

The Lady and the Golden Cat.

Several years ago I was stationed, as assistant surgeon, with my regiment at Orleans. In that ancient city, in spite of its many mansions of the old nobility, suitable apartments for bachelors are few and far between. I always want plenty of air space about me, and so I installed myself in a building on the outskirts of the city.

I rented half of the floor, comprising four rooms. I made my sleeping-chamber and work-room of the two which faced on the street; in the third I put plants and flowers; the fourth was left empty. A great balcony ran along the entire front of the house, on which I could stroll up and down—or rather on half of it, for it was divided in the middle by an iron fence so low that one could easily step over.

I had been living there about two months, when, one July evening, as I approached my rooms, I was surprised to see a brilliant light streaming from the windows of the uninhabited apartment.

"Ah! I have a neighbor," thought I, and I was not especially pleased. Going to my room, I stepped noiselessly out upon the balcony; but the light had already been extinguished. I returned to my bedroom, and read for an hour or two. From time to time I seemed to hear about me in the building a sound as of light footsteps. At last I went to bed and to sleep.

In the middle of the night I suddenly awoke with a distinct sensation that some one was walking about near me. I got up and lit my candle. This is what I saw:

In the middle of the room stood a great cat, its back slightly arched, its tail erect, and its phosphorescent eyes fixed upon me. It was a superb Angora, with long, yellow hair of the color of raw silk. As the light shone upon its fur gleamed like spun gold. It approached me with velvet steps, and softly rubbed its flexible body against my legs. I stopped to caress it, which it permitted, purring gently, and then as I got back into bed, it leaped up on the counterpane. It was a very young cat, and she seemed well disposed to let herself be caressed. I put her back on the floor, and tried to send out of the room; but she evaded me, and took refuge under the furniture.

As soon as I had blown out the light, she leaped up on my bed again, but I paid no further attention to her, and soon went to sleep. It was broad day when I woke again, and the cat was nowhere to be seen.

The human mind is a delicate instrument, easily thrown out of gear. Recall the facts that I have just told you: a light seen, then extinguished, in an uninhabited apartment; an Angora cat of singular color which appeared and disappeared in mysterious manner—that is nothing very startling in this, is there? Very well. Imagine, now, that this same program was repeated every night and under identically the same conditions for a week. Believe me, there is enough in that to effect the thoughts of a man who lives alone, and to give him those little shivers that herald the present of the unknowable. The human mind is so constituted that it unconsciously holds to the principle of a sufficient reason. For all series of identical phenomena, it demands a cause, a law. And it becomes uneasy if it does not discover that cause.

I am not a coward. But I know that fear feeds and grows upon uncertainty while attempts to discover its cause reduce it to simple curiosity. I resolved, then, to investigate this matter. I questioned my orderly. He did not know my neighbors. Every morning an old woman came to take care of the other apartment. He had tried to draw her into conversation; but, whether she was completely deaf or not, she would vouchsafe no reply to him.

Nevertheless, I easily accounted for the first strange fact—the extinction of the light when I returned home. I had noticed that the windows next to mine were masked amply by a great lace curtain; moreover, the two balconies communicated. My neighbor, man or woman, therefore drenched indiscreet glances, and extinguished the light on hearing me return. To verify my supposition, I had my orderly bring me from the mess a cold supper, early one "noon, and I did not leave my rooms that evening. When night had fallen, I took my stand near my window. Soon I saw the balcony lighted up from the window of the neighboring apartment. I gently opened the sash, and stepped out upon the balcony. At that moment, knowing that I exposed myself to a positive danger, either of breaking my neck or of engaging in a hand-to-hand struggle with some flesh-and-blood person, my nerves were perfectly calm. I reached the lighted window without having made the least sound. The window was half open. The curtains, transparent for me who was on the dark side, made me invisible to any one in the interior of the apartment.

I saw a large room filled with quaint, old-fashioned furniture, lighted by a hanging-lamp. At the back of the room was a low divan, on which lay a young and beautiful woman. She was clad in a loose wrap of some filmy material, and her unconfined hair fell about her shoulders like a golden garment. She gazed at herself in a hand-glass, bared her arms, and pressed her lips to the smooth, white flesh, and her supple body writhed with the graceful, languorous movements of a great feline. When every move she made, she seemed to scintillate with the glint of gold.

I was staring at her, spell-bound, when of a sudden the eyes of this strange and beautiful woman fixed themselves upon me—peculiar eyes of a phosphorescent green that seemed to burn with a lambent flame. I was sure that I was invisible to her, being on the dark side of the draped window; nevertheless, I felt that she saw me.

A cry escaped her, and she drew the garment about her and buried her face in the pillows.

I pushed open the window, and stepped quickly across the room. Bending over her hidden face, I poured out a torrent of excuses and accusations against myself. I called myself a boor and a coward. I implored her to strike me, to drive me away, but with a word of pardon. For a long time I continued to plead thus without a sign

from her. At last she turned, and saw a young face, extraordinary and charming, which smiled at me. "It is you, it is you," she murmured.

What she meant by that, I could not comprehend, but I, too, felt that I had seen her before—there was something in her face, her glance, her graceful movements, that awoke vague memories.

I stood gazing at her speechless, for a moment, and then a mad desire came over me to take her in my arms. But she read the thought in my eyes, and leaped to the lamp and extinguished it.

There was a mocking laugh, then silence. Hastily striking a match, I relit the lamp and looked about me. The woman was nowhere to be seen. I had heard no door open or close, and yet she was not in the room. Beside myself there was no living thing there, except the golden cat, which came to me and rubbed herself against my legs. I had not noticed her before, but evidently she had been asleep in some corner and my entrance had aroused her.

I could not very well search the apartment, so I waited a few moments and then returned by the balcony to my room. The light in the neighboring apartment streamed out from the window, but there was no sound to indicate a living presence.

As I pondered on the affair, I began to feel a vague fear of this woman, my neighbor, who said to me "It is you" as if she knew me. I could not drive away the memory of those green eyes that had flashed at me from the darkness as she extinguished the lamp nor of the electric shock that had thrilled me once when I touched her hair with my hand.

Scarcely was I in bed again when I felt a weight fall upon my legs. It was the golden cat. I pushed her away, but she returned. Finally I gave up the struggle and fell into a troubled sleep, with this strange companion, as on the other night, still on my bed.

The next night I again entered my strange neighbor's apartment. She seemed not surprised to see me now and we chatted together for half an hour, at the end of which time she dismissed me with a smile, but in a way not to be denied, and I returned to my own room. She had told me that her name was Linda, but beyond that she would give no information about herself.

And so it ran on for a week. What had taken place on the second night was repeated again and again. Scarcely had I left Linda, and returned to my own room, when the golden cat appeared, leaped on my bed, installed herself there, and remained until morning. I knew now to whom the animal belonged. Once, when I spoke of it, Linda said: "Oh, yes, my cat. Is it not the one that seems to be of gold?" Nothing new took place, but nevertheless little by little, an intangible terror took possession of me.

There were moments when these two beings, with their great green eyes, their supple movements, and their glory of golden hair, became confused in my mind, and seemed to me to be only the dual form of a single soul. In spite of my importunities of Linda and my efforts to reason with myself, to convince myself that, as a matter of fact, there was nothing absolutely inexplicable in what had befallen me, I rallied myself on being afraid of a woman and a pet cat. And then, as the result of all my reasoning, I found that in reality I was afraid of neither of the animal nor of the woman, but of a symbolical duality which existed only in my own mind.

I actually suffered from this obsession. After the nights in their presence, I had days of secret torture such as mad-men undergo. Little by little a resolution was born, grew, and ripened in my mind; the woman held me by her beauty; but I resolved that I should kill the animal.

One evening, before going to Linda's room, I laid out from my supply of drugs a pot of glycerine, a flask of hydrocyanic acid, and one of those little glass sticks that chemists call mixing rods.

When I regained my room, the cat as usual followed me there. I called her and she ran to me, her back arched, her tail erect, purring. I took the glass rod, dipped the point in the glycerine, and held it toward the animal; she licked it dry with her rosy tongue. I repeated this operation three times. The fourth time I dipped the rod in the acid. The cat licked it unsuspectingly, and immediately she became rigid. Then she bounded into the air, and rolled over and over in terrible agony. Finally she fell back upon the floor with a fearful cry—a human cry, one would almost have said. She was dead.

With great bolts of perspiration on my temples and my hands trembling violently, I leaned over the warm body. Her starting eyes had a look in them that froze me. Her black and swollen tongue stuck out between her sharp, white teeth. Her limbs were extraordinarily contorted. With an extreme effort of will, I took the animal up by her paws and left the house. I hurried straight before me down the deserted street to the quays, and there I threw my burden into the river.

Until day broke I wandered about the city, I knew not where. At last the sky grew pale with the coming dawn, and I decided to return to my house. As my hand touched the knob I shivered. I was afraid of finding still alive, as in Poe's celebrated story, the animal I had just killed. But no; my room was empty. I hung myself exhausted on the bed. For the first time in days I slept sure of being alone.

Next day they told me Linda had disappeared. In her room were found her clothes—everything she had, even to the filmy wrap she had always worn when I had seen her—but nothing that could reveal her identity. The proprietor had rented the apartment to "Mlle. Linda, lyric artist." He knew nothing more about her. Who she was and whether she went remain a mystery which the story I have told offers the only hint of a solution.—Adapted from the French of Marcel Prevost.

Convincing. A certain professor, on being asked what he knew upon a particular subject, replied: "Nothing; I have not even lectured upon it, sir."—Tit-Bits.

QUAKER MARRIAGE CEREMONY.

How Members of the Society of Friends Marry Each Other.

A young man and woman in this city, belonging to the Society of Friends who have certified their intention of marriage at the City Hall, are undergoing the regular form which the society imposes by waiting for the approval of the monthly meeting before they can be married. The first stage in the proceeding is for them both to appear at the monthly meeting of the society, which is the only time that any business is done, and make known their intention. They both stand up before the meeting and the man says: "With Divine permission and Friends' approval I declare my intention to take this woman (and he calls her name) to be my wife," and then they sit down.

But the sanction of the society for the marriage requires more than this formally. It is necessary, granted unless both parties are Friends, and so if one of the young people is out of the fold they have to be married without the formal approval of the society.

When the approval is secured the couple marry themselves. The ceremony is appointed by the society to take place at some regular meeting, or else at one specially appointed. In the latter case it may be at a house where any one of the society has the right to be present. But the most interesting ceremony is that which takes place in a regular assembly of the society at the meeting house. Any one who has been to a Quaker service knows the fashion of the meeting house, with its high seats in front, facing the rest of the meeting. The elders usually sit there, but when a couple of young people are going to get married they have to occupy this conspicuous place, and have to stand up bravely, without minister or elder, and marry themselves.

An old Quaker minister who said he had seen six couples stand up in this way before the congregation was asked why the young people had to do it alone, and he said it was a matter that did not concern an intermediate person, but rested between themselves and God. Then he described how the young man would stand up in that high-perched place in the meeting house along with his bride, and, taking her hand said: "In the presence of God and this assembly, I take thee, A. B., to be my wife, promising to be unto thee an affectionate and loving husband until the hand of the Lord by death shall separate us." The bride then speaks in a similar fashion.

At the end of this ceremony a minister prays or speaks, and then, when there is a pause and the spirit moves no one else, the meeting is adjourned. At the close of the meeting the marriage certificate, which is made of parchment, is brought forward, and any one can sign it. A special law sanctions this marriage ceremony. This document, which amounts to the legal sanction of the marriage, is greatly prized among the descendants of Friends, so much so that the childer often have similar marriage certificates made for themselves, though they may have been married outside the society.—Worcester Gazette.

What Would Happen. Under the condition set forth in the question, we must imagine that the moon would always be exactly over one spot of the earth's surface. At night therefore, that part of the earth would always be illuminated, unless the position—which is most probable—would result in an eclipse; but the other portions of the earth would be in total darkness at night. The effect on navigation would be revolutionary. The phenomenon of the tides would practically cease. Consequently, many tidal rivers would run low constantly and flourishing ports go to ruin. Not only so, but the distribution of the water on the earth's surface would be seriously altered. If the moon stood still the waters on that side of the earth where the moon was stationed would rise in one huge mass, while the opposite side of the earth would have a smaller bulk. The waters, however, at the sides of the earth would practically disappear. This would undoubtedly mean that many portions of the earth now dry would be flooded, and vice versa. Not only so, but the shape of the planet would—to an outside observer—change. The solid portions would remain rigid, but the general contour would appear to be egg-shaped, the greater end being turned toward the moon, and the point away from it.

Why Thunder Rolls. The prolonged roll of thunder is readily explained by comparison with a volley fired along a line of troops. Suppose troops to be drawn up in line in such number as to extend for a mile, and ordered, by a signal that all would see, to fire at once. One standing at the end of the line would hear the report of the musket nearest him instantly. He would hear the others successively.

Thus a report 568 feet away would come to him in half a second, and he would not hear the last report for five or six seconds after the gun had been fired. This would produce a sort of roll, which would gradually increase in intensity. Flashes of lightning may be considered as representing three lines of troops along which the explosions occur at the same time. Consider the variety of distance and position of the listener, and we account for the variety of sound in thunder in mountainous regions the rolling is augmented by reverberations or echoes.

Dublin Opera Audiences. Signor Arrini has personally conducted orchestras all over the world, from Havana to Constantinople, from Chicago to Madrid, but for a hearty, appreciative operatic audience, give him Dublin! There the gallery would greet him with shouts of "Viva Victor Emmanuel!" "Where's your wig?" and "How's the Maccaroni?"; would sing songs and glees in the entr'actes, and interrupted Giuglini in the middle of "Ah si, ben mio" with "Ah, Begorra, and Mario's a fine singer, but sure we like your singing best, and that's the truth." It was this same gallery which in the sleep-walking scene of "Macbeth" when the nurse and doctor appear on the stage together, shouted: "Hullo doctor! Well, is it a boy or a girl?"—London Chronicle.

Cuban War will go On.

Official Denial that Olney and Delomo Have Signed Peace Articles.

Senator Gonzales Quesada, the head of the Cuban junta in Washington, was informed Friday morning that a story had been published to the effect that Secretary Olney and Minister Delomo had drawn up articles to end the Cuban war, on the lines proposed by General Gomez. Senator Quesada emphatically denied that any such action had been taken or could be approved by the Cubans. He said the story was absolutely false, as General Gomez had never proposed any reform whatever, nor was there a Cuban in the island that would accept anything but absolute independence.

Both at the state department and the Spanish legation emphatic denials are made that any provisional draft of terms of surrender has been received by Secretary Olney, and discussed by him and Dupuy Delomo, the Spanish minister. Senator Pablo Solar, mentioned as the messenger who arrived here from Madrid, bringing the important document, is the second secretary of the Spanish legation, and arrived here and took charge of his duties more than three weeks ago.

Senator Delomo has not had an interview with Secretary Olney except at the formal receptions for more than a week. There has been absolutely no change in the situation since the president's annual message to congress.

Skyscrapers of the Future. Fifty years ago the idea of constructing 25 and 30 story buildings would have been deemed too wildly improbable to deserve consideration. They are now realized. Some of the tall buildings that have been erected since that time are, from an architectural standpoint, unattractive, but many of the more recent ones are beautiful and desirable. What the next 15 years may develop can scarcely be conjectured. Artistic and philanthropic minds, assisted by intelligent legislation, may accomplish what may now seem miraculous. Instead of buildings wretchedly lighted and ventilated composing the solid wall-like street fronts with scarcely any variation of sky line, color or design, there may be structures perfect in their adaptation to the special purposes each is to subserve, separated from each other by smooth walks, well lawns, blooming flower gardens and clean streets, representing in their designs all that is best in every style of architecture from the remotest ages to the present time, enriched and diversified by color and varying in magnitude from the romantic single story Swiss cottage with thatched roof to the towering office buildings piercing the sky with a thousand "turrets and spires and gilded domes."—A. L. A. Himmelfright in North American Review.

All He Wanted. J. Emory Storrs lost a divorce case by the wit of his opponent. He had brought suit for divorce on behalf of a woman, who asked for possession of two children. The husband made a vigorous protest, and employed a young lawyer of ability to defend the suit. The defence had the best case so far as the evidence went, but Mr. Storrs made one of his characteristic strong speeches, with an eloquent plea on behalf of the mother and her two children. The effect on the jury was apparent. He concluded his speech with that trite exclamation of Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty or give me death!" The young attorney arose deliberately and said: "Mr. Bailiff, you can give me a glass of water."—Chicago Times Herald.

How the Devil Made the Hills. The existence of hills and mountains is accounted for in legendary lore in this wise: When the Lord was about to fashion the face of the earth, he ordered the devil to dive into the watery depths and bring up his hands full of the earth he might find at the bottom. The devil obeyed, but when he filled his hands he filled his mouth also. The Lord took the soil and sprinkled it around, and the earth appeared, but was perfectly flat. The devil, who still had his mouth full of earth, looked on for some time in silence. At last he tried to speak, but choked and fled in terror. After him followed the two demons, thunder and lightning, and so he rushed about over the face of the earth, spitting earth as he went, each portion of the earth forming itself into a hill. Wherever he took a violent fit of coughing and spitting sky cleaving mountains leaped into view.—St. Louis Republic.

Others have found health, vigor and vitality in Hood's Sarsaparilla, and it surely has power to help you also. Why not try it? Want to Hear Bryan. In the Missouri State Senate on Thursday, a joint resolution was adopted providing that an invitation be given Wm. J. Bryan to visit Jefferson City and deliver an address before the Legislature. The House adopted the resolution.

CALIFORNIA.

Personally-Conducted Tour via Pennsylvania Railroad.

At 8:13 A.M. Wednesday, January 27, a special train of Pullman composite, dining, sleeping, compartment, and observation cars will leave the handsome Jersey City Depot of the Pennsylvania Railroad, bound for San Diego, California, and conveying the first of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company's personally-conducted tours to the Pacific Coast.

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