaying and fluttering up there whisper together of the warm south wind, the gray clouds, and the glory of the sun. If I only could rise! If I only could!"

By-and-by the plant sent forth a leaf, an odd, round leaf like a fan, and slowly it lifted the leaf on the summit of its flexible stem toward the surface of the water.

"Ho! Ho!" laughed the polliwogs, floating by, "what a droll leaf! When it gets to the surface, and we are frogs, 'twill be a fine seat for us while we sing 'Trick-a-trix, Trick-a-trix,' and our old papa plays the trombone."

"Pray, don't be too pushing," said the duckweed. "You're as well off as the rest of us. A plant of your condition ought to be modest. Don't be too pushing; no good will come of it."

The humble plant gave no heed to its neighbors' comments, but patiently lifted the round leaf a little higher each day. One morning it felt a strange electric thrill. The leaf had reached the surface of the river, and the sun shone upon it; and the tall flags parted a little to make room, while they whispered kindly "Good morning, neighbor."

The battery, and jets of fire jump down and scorch the green trees under which we fought and despaired.

The shattered old brigade has a chance to breathe for the first time in three hours as we form a line of battle behind the guns and lie down. What grin, cool fellows those cannoners are! Every man is a perfect machine. Bullets blast dust into their faces, but they do not wince. Bullets sing over and around them, but they do not dodge. There goes one to the earth, shot through the head as if sponged his brains.

The machinery loses just one beat—misses just one cog in the wheel—and then works away again as before.

Every gun is using short-fuse shell. The ground shakes and trembles—the roar shudders all around and through the swamp to cut trees and stuff off—to mow great gaps in the bushes—to hunt out and shatter and mangle men until their corpses can't be recognized as human. You would think a tornado was howling through the forest, followed by billows of fire, and yet men live through it—aye! press forward to capture the battery! We can hear their shouts as they form for the rush.

Now the shells are changed for grape and canister, and the guns are served so fast that all reports blend into one mighty roar. The shriek of a shell is the wickedest sound in war, but nothing makes the flesh crawl like the demonic singing, purring, whistling grape shot and the serpent-like hiss of canister. Men's legs and arms are not shot through, but torn off. Heads are torn from bodies, and bodies cut in two.

A Spanish Artillery officer has constructed a new Aerial Machine. The machine, which is of considerable extension horizontally, can be made to ascend or descend at pleasure, and can, according to the statement of the inventor, be turned in any required direction. It consists of two air-bags, as they are called, by which the weight of one of which is filled with hydrogen gas, and the other with compressed air.

Years rolled away and at the yearly art exhibition at Munich a picture appeared representing a summer sky, a tangle of reeds and flags, a stretch of sullen river, and upon the grassy shore a ragged bare-foot boy who was holding a water lily in which he gazed with a look of love and joy.

"That," said an artist, "is by the celebrated Bertram Krause, and is called the dawn of hope."

A Poetic License Wanted.

He was a tall, square man, with a sharp, sunburned nose, and an unshaven face. He wore a chip hat, well swathed through in front, with a rim turned down all around, and a dark, narrow bit of braid for a band. His buttoned pants were neatly tucked into his cowhide boots, and the thumbs of his bronzed hands were thrust into the arm holes of his vest. He entered the Mayor's office with the air of a man of business, and marching up to his Honor, said, inquiringly:

"Be you the Mayor?"

"Yes, I have that honor."

"Well, I want a license for my daughter, Maria Jane."

"Ah, I see; your daughter is about to get married and you wish to procure a marriage license. We do not issue those papers here. You must go over on the north side to the county building."

"No, squire, you are mistaken—as much mistaken as if you had burnt your last shirt or had accidentally got into the wrong pew in meeting; but Maria Jane doesn't want a license to get married, not by no means—not by more than considerable. She is a darned smart girl, if she is my daughter, and if I do say it, as had'n't ought to. She has been keepin' school and boardin' round up in the persimmon deerside and writin' verses for the Summer-field *Wagon*. She thinks more of givin' up teachin' and devotin' her hull time to literary pursuits, and, squire, as I'm a law-abidin' man and loyal to the core—three of my boys went clean through to the sea with Sherman—squire, and I want to do the business for the girl on the square, and so I called to take out a poetic license for Maria Jane. You see, Will Morrison, who has been to college, told Maria that anybody must have a license before he writ much poetry."

Here the Mayor's face turned very red, as if suffering from some intense internal emotion, and it was observed that his eyes were sufficed with tears. His secretary suddenly approached the window and gazed abstractedly out upon the trees in the tub, whose emerald branches were gracefully swaying in the summer breeze in front of the saloons across the way. The former fixed his curious eyes upon the Mayor for a moment, who finally sufficiently recovered himself to say:

"My dear sir, your daughter needs no license to write poetry. She can write as much as ever she pleases, and it will be all right."

Talking Twenty-six Hours.

The longest speech on record is believed to have been made by a member of the Legislature of British Columbia, named De Cosmos. It was in the interests of settlers, who were to be defrauded of their lands. De Cosmos was in the hopeless minority. The job had been held back till the eve of the close of the session. Unless legislation was taken before noon of a certain day the act of confiscation would fall. The day before the expiration of the limitation De Cosmos got the floor about 10 o'clock A. M. and began a speech against the bill. His friends cared little, for they supposed that by 1 or 2 P. M. he would be through, and the bill could be put on its passage. One o'clock came and went, and De Cosmos was still speaking. Two o'clock—he was saying, "In the second place." Three o'clock—he produced a fearful bundle of evidence and insisted on reading it. The majority began to have suspicion of the truth—he was going to speak until noon and kill the bill. For a while they made merry over it, but as it came on dusk they began to get alarmed. They tried interruptions, but soon abandoned them because each one afforded him a chance to digress and gain time. They tried to shout him down, but that gave him a breathing space, and finally settled down to watch the combat between the strength of will and the weakness of body. They gave him no mercy. No adjournment for dinner; no chance to do more than wet his lips with water; no wandering from the subject; no sitting down. Twilight darkened, the gas was lit, members slipped out to supper in relays and returned to sleep in squares, but De Cosmos went on. The speaker to whom he was addressing himself was alternately dozing, snoring, and trying to look awake. Day dawned, and a majority of the members slipped out to breakfast, and the speaker still held on. It can't be said it was a very logical, eloquent or sustained speech. There were digressions in it, repetitions, also. But the speaker kept on, and at last noon came to a baffled majority, livid with rage and impotence; and a single man who was triumphant, though his voice had sunk to a whisper, his eyes were sunken, bleared and blood-shot, his legs tottered under him, and his baked lips were cracked and speckled with blood. De Cosmos had spoken twenty-six hours, and saved the settlers their lands.

Jewish Coins.

The New York Collection is chiefly interesting as showing how the coins—from the first, struck Simon Maccabees, from 140 to 37 B. C., to those coined after the revolts which gave Rome power in the Holy Land—improved in artistic qualities. The silver shekels and the divisions of that coin struck by the Maccabees were rude and bore no figures or images, it being forbidden by the Jewish religion to have images or "Idols," on the coins. This shekel was the first coined money of the Jews, though it existed as a value and was mentioned in the Bible before this time. It was upon the coin of Herod Agrippa, the ruler of whose family succeeded from B. C. 37 to A. D. 130, that the umbrella first appeared. Of the coins of the Roman Procurators, those of Pontius Pilate are chief. They bore the head of the Emperor Vespasian, and were commemorative of the captivity of Judea. Then followed in order the coins of the second revolt in 97 A. D. With these Jewish coins of silver and bronze Mr. Feuardent has arranged several gold and silver pieces of the Roman neighbors of the Jews circulated as money among the Jews themselves after their return from Babylon. They bear most artistic designs, being portraits of the Emperors and figures of warriors on horseback, and show the greatest possible improvement in artistic work over the early Jewish coin.

Blacksmithing in Germany.

In the interior towns and villages of Germany, it has been the custom for many years for the farmer to purchase the iron for his tires and horseshoes, and in some instances, when having a new wagon built, to purchase all the iron entering into the construction of the wagon. One part of the contract is that the smith shall return to the farmer all ends and cuttings from the iron, and it frequently occurs that the farmer remains at the shop until the iron is all cut up, in order that the smith shall not indulge in too much cabbage. Each smith shop has what is termed "the hell," and in cutting the lengths of every piece of iron or tire with which to make the horseshoes or perhaps a dozen or more old horseshoes to be converted into new ones. The farmer must blow the bellows until the work is forged or the shoes all made, and must then hold up the horse's foot while the shoes are being driven on or taken off, and invariably carries the old shoe home with him, unless he prefers to give the old shoes in payment for the apprentice's service in holding up the feet.

Walking-Sticks.

Walking-sticks for ladies, so we are told by an oracle of fashion, are coming into favor again. Thus does the whirligig of time bring round her revenge for a discarded custom. The Empress Eugenie made the carrying of canes fashionable for her sex during the gay days of the second Empire. But back in another century we find the women appreciative of the walking-stick. Ladies advanced in life walked with a staff between five and six feet in height, taper and slender in substance, turned over at the upper end in the manner of a shepherd's crook, and "twisted throughout the whole extent." Sometimes these wands were formed of palegreen glass, but often of wood, ivory, or whalebone. A writer of 1763, speaking of the most fashionable sticks of this period, says: "Do not some of us strut about with walking-sticks as long as hickory poles, or else with a yard of varnished cane scraped taper, and bound at one end with a waxed thread, and the other tipped with a neat ivory head as big as a silver penny?" It is, indeed, as a specimen of personal utility that we regard the walking-sticks of modern times, though in all ages man has made the sons of the forest contribute to his support under weariness and old age.

His Telephone.

"I guess I have to give up my telephone already," said an old citizen on Gratiot avenue, Detroit, recently, as he entered the office of the company with a very long face.

"Why, what's the matter now?"

"Oh! efrtyings. I got dot telephone in mine house so I could speak mit der poys in der saloon down town, and mit my relations in Springwells, but I haf to git it up. I never haf so much troubles."

"How?"

"Whell, my poys Shon, in der saloon, he rings der bell and calls me oop und says an old friend of mine vants to see how she works. Dot ish all right. I say: 'Hello!' and he says: 'Come closer.' I goes closer and hellos again. Den he says: 'Stand a little off.' I stand a little off and yells vunce more, and he says: 'speak louder.' It goes dot vay for ten minutes, und den he says: 'Go to Texas, you old Dutchmans!' You see?"

Aerial Navigation.

Years rolled away and at the yearly art exhibition at Munich a picture appeared representing a summer sky, a tangle of reeds and flags, a stretch of sullen river, and upon the grassy shore a ragged bare-foot boy who was holding a water lily in which he gazed with a look of love and joy.

"That," said an artist, "is by the celebrated Bertram Krause, and is called the dawn of hope."

Did you ever see a battery take position? It hasn't the thrill of a cavalry charge, nor the grimness of a line of bayonets moving slowly and determinedly on, but there is a peculiar excitement about it that makes old veterans rise in their saddles and cheer.

A Salt Old Joke.

Sailors are proverbially jovial; but they are generally a contented, unambitious class and do not seek to go out of the narrow and beaten track of the past for their amusement. Moreover they are loyal to traditions of the sea and would prefer a joke three hundred years old, provided it had done regular duty during all that time, to the choicest selection in the finest original stock that could be set before them. This is not as strange as it might be, for the sailor's life is not a very varied one, and he misses the myriad suggestions that excite and stimulate the fancy of the landsman. The sailor is a practical joker, but his range is about as limited as that of the last survivor of the crew of the Nancy Bell, who would "sit and croak, and a single joke he had with was sally." The sailor loves his single joke and he practices it at odd intervals whenever he finds time lolling heavily upon his hands. It may be called the bottle joke, and the jolly tars are not as simple as they may seem in repeating what we might suppose would be too familiar by this time to deceive any one. But the reverse is the fact. Landlubbers are easily impressed by the mysticities of old ocean, and whenever a fresh tale of woe in its water-proof case of a depleted grog bottle is cast overboard, the chances are that it will in time find its way into wandering circles ready to believe anything that comes back by this roundabout route from those who go down to the sea in ships. As long as this ancient sell does its work, why should the sailor fret his brains to devise anything new for the mystification of credulous and superstitious landsmen?

Fishing for Monkeys.

Walking carelessly through their haunts I strewed some grass upon a place, on which I dug with my knife a few round holes about four inches deep. Coming back to the spot in half an hour I dropped a grain into each hole and left a noose round one of them, concealed with earth. The other end of the line was in a bush. I was there a short time, and monkeys were busy picking the grain. An old fellow would look into a hole and chatter; others came and looked and all chattered. By-and-by a plucky little fellow popped in his paw, and out again. Next time he got the corn, then others dipped in till they finished that hole. In due course they got to the noose, with some chatter and the same results till the line was pulled. A sudden scream, a general bustle while the captive was hauled home and enveloped in a horse-rug. By this time the troop ran up in the trees, screaming and shaking the boughs most gorgeously, following me as I went away, with the lost one kicking till he was tired. I believe this noose plan is frequently practiced. I once caught a monkey on the Trinleek Hill Fort that fell down the face of the scarp, knocking his head against projections till he was brought up with a thud on a slab. He was nearly senseless when I picked him up. No bones were broken. In a few minutes I let him go to his relations, who had never ceased, letting him know where they were. He crawled quietly up the scarp rock, and seemed to be received with anger. Possibly he only wished to know what had been said to him by the fellow without a tail.