

A Noble Deed.

I believe I was born a singer. As far back as I can remember I enjoyed every sound of music and would crawl upon the piano stool when a child in pinks and strike the keys.

As I grew up I soon made a reputation by my voice, and Uncle Archibald was so anxious I should improve that he sent me to Europe to complete my education. I had been there two years, working hard and gaining strength in my art, when the summons came for me to return home. My uncle had failed in business and had lost everything. I found him worn out in his darkened room, a shadow of what he had been.

"And you are a poor man now, Uncle Archibald?"

"I shall be as soon as my house is sold."

I bent and kissed the forehead of this noble and kind old man, who had been my greatest earthly benefactor, vowing that his home should never be sold.

Yes, I would commence public life as a singer, though I have a constant stimulant of music and would shrink from the thought of performing at what ever made me cringing, I promptly decided upon this course of life.

For the first time in my life, I was a singer. I had the leader of a superior opera troupe and offered my services.

He was much pleased. He knew me well, having heard me sing several times at my uncle's house, and he had repeatedly advised me to sing in public.

"But you would need more courage, more confidence. It would greatly aid your success," he used to say.

Now, on my application, enthusiastically in earnest and quite forgetful of myself, I must have appeared different, for he said: "So you begin to understand yourself—to appreciate your powers. That is good. I shall have great delight in bringing you out."

I had a few weeks for preparation, which were, however, sufficient.

"Don't hurt your health by too close study, that will weaken your voice and spoil everything," said my friend.

"You must take a long, brisk walk daily."

In compliance with his advice, I daily trod the public streets with a free, light step. In all my life I had never felt so happy and courageous. I seemed upheld on wings.

I was passing rapidly along the crowded square one morning, when a hand touched my arm. It was that of one of the beggar children—Italian.

A thrill went through me as I looked into the girl's soft, dark eyes, and heard her lip her petition in softer tones. I felt quickly for my purse, but I had left it behind me.

What could I give this destitute child of my beloved Italy? Suddenly a thought came to me—I would give her a song.

Throwing back my veil, I put the children before me and began to sing. As if a magic spell had been dropped upon them, they all stood silent around me. I knew no one in that crowded mart and did not fear recognition; and in the musical Tuscan words I loved I crooned loudly and clearly.

Then I seized the child's brown wrist and lifted her thin palm; silver and even gold dropped into it. I caught a glimpse of many wild, delighted, eager eyes; then, as they hustled around the child, they all looked at me with precious coins, so that each joined her little hands to receive it. I slipped aside and ran home with a gay heart.

That night I was to sing. I had kept my health, and as my mad dream, she declared my beauty to be wonderful.

But, as I turned at the mirror, a sudden sickening realization of the strange occurrence awaiting my coming filled my heart. The old forgotten dream returned and overwhelmed me. I began to tremble. A wild, shaking fear filled me. I felt for the first time the importance of the occasion. These 5,000 people awaiting my singing were not friends of my uncle's.

As I came upon the stage there was a volley of applause; the air rained flowers. Ladies kissed their hands to me. I felt strengthened, encouraged. I wondered what it could mean until—"Sing the ditty you sang this morning for the beggars!"

My heart's blood filled my cheeks. I trembled. For a moment I stood faltering like a shy child. Then, as they sympathetically hushed, awaiting the words of my song, I softly syllabled the first strain, and caroled to the end the simple Tuscan ditty.

Ah, how pleased the ward how kind! how warm my heart! I feared no longer. I could have sung for all night. When I retired the old manager, my friend, embraced me.

"It is all right, my child. They know you—they love you!"

I flew home to my uncle. I knelt down by his pillow and kissed his cheek. He looked at my dress, my loose hair full of flowers, my burning cheeks and dancing eyes.

"Gabrielle!" he cried, "you have been in opera!"

And then I confessed and told my glad tidings.

Ah! success is sweet. I had been favored—my feet, so timid, were set in a flowery path. The way has ever been bright and fair. I love my vocation.

But when the song is done and the lights are quenched, I speed away as gayly to the bright home I have secured and made the resting place of a fond old heart. I have filled it with all the luxuries which money will buy, and many friends throng around me, none will ever, I think, be as sweet as my first success.

The Problem of Falling in Love.

It is difficult to say what it is that enchants a young man's fancy, what particular attraction, what "touch of hand turn of head," because the observer is always more or less surprised that such feeble charms should effect such large results. One would say that it cannot be invariably beauty that decides, if beauty had not so many delicious as religion or love, or there would be no lovely epigrams; it cannot be intellect, or we should meet in sane married women; it cannot be no vices prevailing over households; nor social position, or there would be no misalliances; nor all the penitential maidens would be left to single-blessedness.

A young man's fancy, to be sure, like everybody's is much influenced by propinquity; it is the woman of whom he sees the most, with whom he is intimate enough to discover the attractions that are often overlooked by other friends, who appear to him; but among a number with whom he is equally intimate how does it happen that he selects one especially and finds in her all the poetry and music of his life—*Harper's Bazar*.

A Promising Journalist.

BRILLIANT REPORT OF A MILITARY DRILL BY A PRINTER—HOW HE DESCRIBED THE MILITARY MOVEMENTS

One day during the encampment the managing editor, says the *Houston Post*, found he was short a man to report part of the proceedings on the grounds. Spying the foreman of the composing room he requested him to take notes of a company drill, and this is the way he did it. "Promptly at 4 o'clock the company marched upon the ground and were received by a burst of applause. Immediately the father of the chapel called time and the foreman of the company began to call off by signals. When he called out they unrolled bayonets and kept on through the manual by numbers. The company was made up of numerous wrong fonts, there being a picnic man alongside of a million one and a briefcase alongside of a nonpareil one. In company from the line was very unevenly justified, there being a 2-foot space between some members, while between others there was fully a 3-foot quad. In platoon movements the fellow who acted as right hyphen slipped behind the line and all three of the proof-readers commenced to mark errors. In wheeling left in circle one handful got badly squabbled, and when they went to do a phalanx of four to send to the front and center the whole form got pried and the proof-reader and copy-holder again got their work in. In marching in columns of four another band company error was made. Some thought they had got a price-and-a-half table off the file, while others evidently thought they had struck four columns of figures and words and put in a period when they should have used a comma, in making time around the drill grounds. When the assistant foreman was ordered to make up a four page form he had a few weeks for preparation, which were, however, sufficient.

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Safety on the Railroad.

The public are watching with interest the effort of the management of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Company to improve the efficiency of the service by the institution of proper tests to determine the competency of the engineers and employees of the company. There are not two sides to this question. The public safety can be secured only by the employment of competent men. Men who are not competent have no right to put the lives of their fellow-travelers and the public in jeopardy by undertaking duties which, through physical defect, they are unable to perform.

The company has no right, in law or morals, to employ or to continue to employ men who are not competent. Every officer who permits, knowingly, an incompetent person to attempt to perform such duties, in case of accident, liable to be indicted, where death results, for manslaughter, along with the man who occasions the accident. This is the law, and it is not to be evaded. The law does not permit and will in no wise excuse the employment of incompetent persons to perform such important duties. What use is it to give written orders to an engineer who cannot tell a danger signal from a safe signal?

The rumors that the safety signal, proposed to institute a rule, because of the introduction of such reform in the management as will secure men competent in every respect to operate the trains, must be without substantial basis. It is not a strike, it is not a strike to the company to do an unlawful and highly improper act. The officers of the company could not rightfully yield to such a demand, even if they were so inclined. And the men will not gain so much as they from its inauguration. The men who, through their misfortune, are not able to continue in the particular line of employment to which they have heretofore devoted themselves, could be properly cared for by the Reading management, but they would not be able to do so. The men who, through their misfortune, are not able to continue in the particular line of employment to which they have heretofore devoted themselves, could be properly cared for by the Reading management, but they would not be able to do so.

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An African Queen.

A WOMAN RULER LIVING IN SAVAGE SUPREMACY ON THE BANKS OF THE ZAMBEZI.

The position of women in Africa is as degraded as in most other savage lands, and life is a round of hard, unrequited toil to the weaker sex in nearly all parts of the continent. Here and there, however, is a native queen who has absolute influence over her people and who surrounds herself with as much pomp and circumstance as her position permits. Mr. Colliard, the French Protestant missionary who saved the life of Serpa Pinto during that traveler's trip across the continent, has sent a most interesting account of a picturesque female who holds sway over the savage Barotsa on the upper Zambezi.

One day recently Queen Mokone went on an excursion to the tombs of her fathers. She was expected to return by her chief town two or three days later, and on the appointed day everybody was alert to hear the first sound announcing the approach of the royal party. Suddenly the measured beat of drums was faintly heard. "She is coming. The queen is coming," the cry went through the town, and several thousand men, women and children lined the banks of the broad Zambezi and gazed down the watery expanse. The sound of the drums grew louder and soon the royal barge and the attending fleet came into view.

Under a pavilion made of gaily colored native mats sat the queen in the midst of her subjects. Forty patois were seated on either side of her, and she was surrounded by a great number of attendants. As she came upon the town the women and girls, who were ranged in line along the shore, began to intone a chant, which struck Mr. Colliard as full of weird beauty. It recited the praises of Queen Mokone.

At last the voice of the queen struck the shore, and the crowd of men who lined the way from the river's edge to the queen's mansion, instantly dropped on their knees and began to clap their hands, keeping time to the beat of the drums.

The queen stepped out of her barge. Over her shoulders she wore a brightly colored Indian robe. Several strings of beads and ornaments of ivory encircled her neck, and large white pearls were arranged with care in her hair. She saluted the white man with a wave of her hand, but appeared to pay no notice to her subjects. A procession was instantly formed, and the queen, with her attendants, proceeded to the band at its head. The musicians were suspended from their necks the instruments known as *serimbos*, which are long gourds, on which are strung cords of different lengths which give a variety of sounds when struck with the fingers. As the procession started the musicians struck up, and did not cease playing until the queen withdrew into her apartments. Behind the band walked the queen, and at considerable distance behind her the royal suite and the oarsmen of her fleet. As they passed along the populace fell into line, and the long procession marched until they reached the queen's abode.

Then the master of ceremonies spread on the ground a lion's skin, on which the queen took her stand. The royal suite approached within about a hundred feet, ranged themselves in line before the queen, lifted their hands toward the sky, crying "Loche! Loche!" and then prostrated themselves in the dust. Next, the boatmen went through the same ceremony, and then the populace, in detachments, paid their respects to their ruler in the same manner. After the visitors in the village, and finally Mr. Colliard's own boatmen. Then the queen disappeared within her house, and soon after, surrounded by her young women, gave an audience to the white man.

She had a wheezy accordion, over whose keys she ran her fingers with surprising dexterity. She played a curious melody, a savage air, which was very proud of her musical accomplishments, which, however, did not greatly impress her visitor. Mr. Colliard has been permitted to establish a mission in this town, where, he says, many picturesque scenes only serve to conceal the horrors of paganism and the graces and most revolting superstitions.—*New York Sun*.

The Last Days of Pompeii—A Realistic Representation at Atlantic City.

Every one who has read Bulwer's thrilling tale, "The Last Days of Pompeii," has been charmed and awed with the graphic description of the destruction of the fated city. The narrative is as realistic as the pen in the master-hand can make it, yet more realistic still is the representation of the awful scene as produced by the Messrs. Pain, of Atlantic City. The arrangements for the production are complete. In the background rises Vesuvius, grim and stately; at its feet lies the beautiful city, with its villas, temples and amphitheatre, and in the foreground is a silver lake, on whose bosom float gaily decked barges. A great celebration in honor of the Goddess Isis is in progress; the streets, decorated with eager people in holiday attire, passing the time in games and athletic contests; the triumphal procession disembarks from the galleys and proceeds with waving banners, to the strains of stirring music, to the altar of the goddess.

Alas! the goddess Isis is a false prophetess, and she is about to strike the statue, when a rumbling noise is heard; all eyes turn to the mountain, at once the pride and dread of Pompeii. Curling smoke issues from the summit, to be followed soon by a shower of ashes and a great fall of flame. A great panic seizes the people; they fly in all directions mingling their awe-stricken shrieks with the din of falling pillars and the cracking of the hungry flames. The fleeing populace, the grand mount ain pouring out its fiery flood, the fair city gradually buried under the tons of molten lava, form a scene of unexampled grandeur.

The representation is wonderfully complete, and the scale on which it is produced exceeds that of any spectacular production ever seen in this section.

Over the ruins of the city a gorgeous pyrotechnic display is given. The crater of the sudden volcano belches forth myriads of rockets and bombs, the lake is turned into a sea of golden water and a large number of set pieces are included in the display.

A Conjurer's Trick.

The prettiest trick I ever saw, says a London *Standard* writer, was done by Herrmann while at lunch with a brother conjurer in the hotel at Montevideo.

Five persons were seated at the table (not his own), and he observed that there was apparently an entire absence of any possible preparation. Taking a pear from the dish he told us to mark it. One left four punctures from his fork in it, another dropped a spot of ink on the rind; I pushed an American three cent piece into the soft substance

of the fruit until it was buried; next a large slice was cut out and eaten. Herrmann then took it and tossed it toward the lofty ceiling. "Catch it yourselves," he cried, as the pear was whirling in mid air. It fell into my outstretched hand, pruned, ink-spotted and with the three cent bit still bedded in its tissue, but whole.