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[Written for the Cambria Freeman.]
TO LAURA
BY J. GILLESPIE LONDON.

Thou hast shed the dew and fragrance of Thy young and sinless years upon my heart, And all that once was there so dark and drear, Has turned to blossoms beautiful and bright! The holy influence of thy rapturous love, Like sunshine gleaming from a tropic sky, Has nursed the fading flowers within my soul Till they have turned to shining wreaths of love.

I sit beneath the elm tree's shade this hour, And as the stars, like eyes of angels, ope Within you far mysterious realm on high, So thoughts of thee do spring up in my soul To make the darkness and the storm go out. Each star within thy glorious coronet, Each flower that opens its petals to the dew, Each leaf that waves within the twilight air, Each bird that dutters in its grassy nest, Bears some sweet resemblance of thy gentle self!

This gentle wind that lifts the pale flower up From steaming rock or mossy laden bank, Has tones of music and of passion—love, Such as thy lips have whispered in mine ear. When we together strayed through wood and wild, And talked of other days to come, when life Would be a sweet, eternal spring, whose flowers Would never fade.

THE TWO VOICES.

In a certain small village there lived a very poor man, a basket-maker, named Hans. He lived quite alone, in a mean little hut, which was his only property. He had no wife nor children to love and comfort him, for he was too poor to marry, and his old bedridden mother had died, and left him all alone. Hans missed her very much, and left very lonely, working day after day, with no one to give him a cheering word. But his mother had taught him to be industrious and contented, so he worked steadily on, though he scarcely earned enough to keep the wolf from the door.

Hans might have grown old and gray, without indulging any vain longings for a better condition, but unluckily he saw the miller's pretty daughter, and fell in love with her bright eyes and pleasant voice, and thought how nice it would be to have her to cheer his lonely home. But Hans knew well it was as much as he could do to find food and clothes for one, so he was obliged to see the miller's daughter walk to church with rich farmer Trenck.— This state of things made poor Hans very unhappy.

"I am as comely and young as farmer Trenck," said Hans to himself, "and if I only had money, who knows what might happen." Then he fell to thinking how to get the gold he coveted, and these thoughts kept him awake when he should have been asleep, and kept him idle when he ought to have been working.

It happened one day when Hans went out to cut some rushes for his baskets, that as he stooped down, with his knife in hand, he saw a leather wallet lying among the reeds. He dropped his knife, and seized the wallet. It was very heavy, and as he turned it over in his hand a bright gold piece fell out into his palm. Hans felt as if his heart stopped beating. He rubbed his eyes to be sure he was not dreaming, and then looked around to see if any one was near. But nobody was in sight, and he sat down on a green bank, and counted out the bright gold pieces, one by one, and then dropped them back again into the leather bag, thinking all the time that the chink of the precious metal was the sweetest music he had ever heard.

There was ninety-one gold pieces in the wallet, and as Hans, after counting them over and over twenty times, finally tied the string tightly about the bag, he heard a delicate little voice close to his ear say: "What are you going to do with the money, Hans?"

Poor Hans started up in affright, for he thought that some one had been watching him all the time. He looked all around but could see nothing, when again the voice repeated—

"What are you going to do with the money, Hans? It is not yours."

Again Hans looked about him, and now he saw seated on his right shoulder a small but beautiful creature, with silver wings and bearing a star on its forehead, which cast a bright radiance all around. Before he could recover from his surprise, so as to reply to the question, another voice, very unlike the first, and sounding as though it came through a brazen tube, answered for him:

"Hans will keep the money, to be sure; he found it, and it is his."

"He has no right to keep what belongs to another," answered the silvery voice.

"How does he know the real owner?" said the brazen voice. "Whoever dropped it considers it lost. Hans is a poor man, and this is a piece of good luck which he ought not to throw away."

While this dialogue between the two voices was going on, Hans, looking toward his left shoulder, he beheld a small, dark form, enveloped in a sort of dazzling haze that prevented him from seeing its outline with distinctness. It was not a bright, silvery light like that from the spirit of the silver voice, but a sort of lurid glare like the reflection from molten copper—yet there was something strongly fascinating in its brightness which tempted one to look again.

"Who are you both that thus disturb about my affairs?" he asked.

"I am the Voice of the Shadowless, whose followeth my advice shall never commit sin or know despair," answered the star-crowned figure on his right shoulder.

"And men call me the voice of the shadow, whose followeth me shall have riches in plenty and a life of joy," answered the brazen tone, with a harsh laugh.

Hans cast down his eyes in thought, and there, on the green sward, rested the shadow of the brazen one, a dark, unshapely thing, portraying his true form divested of the dazzling glare, and twice the size of the figure itself. Hans started and trembled; there was no shadow near the figure on his right, but a soft light lay shimmering on the grass—the light from her silver wings.

"Pooh, pooh, man; never be afraid of a shadow," said the brazen tone, jeeringly; "that is the best proof you can have that I am a real, tangible being, and ready to serve you. The words of the shadowless are all very well for ordinary occasions, but at a time like this listen to me."

"What shall I do with the wallet?" asked Hans. "I don't want to keep it if it is dishonest; I could not bear to be a thief."

"Never call yourself hard names," answered the brazen tone. "The act of finding and of stealing are two different things. The facts are these: Somebody loses a purse; you are fortunate enough to find it; therefore, it is your own, of course, to do with as you like."

"Not so," interrupted the Shadowless. "The money must have a proper owner, and it is the duty of Hans to discover him, if possible, and restore it to him; that is what he will do as an honest man."

Hans winced at these words, and the Shadow, seeming to perceive that he had gone too far, replied:

"Well, there is no harm at least, in Hans taking the wallet home with him, and thinking it over awhile; it will be much safer in his chest than lying out here in the weeds." This suggestion pleased Hans; but the Shadowless spoke:

"Do not listen to the tempter, Hans, but take the money at once to the Justice and tell him all about it. If once within your grasp, you know not to what you may be tempted—perhaps even to steal."

Hans was offended at this implied doubt of his honor, so he said, angrily, "Do you think me a child, that I cannot be trusted? I choose to take the wallet home, and I will."

"Hans, Hans," murmured the silver voice, imploringly, "drive me not from you by wifol obstinacy; know me as your true friend, and trust me, all will be well at last."

A pang went through the heart of Hans, at these words, and he was just about yielding when the Shadow said—

"How childish your fears are; what, afraid to trust yourself, one night with a little bag of gold? I thought you were more of a man. Suppose you had not found the wallet to-day, it would have laid among the reeds all night. Is it not in reality, much safer with you? You can carry it to the justice to-morrow."

These specious words decided Hans, and the soft, imploring voice of the Shadowless was no longer heard. He arose and went toward his house attended by the voice of the Shadow, who kept sounding in his ear the praises of his manliness.

Hans observed that the shadow on the grass was larger than before, and he thought it hid the sunlight; but the voice of flattery sounded sweeter in his ear, and the lurid light hovering on his shoulder dazzled him; so he went on, not heeding that the skimming light had gone from his path and that the star-crowned form sat drooping, dimmed and silent. When Hans arrived at his cottage he carefully barred the door, a thing he had never done before, and then once more spread the glittering gold out upon the board bed, and counted them one by one.

"There are just ninety-one pieces," whispered the Shadow, "one piece would buy you a coat. Don't you think you deserve something for finding the wallet, Hans?" Hans listened, but said nothing. He was thinking that if he had a new coat, he might walk to church with the miller's pretty daughter; but the people would wonder where he got the new coat. It seemed as if the Shadow knew his thoughts and went on—

"You might go to the town, you know, and perhaps there might be something owing to you, who knows. The coat is bought with money owed to you, eh, Hans? I and then on Sunday, when Trenck comes along, he will have to stand on one side; and look, now, there she comes."

Hans looked up, and there she went, sure enough, looking more blooming than ever.

"You can replace the piece when you earn it, and restore the wallet then; no one knows when you found it," urged the Shadow.

Hans sighed heavily; and then he took up the bright pieces and dropped them in the bag, all save one, that he kept upon the table.

"Thou shalt not steal," murmured the silver voice, but now the tone was as faint as a dying echo, and the brazen tone drowned it at once with a loud laugh, and the inquiry—

"Who talks of stealing? Hans borrows the piece awhile, and huris no one by it."

It was now dark, and Hans threw him-

self on the bed, after carefully locking up the bag of gold in his chest, and hiding the one piece beneath his pillow. His sleep was restless and disturbed; and early the next morning, unrefreshed, but determined, and not daring to question himself, he arose, took the gold piece, and hastened away to the adjoining town.

The tailor, who knew Hans well, looked surprised, when Hans offered the piece of gold, but he believed him when he said it was money long owed to him; and fitting him with a handsome coat with bright buttons, handsomer even than farmer Trenck's.

The morrow was Sunday, and the voice of the Shadow whispered of triumph in the new coat, but, despite all he could say, a dark pall seemed thrown over all things, and the fearful shadow on the grass increased fearfully, while ever and anon the silver voice of the Shadowless murmured, "Hans, art thou doing well?"

Until at last, in an agony, he reached his home, and, not daring to look at his new coat, threw himself on his bench, and the dark shadow lay crouched at his feet.

Thus the day wore on unheeded by Hans, when a neighbor suddenly stopped at his door and cried:

"Hast heard the news, Hans? The miller was robbed the night before last when coming from market; he was knocked down and his wallet taken from him before his two men came up; the robbers fled; he has posted a reward for the thief. It is a great loss of a certainty, ninety-one heavy gold pieces; a fortune for a poor man, Hans."

Hans sat motionless, and the neighbor supposing him busy, passed on. Hour after hour wore away, and Hans sat gazing on the wall, when the voice of the Shadow roused him. "Come, Hans, be a man," it said confidently, "it is all or nothing now; no one will ever suspect you of having the money. If the robber is caught so much the better. I suppose he flung the wallet aside for fear of detection, meaning to return for it again.— The miller is rich, and by and by when you open a shop for yourself, you will marry his daughter, and thus you see all will be returned to him four-fold. Come, cheer up; I'll show you some of the things that will be. Look up."

Hans looked up and on the whitewashed wall beheld what seemed to be three places like big picture frames, in the first of which, seen by the lurid glare the shadow cast upon it, was a group of figures. Hans looked earnestly saw himself in the handsome new coat—on his arm the miller's pretty daughter, who smiled on him, while the old father looked on pleased, and farmer Trenck walked sullenly alone. Hans's heart beat high, and looked at the second, he saw a church and seated at a table at the other side of the room, appeared the figure of himself, dressed in the robes of a justice, and appeared writing. Hans shuddered. The scene recalled the present too vividly, and the shadow hastened to throw a dazzling light over it to hide it from view, when suddenly the voice of the Shadowless spoke this time loud and distinctly.

"Look once more, Hans."

And Hans did look, and now the horrid glare was gone, and seen in the sily light of the star of the Shadowless, he beheld himself pale, haggard and fearful, with the miller's daughter on his arm, while before him went the fearful Shadow, larger and more fearful than ever. He trembled. At the second picture, the bride party was here, but a black pall covered everything, and the fearful shadow filled the church with its presence.

At the third he saw himself and all the group about him completely wrapped in his fearful gloom, and the face of the miller's daughter was faded, and himself seen in that silvery light of truth he scarcely recognized, so changed, and terrible had his face become. Hans covered his face.

"You have now seen the visions of the false by the light of the true," said the Shadowless. "Look once more and behold the truth itself."

And Hans looked once more and beheld the former visions swept away, and then saw the judgment hall, and himself the prisoner accused of high-way robbery, and sentence about to be pronounced upon him. Hans bowed his head in agony and cried:

"Oh! star-crowned spirit guide me and keep me from temptation," and at that word the dark form vanished; the shadow was gone from before him, and in its place was the soft clear shimmering light from the silver wings of the Shadowless.

Hans looked up, it was early dawn; but the sun-light seemed brighter to him, and a halo to rest upon the hills. He arose, and, prompted by the bright form that no longer rested upon his shoulder but nestled in his bosom, he took the new coat from its hiding place, and unlocking his chest, took out the bag of gold, he shuddered when he touched it, and looked about him involuntarily, fearing to meet the Shadow, but the silver voice said cheerfully: "Fear nothing, Hans, while I am next thy heart he cannot harm thee."— And so encouraged he stepped boldly out.

There was no one stirring at that early

hour, but the silver light made a bright path before him. The tailor had just risen and much astonished was he when Hans returned the coat, and begged the gold should be restored; and telling him how he had found the miller's gold, and how he had been tempted; the tailor was a just man, and did as Hans desired; and then accompanied Hans to the justice's house. As they came near it, they saw quite a crowd assembled who, when they saw Hans, shouted:

"There he is himself; we have got him; and they seized him as they spoke. 'So it was you who robbed the miller,' they cried; 'we found your knife among the robes.' But Hans looked down and saw the Shadowless spirit resting in his bosom, and thus replied: 'Not so, my friends; come with me and learn all,' and he passed on undaunted to the justice hall.

And there before the justice Hans told his story, and the men showed the knife, and the miller told how he had been robbed; then Hans stood up and placed the bag of gold on the table, told how he had found it, and how he had been tempted by the Shadow, and as he went on and described the vision he had seen, every one could see his love for the miller's daughter. He told how the Shadowless had shown the pictures in their true light, and as he spoke the silver wings of the star-crowned spirit in his bosom shone with new lustre; and the clear, soft light spread until it filled the justice hall, and fell upon Hans' face like a glory—and it entered the hearts of all who heard him, and with one voice they pronounced him innocent, and more than this, the miller took him home that day, and in the new coat the miller paid for, Hans walked to church beside the miller's daughter; and not many Sundays after there was a bridal celebration in the little church. No dark shadow was there, but, instead, the clear, soft silver light from the wings of the Shadowless floated like incense around them and when years had passed, Hans, the miller was, with his wife and children, called the happiest family in the town.— It was the same silver spiritlight that brightened their dwelling, because the star-crowned Shadowless now made her home in the heart of each, and to her they dedicated the fireside altar of their home. It was the Spirit of Truth.

A QUAKER DETECTIVE.

A STORY OF THE ROAD.

We were five passengers in all; two ladies on the back seat, a middle-aged gentleman, a Quaker, and myself on the front. The two ladies might have been mother and daughter, aunt and niece, governess and charge, or might have sustained any other relationship which makes it proper for two ladies to travel together unattended.

The middle-aged gentleman was sprightly and talkative, and soon struck up an acquaintance with the ladies, to whom, in his zeal to be agreeable, he rather overdid it—bowing, smiling, and chattering in a most attentive manner. He was evidently a gay Lothario. The Quaker wore his usual drab of his sect, and confined his speech, as many an M. P. would save his credit by doing, to simple "yeas" and "nays." As for myself, I make it an invariable rule of the road to be merely a looker-on and listener.

Towards evening I was aroused from one of those reveries into which a young man, without being either a poet or a lover, will sometimes fall by the abrupt query from the talkative gentleman:

"Are you armed, sir?"

"I am not," I replied, astonished, no doubt, visibly at the question.

"I am sorry to hear it," he said; "for before reaching our stopping place it will be nearly midnight, and we must pass over a portion of the road on which more than one robbery is reported to have been committed."

The ladies turned pale, but the stranger did his best to reassure them.

"Not that I think there is the slightest danger at present," he resumed; "only when one is responsible for the safety of ladies, you know such a thing as a pistol in one's confidence. Your principles, my friend," he said, addressing the Quaker, "I presume, are as much opposed to carrying as to using deadly weapons."

"Yea," was the response.

"Have the villains murdered any of their victims?" inquired the elder lady nervously.

"Or have they contented themselves with—plundering them?" added the younger, in a timorous voice.

"Decidedly the latter," the amiable gentleman hastened to give assurance; "and as we are none of us prepared to offer resistance in case of attack, nothing worse than robbery can befall us."

Then, after blaming his thoughtlessness in having unnecessarily introduced a disagreeable subject, the gentleman quite exalted himself in his efforts to raise the spirits of the company, and succeeded so well by the time night set in that all had quite forgotten their fears or only remembered them to laugh at them.

Our genial companion fairly talked himself hoarse. Perceiving which, he took from his pocket a package of newly invented "cough candy," and after passing it first to the ladies he helped himself to the remainder, and tossed the paper out of the window.

He was in the midst of high encomiums of the new nostrum, more than half the efficacy of which, he insisted, depended on its being taken by suction, when a shrill whistle was heard, and immediately the coach stopped, and two faces, hideously blackened, presented themselves, one at each window.

"Sorry to trouble you," said the man on the right, acknowledging with a bow two lady-like screams from the back seat; "but 'business is business' and ours will soon be over if things go smoothly."

"Of course, gentleman, you spare, as far as may be consistent with your disagreeable duty, the feelings of these ladies?" appealed the polite passenger, in his blandest manner.

"Oh, certainly," was the reply; "they shall be first attended to, and shall not be required to leave their places or submit to a search unless their conduct render it necessary."

"And, now ladies," continued the robber, the barrel of his pistol gleaming in the light of the coach lamp, "be so good as to pass out your purses, watches, and such other trinkets as may be accessible without much trouble."

The ladies came down handsomely, and were not further molested.

One by one the rest of us were compelled to get out, the middle-aged gentleman's turn coming first. He submitted with a winning grace, and was robbed like a Chesterfield.

"My own affair, like the sum I lost, was scarcely worth mentioning. The Quaker's turn came next. He quietly handed over his pocket-book and watch and when asked if he had any other valuables said, "Nay."

A Quaker's word is good, even among thieves; so, after a hasty good-night the robber thrust his pistol into his pocket, and with his two companions, one of whom held the reins of the leaders was about to take his departure.

"Stop!" exclaimed the Quaker, in a tone more of command than request.

"Stop! what for?" returned the other in evident surprise.

"For at least two good reasons," was the reply, emphasized with a couple of pistols cocked and presented.

"Help!" shouted the robber.

"Stop!" again exclaimed the Quaker, "and if one of thy sinful companions advances a step to thy relief, the spirit will surely move me to blow thy brains out."

The robber at the opposite window, and the one at the leader's head's thought it a good time to leave.

"Now get in friend," said the Quaker still covering his man, "and take the middle seat; but first deliver up the pistol."

The other, however, hesitated.

"Thee had better not delay," said the Quaker; "I feel the spirit beginning to move my right forefinger."

The robber did as he was directed, and the Quaker then took his place by my side, giving the new-comer the middle seat.

The driver, who was half frightened out of his wits, now set forward at a rapid rate. The lively gentleman soon recovered his vivacity, and was especially facetious on the Quaker's prowess; but, the Quaker, relapsing into his usual monosyllables, the conversation flagged.

Time sped on, earlier than we expected, the coach stopped where we were to have supper and a change of horses. We had deferred a redistribution of our effects till we should reach this place, as the dim light of the coach lamp would have rendered the process somewhat difficult before. It was now necessary, however, that it should be attended to at once, as our jovial companion had previously announced his intention of leaving us at this point. He proposed a postponement till after supper, which he offered to go and order.

"Nay," urged the Quaker, with sudden abruptness, and laying his hand on the other's arm, "business before pleasure," and for business there is no time like the present. Will thee be good enough to search the prisoner?" he said to me, still keeping his hand in a friendly way on the passenger's arm.

I did so, but not one of the stolen articles could be found.

"He must have gotten rid of them in the coach," suggested the gay gentleman, and immediately offered to go in search.

"Stop!" thundered the Quaker, tightening his grasp.

The man turned pale, and struggled to release his arm. In an instant one of the pistols was leveled at his heart.

"Sit a hand or foot, and you are a dead man!" said the Quaker, who must have been awfully excited so to forget both the language and the principle of his persuasion.

Placing the other pistol in my hand, with directions to fire on the first of the two men that made a suspicious movement, the Quaker went to work on Lothario, from whose pockets, in less time than it takes to tell it, he produced every item of the missing property, to the utter amazement of the ladies, who had begun in no measured terms to remonstrate against the shameful treatment the gentleman was receiving.

The Quaker, I need scarcely add, was no Quaker at all, but a shrewd detective, who had been set on the track of a band of desperadoes, of whom our middle-aged friend—who don't look nearly so middle-aged with his wig off—was the chief.

The robbery had been adroitly planned.

The leader of the gang had taken possession of a seat in the coach, and after learning, as he supposed, our defenceless condition, had given the signal to his companions by throwing out the bit of paper already mentioned. After the unexpected capture of the first robber, an attempt was made to save the booty by secretly passing it to the accomplice, still believed to be unsuspected, who counted on being able to make off with it at the next stopping place. The result was that both for a season "did the State some service."

THE POISONED PICKLE.

A THRILLING STORY.

Loud mirth and wassail resounded throughout the subterranean hall; and the rude revelers, seated at numerous small tables, feasted right merrily.

The storm raged furiously without, and the homeless wanderer, cursing the elements and his impetuosity, hid to some friendly station house for shelter.

But the banquet went on. From out a polished reservoir of tin poured forth rich streams of the sulfurous fluid made from burnt beans, while mounds of buttered cakes found their way down the gaping gullets of the hungry consumers.

"Twas a coffee and cake cellar in Nassau street.

The unkempt waiter, in saffron-colored linen and a bad cold affected his speech and made his nose run, rushed higher and higher, responding to numerous calls, almost frantic; for some of those demands were sarcastic—some even injuriously abusive.

"Say, Nosey, why don't yer go and let yerself to a soap-biler—s-a-y-y?"

"Cup o' coffee and nine doughnuts!"

"Plate o' beans, and don't stop to count a bloody bean!"

"Slice o' bread cut with a hammy knife to give it a flavor!"

"Three cent plate o' fried liver, wid six knives and forks!"

"Large pair of nippers to haul dis 'ere cockroach out of my coffee!"

With such ebullitions of playful wit did the jocular revelers beguile the midnight hours. Most of these facetious knaves were newsboys, waiting for the morning editions; but here and there sat a poor printer in frowning silence, getting away with his "mudgeon," or a glumly reporter or sub-editor hung dreamily over his report, wishing himself dead. Perchance, too, some bummer, boozing in a remote corner, glared savagely upon the viands he could not share, and endeavored to escape the eagle eye of the landlord, who might have booted him from that festal hall had he seen the stampless cutout.

Suddenly, there entered a noble stranger, who shook the rain-drops from his doublet and surveyed the scene with calm disdain.

The scorn of the man was terrible; it withered, choked, floored; it bounded from his lightning eyes like a crushing curse.

All present quailed.

Silence reigned.

The stranger was attired in the picturesque costume of a Mulberry St. bondst—slouched hat, patched pants, soles boots and no shirt. A sardonic smile was frozen on his lips—and both his eyes were in mourning.

"Flinging himself heavily into a seat, he smote the table thrice with his mailed hands—for a rag covered his knuckles, after some street broil.

The waiter stood on his guard, and the landlord counted his pewter spoons.

"Slaves!" cried the stranger, in a tone of terrific thunder—"dost thou know me?—Ha, ha! I am the Skulking Pilferer of the Sixth Ward, and my name is Maginnis! Go and ask the first policeman you meet, and he will, with white lips, tell of my deeds. Many a fence have I scaled to purloin damp linen from a clothes line; many a reclining sneezer have I gone through; from many a crippled beggar have I wrenched the last coin. Ye shall know me, and fear me, too! Yet I am but human, and would eat. Me thinks, as my funds are low, I could munch a cracker and a pickle. Laggards, bestir yourselves, or with this knightly hand will I wipe you over the jaw!"

The food was brought, and the stranger ate with voracity, ever and anon looking at the door as if he designed to sneak out without paying.

"Thou art a blower!" exclaimed a hoarse voice, from unseen lips.

The stranger arose.

"And a fraud!"

The stranger insane with fury, moved toward the door.

"And a beat!"

The stranger threw open the door and looked wildly at the tempest, as if invoking the powers of darkness to crush his defamer.

"And a gin head!"

"This was too much. The stranger, with a maniac howl, rushed out of the hall and was soon lost in the gloom of night.

"A put-up job," muttered the landlord, gazing ruefully at the empty plates—"it was a scurvy trick. No matter; he shall pay for this. I suspected him, and put pizen in the pickle."

The landlord went on washing the dishes with a thoughtful face; and deep silence reigned.

WHAT relates ought to make the best pedestrians? Step sons.