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PROFESSIONAL CARDS OF

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Curious Sea Inhabitants.

There is a continual warfare going on in the deep—a constant struggle for the means of sustaining life. The carnivorous devour the vegetarians, and the mud-eaters swallow both animal and vegetable forms; and this runs all the way down the scale, from the shark and the equally ravenous bluefish to the least of the annelids. These last—the sea-worms—are wary, but they cannot escape their enemies. If they were to confine themselves to the bottom—where they feed, and where many of them grow to the length of a foot or two—they might in a measure escape, though they would still be a prey to the scup and other fish that know how to dig for them; but they love to swim, particularly at night and in the breeding season, and then they are snapped up in countless numbers. They have almost every variety of forms, and their structure is marvelous—monsters with hooked jaws at the end of a proboscis, and with sides of bluish green, that throw off an infinite variety of iridescent hues. Some of the sea-worms have scales, others have soft bodies; some are sluggish, and curl themselves up into balls when disturbed; others are restless, particularly at night; some are round, others flat; some build tubes of sand and cement, woven together till they make a colony of many hundred members; the tubes of others are soft and flexible, and some, when disturbed, withdraw within their crooked calcareous tubes, and close the orifice with a plug. One variety of the serpulid has three dark-red eyes; another variety has clusters of eyes on each tentacle. The amphipods were accounted of no great value till it was shown by the Fish Commission that these small crustacea furnish a vast amount of food for both salt and fresh-water fishes. Indeed, there is not a creature that swims or crawls that does not become the food of some other animal. A beach-flea is caught up by a scup or a flounder, squids make terrible havoc among young mackerel, and sharks and stingrays find something appetizing in the gastropod.

"My brethren," said a Western miler, "the preaching of the gospel to some people is like pouring water over a sponge—it soaks and stays. To others it is like the wind blowing through a chicken coop. My experience in this congregation is that it contains more chicken coops than sponges."

White paint may be readily cleaned with whitening moistened with a little water. Use a woolen cloth for a rubber and wash off clean with water. Cold tea grounds are also excellent for rubbing or cleaning paint.

A PROTEST.

Why should it sound cheerless and cold, When a man says he has grown old? Think you of a head bald and grey, Of a mortal that's had his day?

Should my sons call me "old man," And the town folk "Ucle Dan?" Just because my strength is spent, Just because my form is bent?

I watch the youth as they run about, With many a laugh and merry shout, And I recall my childhood day, When I was thoughtless, free and gay.

Why not, O youth, tenderly speak, Kindly be to the old and weak— Gladly from unkindness save, Smooth their pathway to the grave.

Thoughtless youth should remember, Quickly comes bleak December, Then will their forms be bent, Then will their days be spent.

This home my soul shall soon vacate, Taking on the glorious State; This old form will ne'er appear, In that Heaven best and dear.

Glorious season of youth, Twining in the light of truth, Some old or growing old up there, 'Tis life beyond all tears and care.

THE OLD WILL.

Little Blossom, you make it so hard for me to say good-bye to you."

"When?"

"The innocent, surprised, inquiring face—renewance was indeed, difficult for John Burrows. He touched a dimple in her cheek, and then a curl of her hair, as he might have touched flowers on a grave, perhaps.

She shook back the silky ripples impatiently.

"When, John?"

He looked at her for a moment without a smile, pretty as she was.

"Nelly, sit down here for a moment."

They sat down on the pretty crimson couch before the fire. Seeing trouble in his face, she put her hand in his, and he smoothed out the little rose-leaf member upon his broad palm, more than ever confident, as he looked at it, that he was right.

"Nelly, you know I love you."

"Yes," with a blush, for he had never said it before.

"And I am very sorry."

"Why," after a pause of bewilderment.

"Because you are a delicate little flower, needing care and nursing to keep your bloom bright; and I am going to a hard, rough life, among privations, fever, and malaria, which will try even my powerful constitution, and where you must not go."

"You are going to the Far West?"

"Yes. My mother must have a home in her old age. She is strong now, but time is telling on her. You know all that she has been to me?"

"Yes; she has been a good mother. But you shall take me too, John."

She won her way into his arms against his will.

"You will take me, too?"

"No. Did I not tell you that you made it so hard for me to say good-bye to you?"

"John, what could I do without you?"

"He took the little, caressing hand down from his face.

"Don't make me weak, Nelly. Do you think that it is nothing to me to leave my little violet—the only woman I ever loved—for a hard, cold life and unending toil. I cannot marry for ten years, Nelly."

"And then I shall be thirty years old."

"Yes, married, and with little children; seeing, at last that your old lover, John Burrows, was right."

He rose to his feet.

"John!" in terror.

"Yes I am going, Nelly. Little one—you look so much a woman now, with your steadfast eyes—hear me: I did not foresee that you would love me—that I should love you. You were a little school girl when I saved you from drowning last summer, and your satchel of books floated away down the river and was lost. I came here to see Gregory, not you. I could not help loving you; but did you think until to-night that you cared so much for me, Nelly. But, child you will forget me."

"Never!"

He went on.

"Nelly, I shall hunger for you day and night, more and more, as time goes on and I get older, lonelier, more weary. But I shall never hope to see you again. Now, give me your hand."

She gave him both. He raised them to his lips, but before she could speak again he was gone.

Shivering violently, she went to the fire, and stood there trying to warm herself. She understood it all now—his strangely elaborate arrangements for a trip to New York. He had known that he was not coming back when she had begged him to bring her his photograph from the great metropolis, but was going on—into the dim distance. This is why he had not promised.

It was getting late—she was so cold—she had better go to bed. She would not go into the parlor to bid her father and aunt, and Gregory good night; so she crept silently up to her own room. There the very weight of grief upon her lulled her to sleep.

But when she woke, her grief sprang upon her like some hidden monster who had lain in wait for her all night. Her misery terrified her. Why should she not die? Why should she ever rise from that bed?

But when they called her, she sprang up hastily, dressed and went down, and they were too busy talking to notice that she did not know what she was doing.

The Jester Engaged.

Once Mount Pleasant had the Jester engaged for his great moral entertainment, but in order to make his next engagement, he had to quit talking at the expiration of one hour and twenty minutes, and hurry away on a special train.

But Mt. Pleasant knew that he had talked two straight, solid hours at Scottdale, and was Mt. Pleasant to be snubbed, and put off with a smaller lecture than Scottdale? Perish the thought! All of the lecture or none.

No new arrangements had to be made for Mt. Pleasant. And that night, while the Jester was putting on his cap and bells, he said to his friends:

"I will make it sickly for the Mount Pleasants. I will teach them to clamor for a long lecture when they might just as well have a short one. I am going to talk these people to death. I am going to give them all four of my lectures, one after the other. It will be a good joke on them. I will talk and talk, you see, until they are tired out, and one after another, singly and in groups they leave the room, until I alone am left in the hall. That will be awfully funny, and it will be something new in the lecture business. Oh, it will warm them."

Well, the curtain rung up and the show went on. And it kept going on and on. And the audience stuck to him like a burr, and along about ten o'clock a little later the Jester began to grow anxious. But he kept at it, and by and by a couple of men got up and went out. This was the first break, and the Jester felt encouraged. But in a few minutes the men, who had only gone out to see a man, both came back. And he felt depressed again. But he kept at it. He was bound to talk that audience out of National Hall. But it was too many for him. Perhaps seven or eight people left the hall at different times, but that was all; and at 25 minutes after eleven o'clock the exhausted Jester jangled his sweet bells a little out of tune on the closing joke and fell into a chair, limp and despairing, while the good-natured audience, fresh as a rose, retired from the ring, smiling and ready for another round. You can't talk out a Mount Pleasant audience.

"I never talked so long in all my life," the Jester said, "and to think that they should tire me out, after all. Anyhow, I wasn't feeling very well. I'll come back next winter when I'm fresh and strong, and I'll give these people a little racket for their white alley then."

"You're the man, aren't you, that writes such touching things, once in a while, about the beauty of silence?"

But the Jester said he was too sleepy to talk politics, and the stage being ready the pilgrims lighted their cigars, drew up their windows and smoked a clergyman of the Episcopal Church all the way over to Tarr Station, so that when he got home that night he made the parlor smell like a drying-house, and up to this date has not been able to convince his wife that he hadn't been smoking.

The Village Postmistress.

The son of this postmistress says of his mother: "She's gettin' a little hard a' hearin', though; but I tell her that ain't strange, seein' she's heard so much in her day. Ears can't last forever you know, Mis' Linton, an' for fifty years there ain't been nothin' goin' on among the neighbors that ma ain't heard. Bein' in the post-office is wearin' to the hearin' ez well as the eyes. Folks comin' an' goin' for their letters generally leave as much news ez they take away. By the way, Mis' Linton yer sister, Liss Bradleigh's, comin' back to-morrow. Ma was readin' the postal cards last night, and she came across one from her."

"Reading my postal cards?" exclaimed Mrs. Linton.

"Why, yes. Ma always reads 'em right-off. She says it's her duty. Might be news of sickness or death or authin' else, that we'd ought to send right along. They're dreadful aggravatin' readin' through. People don't write as well as they used to, an' don't make things clear, nuther. When anybody writes 'Yes' or 'No' on a postal, no postmaster in creation can make anything of it. But your sister's postal is plain enough, Mis' Linton; that ain't nothin' indefinite about her. She says: 'Comin' Thursday, 5 o'clock train. Have Factotum meet me.' Ma puzzled a good deal over that word factotum, and we both concluded that 'twas the name of your help. Furrin' name, ain't it? I told ma 'twas new, any how, an' ez we had a young colt we was goin' to raise, an' hadn't named it, we concluded we'd call her Factotum, like that furrin' kitchen girl o' yours, Mis' Linton."

The Nile.

An English capitalist, Mr. Gaston proposes to dam the Nile at the Cataracts and subject about 800,000 acres of land, which is now desert, to the influence of its fertilizing waters. This is a stupendous undertaking; but it is beyond a doubt that the present rapids are produced by the debris of ancient works of this description which are now strewn on the bed of the stream, and from an engineering point of view the work would be perfectly feasible. The inundation would then be under complete control, while the company which should carry out the work would be reimbursed by the lands allotted to it out of nearly a million acres, which would now for the first time be brought under cultivation. It is said that the preliminary capital has already been raised.

James Bowie.

On one occasion Bowie whose reputation reached Memphis, arrived by boat at that city, or rather at what was then known as the Third Chickasaw Bluffs. The bank from the boat landing to the top was about one hundred and fifty feet high and a large number of people were watching the arrival of the strangers. Looking down one of them recognized Bowie as he stepped over the gang-plank and made the remark, "There comes Jim Bowie."

"What!" shouted a big flatboatman, then known as the "Memphis Terror," as he looked down the bluff; "what Jim Bowie? That's the fellow I've been looking for months. Jim Bowie! Why, him, I'll whip him so quick he won't know what hurt him. I'll whip him if I never whip another man as long as I live! Stand by, boys, and see the fun!"

Bowie came slowly up the bank. In his hand he carried an old umbrella. He had no pistols and was evidently not expecting or in fact prepared for a fight. This fact did not escape the now thoroughly interested spectators. Up went the flatboatman promptly, as Bowie reached the top of the bluff. "Is your name Jim Bowie?" he asked.

Bowie replied that it was.

"Then," shouted the flatboatman, as he squared off, "I think you are a rascal and I'm going to whip you right here and now."

Bowie was a man of few words. He stood and gazed at his adversary, who was more emboldened than ever. "I think you're a coward," he yelled, "and I'm going to knock your head off," and so saying the "Memphis Terror" advanced to the conflict.

Bowie never flinched. His keen eye was fixed on the "Terror," who at this moment was face to face with him. But as the man of Memphis drew a dirk from his breast, Bowie stepped back a foot and thrust out his umbrella as if to keep his antagonist at bay.

"The 'Memphis Terror,' seizing the umbrella with one hand, made a pass at the inventor of the famous knife with the other. In so doing he pulled the umbrella to himself, leaving free in the right hand of Bowie his murderous weapon, which to this moment had been concealed in the folds of the impromptu sheath. The sight of Bowie standing there, with the knife in his hand and the gleam of vengeance in his eye, was too much for the 'Terror.'"

From the bouncing bully he became transformed into a craven coward in a second. His face turned pale and his knees trembled, while the dirk dropped from his hands as he gazed on Bowie's weapon with staring eyes. "Put it up, put away that scythe, for God's sake, Bowie. I was mistaken in my man."

Bowie advanced a step.

"Don't—don't kill me!" beseeched the bully; "for God's sake, man don't go for me with that scythe and I swear to you I'll never attack another man as long as I live."

Bowie looked at his now thoroughly demoralized opponent for a moment, and then turning on his heel with the expression, "Coward," walked rapidly away. Thenceforth the Memphis "Terror" was a changed man, and until the day of his death he never lost the sobriquet of "Put-up-that scythe."

Bowie was very fond of music and dancing and on occasions where he could enjoy both he invariably appeared in the best of humor, and the reserve which had begun to characterize him at this time appeared to thaw out. It was on one occasion at a dance, when he was in such favorable conditions, that I had an opportunity for free-and-easy chat with him about some of the encounters in which he had been engaged. Referring to the disparity in size between himself and some of the men whom he had met in conflict, I asked him how he regarded his chances under such circumstances.

"Suppose," said I, referring to a man of herculean build, who stood near, "suppose you were attacked by such a man as Hob Johnson there. What then?"

"Oh," dryly responded Bowie, "I would cut him down to my size!"

Maggie's Mission.

A plain girl, with a plain face and name, Maggie Gibson, that was all. Short, plump, and twenty-two. Always bursting buttons off her dresses, tearing rents in skirts and aprons, and ripping open tight seams.

A white freckled face, broad, and full of good humor when quiet, a wavy mass of reddish hair, that would never stay smoothly braided, wicked ringlets falling down into the saucy eyes, blue eyes were, pretty some times, when lighted up by life and excitement, dreamy and common-place when the soul was quiet; a snubby little nose, no character there, a pouting mouth, pale, colorless lips. Although a person well suited to the name, "a decidedly common-place girl," we would say, at a mere glance, yet, that heart nursed dreams of a resplendent future. Not a soul to think deeply, yet, every day there were desires and longings and ambitions crowding the soul, and expanding the body, it would seem.

We find her pouring out her wrath on aunt Sally's head, because that worthy lady had remonstrated against an ambition she called "manly," because it required a man's strong nerves, a man's clear cool brain, his steady hand, big stout

Arctic Flowers and Berries.

It might be supposed that in the utter barrenness of the Arctic landscape flowers never grew there. This would be a great mistake. The dweller in that desolate region, after passing a long, weary winter, with nothing for the eye to rest upon but the vast expanse of snow and ice, is in a condition to appreciate beyond the ability of an inhabitant of warmer climes the little flowerets that peep up almost through the snow when the spring sunlight begins to exercise its power upon the white mantle of the earth. In little patches here and there, where the dark-colored moss absorbs the warm rays of the sun and the snow is melted from its surface, the most delicate flowers spring up at once to gladden the eye of the weary traveler. It needs not the technical skill of the botanist to admire those lovely tokens of approaching summer. Thoughts of home, in a warmer and more hospitable climate, fill his heart with joy and longings as meadows filled with daisies and buttercups spread out before him while he stands upon the crest of a granite hill that knows no footstep other than the tread of the stately musk ox or the antlered reindeer, as they pass in single file upon their migratory journeys, and whose caverns echo to no sound save the howling of the wolves or the discordant cawing of the raven. He is a boy again, and involuntarily plucks the feathery dandelion and seeks the time of day by blowing the puffy fringe from its stem, or tests the faith of the fair one, who is dearer to him than ever in this hour of separation, by picking the leaves from the yellow-hearted daisy. Tiny little violets, set in a background of black or dark-green moss, adorn the hillsides, and many flowers unknown to warmer zones come bravely forth to flourish for a few weeks only and wither in the August winds. Very few of these flowers, so refreshing and charming to the eye, have any perfume. Nearly all smell of the dank moss that forms their bed. As soon as the snow leaves the ground the hillsides in many localities are covered with the vine that bears a small black berry, called by the natives parwong, in appearance, though not in flavor, like the huckleberry. It has a pungent, spicy tartness, that is very acceptable after a long diet of meat alone, and the natives, when they find these vines, stop every other pursuit for the blissful moments of enjoying their stomachs with the fruit. This is kept up, if the crop only lasts long enough, until they have made themselves thoroughly sick by their hogghishness. But the craving for some sort of vegetable diet is irresistible, and with true Innuit improvidence they indulge it, careless of consequences. Fortunate for them is it that their summer is a short one and the parwong not abundant, or cholera might be added to the other dangers of Arctic residence. But the days of the buttercup and daisy, and of the butterfly and the mosquito, are few. With the winter comes the all-pervading snow and the keen, bracing northwest wind, the rosy cheek and the frozen nose, but with it also comes rugged health and a steady diet of walrus meat.

An Old Fashioned Nurse.

She was old—in fact, she was a great-grandmother—but she still retained the vigor of middle age, and pursued her profession of nursing the sick. Her face was seamed and wrinkled, the wrinkles being so criss-crossed that one was involuntarily reminded of the tanned alligator-skin used in making belts and satchels; but her hair retained its natural color, and she kept it in order by means of her patient's brushes and combs. She had her peculiarities, as most old nurses have.

Her excessive economy was equaled only by her acquisitiveness. She had worn her black lace veil for forty years, her "reps" dress, in whose pattern red gourds chased each other over a yellow ground, dated back to a past generation, and her other garments were chosen for their lasting quality. Of these she seemed to have as many layers as an onion. The layer exposed to view, when she prepared herself for rest at night by her patient's bedside, consisted of a quilted skirt and a bodice of common blue and white striped bed-ticking. In her leisure moments she wandered about the house and lot commencing with herself concerning the family's waste and extravagance. She picked up strings, nails and tin cans; she gathered three shriveled apples that hung on a tree in the back end of the lot; and she dug down into a pile of ashes upon which the rains for months had beaten, tasted them, and finding them still strong and good, upbraided the mistress for not extracting the lye and making soap. Nothing that was offered to her came amiss. She accepted old clothes with avidity, old shoes and joints of rusty stove-pipe had a value in her eyes, also crippled umbrellas and rubber boots with holes in them.

She was not consciously mirth-provoking in her talk; her conversation ran mostly toward lugubrious recitals of sickness, death and misfortune, but her patient extracted amusement from her words and expressions. Besides these traits, peculiar to herself, she had many common to old-fashioned nurses, but was excelled probably by none in her capacity for spilling things, for losing her spectacles and for putting,

"By George!" said Foggy, there's rich digging over there. I should say that dirt would assay a dollar an ounce."

"I have come now to repay what I carried off so slyly, it would seem. I want to repay it doubly; my husband is rich. I use my own maiden name in my practice; my husband would not allow me to use his."

A REGULAR BONANZA: Her hand was evidently not on good terms with soap and water, but was heavily loaded with jewelry. "By George!" said Foggy, there's rich digging over there. I should say that dirt would assay a dollar an ounce."

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