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Clasp Lightly.

Wild flowers die when warm close hands
Their fragile stems too eager seize;
Hold loosely, child, the light live wands
Of joy, that would wave free like these.

Touch gently the fine fairy things
That lean their sweet forms 'gainst the hour;
One harsh thought brushes bloom from wings
That coyly fan love's silver bower.

Clasp lightly what thy heart would keep
In dearest hope, in dearest fear;
The soft wind woes the May from sleep—
What has rough March but April's tear?

Together.

I wonder if you really send
These dreams of you that come and go!
I like to say: "She thought of me,
And I have known it." Is it so?

Though other friends walk by your side,
Yet sometimes it must surely be,
They wonder where your thoughts have gone,
Because I have you here with me.

And when the busy day is done
And work is ended, voices cease,
When every one has said good-night,
In fading firelight then in peace

I idly rest: you come to me—
Your dear love holds me close to you.
If I could see you face to face
It would not be more sweet and true;

I do not hear the words you speak,
Nor touch your hands, nor see your eyes
Yet, far away the flowers may grow
From whence to me the fragrance flies;

And so, across the empty miles
Light from my star shines. Is it, dear,
Your love has never gone away?
I said farewell and—kept you here.

COUSIN ELIHU.

All her life long Sara Holmes had had a romance. It began and ended with these words: "When Elihu comes home." And though she was nineteen years old at the time of which I write, it seemed to her on that burning July day, as she sat in her bedroom and looked out upon the moonlit fields, that she had been living one or two centuries in this world, at the very least, and all the time dreaming golden dreams of Elihu only to find them shivered into atoms at the last.

For Elihu had come. And the time and manner of his coming were so unlooked for and so unexpected to her as well as every one else, that no wonder the girl sat there in the moonlight, saying to herself: "He is here. I need never watch or wait for him again. In the next chamber to mine he is sleeping—that is, if he can sleep. Poor Elihu."

The earliest stories she could remember had been told to her by her mother, about "Cousin Elihu" and the enormous fortune he had made "down South," at a time when fortunes could yet be made in that unhappy land. She had heard fabulous tales of the palace in which he lived, of the negro slaves who flew to do his bidding, of the beautiful carriages and horses that bore him from place to place, and of the jewels, the silks, satins and velvets that fortunate woman would possess who would one day become Elihu's bride.

Other girls had heard these stories also, and the belle of the school at Homesdane often said that, when she was sixteen, she should "go a traveling," and find her way "down South," and "set her cap" for Elihu Holmes. That the result would fellow for which she looked, no girl among them doubted, for even the master's stern face softened and smiled upon Rosanna Meadows, when she shook back her golden curls and lifted her large blue eyes with a blush to his.

Poor Rosanna! Sara leaned her cheek on her hand, and looked over the hilltop toward the village graveyard, where the village beauty was now lying, with her blue eyes closed, her golden ringlets smoothed back from her white brow, and her hands clasped in an unearthly quiet on her breast. Elihu had never known how her girlish fancy went out towards him. And now Elihu had come home!

As Sara Holmes grew up, and developed from the tall, angular girl, into the queenly and self-possessed young woman, the thought would sometimes occur to her, as she stood before the mirror braiding her dark hair, "If he should come back, would he think me pretty, now that Rosanna is gone?" The broad low brow, the oval cheeks and dimpled chin answered her; the healthful color, the deep dark eyes, the bright, bewildering glance said, "Yes." For hers was now a higher beauty than Rosanna's pink and white loveliness had ever been, and the treasures of her mind and heart might well have won an older and wiser man to love her, long before Elihu came home.

And now she drew a long breath, and set herself to recall all the incidents of that sudden and startling return.

Tea was over—the milk was strained—and they were all sitting on the front piazza, under the shade of the maples and the locusts, while her father read bits from the weekly village paper aloud. Her step-mother was knitting; her sister Grace was lining a hat, and her brother Ben was whittling out a toy boat from a bit of wood, while she, Sara, sat beside him and held his tools as he needed them, and lost herself in a reverie about her hero in the South.

A carriage drove up the village road and halted at their gate. The driver descended from his seat and beckoned to her father, who hurried down to the gate to meet him. After talking some time together, a small trunk was lifted down and left beside the gate. Then the carriage door was opened and a tall figure descended, and directly after, Ben, who had followed his father in a fit of boyish curiosity, galloped back with distended eyes, whispering loudly:

"Mother—girls! Cousin Elihu has come! And he has lost every cent of his property down South! I heard the driver tell father so! And they have sent him off up here, because they thought he was going to be sick; and there he is, you see, leaning on father and the driver, and he can't but just walk. Isn't it a blamed shame of those Southerners?"

"Mercy!" exclaimed Ben's step-mother, rising as they all rose, when the tall, slender figure approached.

Sara looked up with her heart in her eyes, to greet her hero—no less a hero to her for the pitiful history of loss and ruin that she had just heard.

She saw a tall, upright, elegant-looking man, with a fair complexion, large, melancholy blue eyes, a long, straight nose, drooping eyebrows, eyelids and lips, and a firmly rounded chin, that somewhat counteracted and contradicted the listless sadness of the rest of the face. His hair was turning gray, and the heavy, golden mustache had one or two threads of silver, but, with that exception, he wore no look of age.

Elihu was well but plainly dressed in a traveling suit of gray. He removed his hat as he drew near the ladies, with a courteous grace; but he looked in vain for the warm welcome from the second Mrs. Holmes and her daughter Grace that he would have received from his own cousin had she been alive.

Mrs. Holmes bowed to him coldly, though civilly; and Grace, angry with him and with herself for the sudden collapsing of sundry ambitious hopes which she had never confided to any one except her mother, swept him her latest dancing-school courtesy, and affected not to see the hand he held out.

Elihu colored slightly and turned to Sara, whose large, dark eyes were fixed with a gaze of tender pity upon his refined and melancholy face.

"You have a face that I ought to know," he said to her gently. "You are your mother's child, dear Sara! I hoped she would be here to meet me when I came home at last."

Sara's heart was already full, and this reference to her dead mother caused her tears to overflow.

"Dear Cousin Elihu," said she, taking his hand in both hers, "my mother remembered and loved you to the last day of her life. She would have been glad indeed to see you here once more. I am glad, too. All my life long I have looked forward to your coming."

"But you did not expect to see me return so poor," said Elihu, sighing.

"Poor or rich, it matters little," replied Sara, fervently. "You are here at home once more, and that is enough to make us all rejoice."

"Aye," said Elihu, looking from her beaming countenance to the cold faces of the rest. "I should have been glad to bring gold enough to make me welcome. But what has happened has happened, and I do not wish to complain. Cousin Joshua, for my cousin's sake, and for the sake of the old times when you and I were boys together, I suppose you will let me stay at the old homestead for a few days?"

"Eh? Oh! To be sure! Stay and welcome, Cousin Elihu," stammered the farmer, who feeling the eyes of his wife and his daughter Sara fixed upon him, was like a man between two fires.

So it was settled, and Sara flew about like a good fairy, to prepare supper for the wanderer, and afterward to set in order his room and bed. At nine o'clock he retired, and then the storm burst forth.

The second Mrs. Holmes inquired, shrilly, if their house was to be turned into a "poor farm," and made the abiding place of every shiftless creature who had wasted his substance in riotous living among "those negroes"—only to come, at the last, without a penny in his pocket, to be supported by those who had the misfortune to be related to him in a very distant way.

Mr. Holmes said, meekly, that "it wasn't likely Elihu would want to stay long, and that as he had once redeemed the farm, which was heavily mortgaged, with his own money, and given a deed of the place to his first wife, he didn't very well see how he could refuse him a shelter there if he claimed it. For a time, at least," he added, nervously, seeing his second wife's black eyebrows knitting themselves together in a way that he had learned to dread.

Grace upheld her mother in all her denunciations; though Sara thought, privately, that it would have been more delicate had she kept silence, since, as the daughter of Mrs. Holmes by a former marriage, she could not be supposed to have any great interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in the disposition of the homestead farm.

As for Ben, like most boys of thirteen, he was on the side of right against might, and he did not scruple to say that, for his part, he hoped Cousin Elihu would stay there forever; and that he was sure, as he had redeemed the farm, that he had a perfect right to do so. His sister Sara could have kissed him for the answer, but she kept silence.

The days went on. By every art that a mean and paltry spirit could invent, Mrs. Holmes the second showed plainly to Elihu how unwelcome he was beneath her roof-tree. As for Grace, she simply ignored him. And Mr. Holmes, though he would gladly have been both grateful and kind, was so tamed and worried by nightly curtain lectures, hours long, that he dared not show the ruined man any attention, and only looked at him wistfully now and then, as if wondering when he would be gone.

Elihu's plate, knife and fork were placed upon the table at every meal, it is true. He fared as the rest fared, and his room and bed were the best in the house.

But this was Sara's doing. To her and to Ben he owed each moment of happiness that he enjoyed in the old house. The sister and young brother were always glad to be with him, but the other inmates of the house looked over and around him, and even when he ate of their bread and drank of their cup, seemed as if they knew him not. Sara's proud spirit blazed up for his sake at a thousand petty insults and affronts each day. She wondered privately to herself, and aloud to Ben, how Cousin Elihu, with all the memory of his past wealth and grandeur still in his mind, could endure it! Nor was she surprised, when, one pleasant evening, just four weeks after his arrival, Elihu told her that he must go.

"I cannot blame you. They have treated you so shamefully!" she said, while her heart sank down, down in her breast, like a stone sinking into the depths of the tiny lake on whose banks they sat. "But where will you go, Cousin Elihu? What will you do? You were ill when you came here, and, thanks to their unkindness, you are not well and strong enough to care for yourself. Oh, it is a shame—a shame!" she broke out again. "And if you had come rich, as they expected, every one of them would have been at your feet!"

Cousin Elihu smiled the smile that always brightened his melancholy face, till, in her eyes, it was the noblest, handsomest face on earth.

"Never mind them, Sara," said he; "you and Ben have been so good to me that I have scarcely noticed the rest. So good that"—

He paused and looked at her.

"Sara, when I'm gone, shall you miss me?"

The tears rose to her eyes.

"Oh, how can you ask? You know, Elihu, when you go I shall be miserable! I shall think of you among strangers, poor, perhaps ill, perhaps dying"—

She hid her face in her hands and sobbed aloud.

Elihu waited till her grief had exhausted itself, and then took her hand.

"What you say is all very true, Sara. I am not fit to go out into the world alone. Will you go with me? You have a good home here, I know, but if I have you to work for, I will soon make you a better one. And by-and-bye Ben can come to us, and we will make a man of him. Will you be my wife, Sara?"

She looked at him with all the solemn fervor of a woman's love and devotion shining in her eyes.

"If you will take me, Elihu, and let me care for you, I shall be the happiest creature on earth. From the moment when I saw you come in at the farm gate, from the moment when I knew that your fortune was gone, and that you were ill and alone in the world, I have prayed that you might love me. I don't care where our home is or what it is, so that we share it together. I can be happier with you in a log hut than I could be with any one else in a palace; for you need me, Elihu, and I—I have thought and dreamed of you, and, I really believe, loved you from the days when my mother first told me about you, when I was a baby at her knee."

So they were betrothed, and after a brief storm at the farm house when her decision was first made known, Sara followed the fortunes of her lover to a distant city where they were married.

Ben went with her as her protector and "best man." Her father kissed her and cried over her, as he bid her farewell, and put a pocket-book containing five hundred dollars into her hand as a wedding portion.

"I can't go with you to give you away, my dear, and I can't let you be married here," said the poor man; "for I shall never hear the last of it if I do; and I'm getting old now, and I want peace and comfort in my own home. But God bless you, Sara, and your husband that is to be. Poor Elihu! Your mother loved him dearly, and I don't know a fault he has in the world, except that he is poor."

So, strengthened by her father's approval and blessing, Sara approached the altar to consecrate her life to the hero of her dreams!

The ceremony over, they drove to a first-class hotel, and breakfasted in a style that made Sara tremble for the future. And after breakfast Elihu laid a package before her, and a casket by the side of her plate.

"My first present to my wife," said he. "As for you, Ben"—

A cry of delight from Ben made his sister turn round to look at him. The boy was glorious in a gold hunting-watch and chain.

"Open your casket, love," said her husband, smiling.

She obeyed, and a river of light seemed suddenly to flash upon her from the diamonds within. At the same moment her husband broke the seal of the package and showed her a bank-book inscribed with her name.

"Ten thousand dollars are deposited there, subject to your order," said Elihu, carelessly.

"Ten thousand dollars! and the watch! and the diamonds!" gasped Sara, turning pale. "What can it all mean?"

"I know," broke in Ben, with a joyous laugh. "Cousin Elihu has only been pretending to be poor all this time! Nicely sold all those people at the farm will be!"

Sara turned to her husband. He smiled, and drew her closely to his breast. From that happy day not a wish of hers or Ben's has been ungratified. And all the romance of her life began instead of ending (as she for a time supposed) when Elihu came home.

The Old Spelling-School.

These dictionary men and women of to-day, says an exchange, presume to come forward and think they know how a spelling-school was conducted forty years ago. But it's all a mistake. They were never there and helped to do it—then what can they know about it? They never walked two and three miles through the snows and blows of a winter's night to a spelling-school, in a school-house away up in the hills, just for the sake of sitting beside a sweet little bright-eyed girl in a striped calico gown, with a small linen collar, and a white apron. They never knew the pangs of jealousy from seeing another boy chosen to sit beside her; and they never felt the awful misery of "getting the mitten," and having to walk off, knowing that that other boy was trudging home in bliss beside that striped calico gown, with the plump little hand of that bright-eyed girl resting confidingly in his arm. Nor did they ever feel the stinging pain of frosted ears, which every boy was willing to hazard getting for the sake of seeing the girl he felt so tender about. Those were happier days. We thought we had our sorrows then—and weighty ones they were, too—but now we know that we had so much of youth, and life, and hope, and trust, and tenderness, too, for the little bright-eyed girl in the striped calico gown—either she or another—that we look back to those spelling-school days of forty years ago with feelings of infinite longing; and some of us who wear spectacles find that when we go over the scenes of those days, somehow our glasses become dim and need wiping.

Shall we ever forget Webster's spelling book and the long words our mothers gave us while we were practicing for the school? Ah! many of the old boys and girls have been "spelled down," never to take their places again; the old school-house, too, is gone, and the sods of the churchyard cover so many of the teachers that after your best efforts your spelling match of to-day is only a very common affair compared with ours in old days. Yet if the revival of this pleasant old custom will make our boys and girls better spellers, or if it will only give them a little of the happiness that we enjoyed so much, and which we still remember so vividly, why, bless them, let them spell, and why not?

Another Trick.

Since the passage of the law against three-card monte sharps, a new game has been started in the West to fleece unsuspecting travelers. It is played with dice, and is called the "Soldier's Game." It is well known that the spots on opposite sides of dice always amount to seven. At a saloon at a station where immigrant trains stop two gamblers ask their intended victim to take a drink. Standing at the bar A. says to B.: "I'll throw the dice with you to see who pays." "All right," says B. "I bet the drinks," says A., "that, counting the tops and bottoms, I'll throw thirty-five every time." B. bets that it cannot be done, and has to pay for the drinks. While the party are enjoying the fun, sharper C., apparently a stranger, walks in, and is invited to join in a drink. Sharper A. gives a knowing wink to their victim, and offers to bet C. $100 that, counting the tops and bottoms, he will throw thirty-five three times in succession. "I'll bet you don't," says C. Taking the immigrant a little aside, A. tells him that he has only $50 with him, and asks whether he wouldn't like to put up the other fifty, and divide with him. The victim, sure of winning, assents, and the stakes are put up in the hands of B. While this little conference has been going on, sharper C. has deftly substituted for one of the dice another made entirely of sixes. A. throws the dice, of course loses the bet, and C. pockets the stakes and walks out. About this time the whistle of the train sounds, and the victim gets on board, minus his money.

Among the Pygmies.

From accounts it would appear that Col. Long's present expedition into Africa at the head of the Egyptian troops relates to explorations among that most interesting people whom Schweinfurth has made known to the world—the Niam Niam, or Pygmies of Equatorial Africa. This singular tribe of men are mentioned as far back in history as by Ptolemy, and frequent allusions have been made to them by various travelers ever since. They are the smallest race of men of good proportions known on earth, and but few specimens have ever been seen by scientific eyes. It will be remembered that Schweinfurth attempted to bring one of these creatures with him down to Lower Egypt, but he perished on his first contact with civilization. Whether his skeleton was preserved for science we are not informed. These little creatures seem as malignant and wicked as they are abnormal in size. They are reputed to be the most irreclaimable cannibals in Central Africa, and Schweinfurth's account of their habits and those of neighboring tribes in this respect, are the most disgusting that have anywhere been given of any branch of the human race. If the long-looked-for "missing link" ever is to be discovered between the savage and the animal, anthropologists will certainly look for it among this vicious and pygmy race.

No Prison.—In the principality of Lichtenstein there is no prison, but they condemned a man to imprisonment for a year. They kept him in the royal palace, and he liked it so well that when they offered to release him if he would quit the country he declined. They finally bought him off by giving him money for his passage to America and an indemnity for going into exile.

THE GRASSHOPPER PLAGUE.

A Most Interesting Paper on the Plague and its Habits.

Mr. John B. Wolff read the following paper on the subject of the grasshoppers which have devastated the Western country to the American Farmers' Club:

In size and appearance the insect closely resembles the smallest grasshopper of the Middle and Northern States, which makes its appearance in the fall in the corn-fields and meadows, sometimes seriously injuring the corn leaves and fall grass, but seldom extending over a large area. It differs from the latter a little in size and color, being lighter and smaller. This difference is doubtless due to local conditions, as climate and food. It also differs essentially from the Rocky mountain grasshopper proper. The latter is a permanent institution, repeating itself from year to year and age to age, within the mountain range, and seldom descending to the plains. In size, it is about half way between the smaller and larger species of the Middle States. It is much the darkest in color of any of this class of insects. When flying it is still darker, owing to the dark shade of the under wings; it differs also from all others in the peculiar snapping, sharp sound made by the striking of its wings when in motion. During the months of July and August the insects are so numerous that this snapping sound becomes annoying to travelers. After they have fed in the morning, and rise on wing for the day, they maintain an everlasting din until nightfall.

Of the special locality whence come the devouring hosts but little is known beyond the fact that the main body comes from the north and travels south. From the best information I can obtain they have their principal breeding grounds in the spurs and foot-hills of the northern extremities of the Rocky mountain range. Here they find a season long enough, little rain, dry soil, few natural enemies, and scanty vegetation, which latter determines the intervals of migration. It is known that in their regular course they move sometimes two or three years in succession, and sometimes at intervals of several years.

When the breeding period arrives (July and September), they address themselves at once to the work in hand. During the evening and morning they feed (they are good feeders); about 10 o'clock they rise, and remain on wing until the afternoon; they then descend and commence depositing their eggs. The female, with the extremity of her body, bores into the hardest ground a hole the size of her body and about three-fourths of an inch deep. As the dirt is loosened it is removed with the hind feet, until it has attained the proper depth. They seem to prefer the very hardest ground; the roads of clay and sand, trodden until seemingly as hard as common brick, are the chosen spots. These holes are so numerous that the surface of the ground has the appearance of an uncapped honey comb. Into each of these holes is deposited eight to twelve eggs; each egg is encased in a waterproof sac; the whole is again covered with gelatinous substance resembling glue. This may be intended as an additional protection, or as food for the newly hatched insect, to afford it strength to dig its way out. This operation is repeated from day to day for at least two months, or until the cold weather destroys their food, when they vanish as if by magic. The holes are soon filled with dirt, and the surface shows no sign of the plague slumbering just beneath. Wet and cold seem to have no effect whatever. The writer has flooded many acres, and allowed the water to freeze on the ground without any perceptible damage to the eggs.

The direction and distances are determined by the winds. They usually rise in the wind which precedes the rain-clouds, and fly, or rather are carried, until the force is abated, when they come down. If the feeding-ground is favorable, and the gestation period has arrived, they remain where they alight. If otherwise they seize on the next favorable opportunity and move again. It sometimes happens that the winds are of short duration, and in such cases they have moved as much as fourteen times in a single season. The prevailing direction of the winds along the eastern slope of the Rocky mountains favors a southern, southwestern and southeastern direction. But any change in the air currents after they rise will carry them into Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas or Nebraska, the distance being determined by the continuance and speed of the air currents. Their regular direction is south, with height variations. This is indicated otherwise. After they have left their original grounds, and deposited their eggs in a new region, the young from these eggs, as soon as hatched, move regularly southward, leaping into the water by millions. Many are thus consumed by the fishes. Angling has no sport in grasshopper years. Those which take the water are washed out on the bars apparently dead, but the warm sun soon revivifies them, and they renew their march and work of devastation.

They give no warning. The ear first detects a humming sound that swells into volume, without distinctness, as they approach. You stand and look to see whence the unusual noise; and all at once the air is filled with them until the sun is momentarily obscured. Nothing in nature is like it but a snow storm. This occurs when the early crop is well matured, and the late crop is in full growth. They alight hungry and ravenous, and immediately commence their work. At times they are so thick that it is almost impossible to induce the teams to move. If the corn is tender the farmer also is thus caught; may see the ears dropping from the stocks before he has time to quit the field. You may retire at night the possessor of many broad acres of growing crops, and within twenty-four hours have nothing left. But wheat and other matured grains may be harvested and saved. But if left in the field they will cut the grain from the head, and destroy in whole or part even these, so that the only way to save it is to house or stack at once. The newcomers are, therefore, not so destructive as the brood from their eggs, for many reasons which will appear. The young brood exceeds the parents by many hundreds, perhaps thousands. To form an estimate of the descending cloud is simply as impossible as to calculate the snowflakes of a snow storm. How, then, shall we estimate this unknown quantity multiplied by thousands? The warm sun in the spring vitalizes the eggs first on the highest and dryest deposits, then on the less favored places, until the whole are vitalized. As soon as they appear on the surface they commence to move south, consuming all tender vegetation as they progress, and in the case of small grain leaving the ground as bare as before it was sown. Onions, peppers, and rhubarb are among their favorites, and even the wild parsnip—poison to other animal life—is stripped to the naked stalk.

Beast, birds, fishes, make no impression on the quantity. All eat till they are surfeited, and still they are undiminished. The idea that domestic fowls or wild birds of any or all kinds can in any degree mitigate their ravages is simply preposterous.

Their time, and in fall and spring it is about the same, is from two to three months. The young have no wings, and depend on their legs for locomotion. They are therefore compelled to remain until matured, and continue to eat until full-fledged, when they quit and rise as suddenly as their ancestors came.

No parasite, as some have supposed, preys upon them fatally. Occasionally a dead carcass may be found with a grub, but this is most likely to be the progeny of the blue fly, but their after-death. Of these there are so few as to make only a rare occupation. The immigrants do not perish until they have deposited their eggs; so that the parasites are of little value. The young brood remain until completely grown, and rise and leave suddenly, and not by degrees, as would be the case if destroyed by a parasite. They are all gone at once. No dead are left upon the field. From the time of leaving their original breeding grounds until they disappear altogether they seem to make but one stop. After this, or in their second flight, they are lost altogether. The most plausible solution is that they are finally swept into the ocean. They seldom, if ever, alight south of Kansas or Colorado. And if they do, it is exceptional.

The Man Without a Home.

At Fort Madison, Iowa, there may be seen going about the streets with the utmost freedom a gray-haired old man, the only feature of whose appearance distinguishes him from the city fathers is the uniform dress of the penitentiary. This costume is in strange contrast with the rest of a not unattractive exterior, and it brands its wearer as an object of curiosity to corner idlers and of dread to little children. It is the mark of Cain, indicating that the hands which protrude from it are stained with human blood; it is the badge of a murderer who escaped hanging only through a technicality of the law.

The old man is known by the name of Pleasant Fouts, and has the doubtful distinction of having been the first white man to commit a capital crime within the borders of Polk county, Iowa. When last he crossed the county line, in August, 1854, he was an immigrant in the prime of life, journeying westward with his young wife Ruth, in search of a home. They never found one. In an evil hour jealousy thrust itself between them; and the husband, in a moment of madness, struck a murderous blow of which he has never ceased to repent.

A trial in those days and in that sparsely settled region, though fenced about with some formalities, was comparatively rapid and positively decisive. Fouts, when brought to the bar, was confronted with an unimpeachable witness, who swore that she saw him stab his wife again and again with a knife, despite the deponent's entreaties to desist; and that, after his victim had once escaped from him and taken refuge in the house of a neighbor, he obtained access to her there by deliberate cunning and deceit. Neither the deed nor the malice aforethought could be controverted by the machinations of counsel. Fouts was convicted of murder in the first degree and sentenced to be hanged. Less than a fortnight before the day appointed for his execution, however, a reversal of judgment was obtained and a new trial ordered, which resulted, in the then cooler state of popular feeling, in his condemnation to the penitentiary for life.

For the first ten or twelve years of his imprisonment he lived like the other convicts; but little by little the warden came to repose more confidence in him and to allow him greater liberties, until now he is under no restraint whatever, and transacts much of the official business of the institution both inside and outside its gates. He really needs no watching, for he feels no temptation to abuse his privileges. With his wife's death the last link that bound his desires to the world was severed. The half-score of years that followed permitted the rest of mankind to outrun him in the race of life. He is, to all intents and purposes, dead to social life; the hands of the century-clock have been turned so far back for him that they can in no manner regain their wonted place. Persons who know him say that he is so sensible of his isolation that nothing would induce him to forsake the penitentiary—not even a full pardon; those gray, grim walls, so repugnant to the sight of men who have never forfeited their freedom, encompass the only home he cares for.

Drying Up of Rivers.

Professor Wex, of Vienna, a well-known naturalist, has just published an appeal to the various governments of Europe, urging them to provide means, by legislation, for encouraging forest growth. He points to the fact that in consequence of the cutting down of large areas of timbered regions, not only the moisture in the soil has greatly diminished, but the average rainfall has also lessened, and hence the volume of water in the great rivers has receded, during the last fifty years, in the Elbe and Weser, sixteen inches; in the Rhine, twelve inches, and in the Danube, over ten inches. The same facts noticed in Europe by Professor Wex, have repeatedly been shown to exist in this country. The Ohio river, on an average, contains now less water than it did ten years ago, and steamboats of larger size, that could conveniently go to Pittsburgh formerly, find it impossible now during some months in summer, owing to the shallowness of the river. The same condition has been experienced on the upper Mississippi, but in a less degree, since the country along the sources of that stream is not yet so thickly settled. This is a serious question, involving the future of the agricultural prosperity of the land, as well as its internal trade, and is entitled to the most careful consideration of statesmen and legislators.

Fugitive Real Estate.

Col. Waring, in *Scribner's* for May, tells the following incident of the drainage of Haarlem lake: A curious phenomenon, however, occurred in connection with the outer dike of the canal on the east side of the lake, where it crossed an area of floating soil which bordered wide ponds near the village of Aalsmeer. An area of many acres, detached by the canal from the old works of defense against the lake, found itself one fine day driven by the tempest from the bank of the canal to the other side of the pond. The proprietor implored the aid of the commission. His land had floated to the opposite shore, widely separated from his other fields, and resting on water that was not his own. By the combined effort of the proprietor and of the commission, these fugitive fields were towed back to the borders of the canal and pinned in place by piles and poles, which prevented them from undertaking another voyage.

Coughing.

The best method of easing a cough is to resist it with all the force of will possible, until the accumulation of phlegm becomes greater; then there is something to cough against, and it comes up very much easier, and with half the coughing. A great deal of hacking and hemming and coughing in invalids is purely nervous, or the result of mere habit, as is shown by the frequency with which it occurs while the patient is thinking about it, and its comparative rarity when he is so much engaged that there is no time to think, or when the attention is impelled in another direction.

THE NEWSPAPER BUSINESS.

What a Well Known Western Editor and Publisher Has to Say About It.

Col. Aikens, editor of the Milwaukee *Evening Wisconsin*, in referring to the newspaper business, says: The average newspaper reader thinks he could improve the newspaper he reads, if he were the editor. It is very common for editors of long experience—men who have devoted a lifetime to the profession—to get letters from subscribers offering advice. No doubt some editors need advice; but as a rule an editor, fit to be in his position, knows better than any one reader what should go into his paper. The readers of a newspaper are a community, and their wants and tastes are broader than those of one man, hence the acute editor will find his way to the satisfaction of the greatest number. In this course he will circumscribe himself only by a regard for truth, right, and public good. He is, however, constantly tempted by the large sale of purely nasty and immoral papers, to increase his at the expense of decency. But only on the ground that the devil is the best paymaster can this course be justified. Edit a paper within the bounds of decency and right, and the best test of the editor's work is the sales of his wares—the number of his readers. Edited upon any other principle the paper becomes a tract, and people don't buy tracts—the benevolent societies give them away.

Another popular fallacy with regard to newspapers is the very general belief that fabulous fortunes are made in publishing them. Of course everybody knows that not much money can be made in printing a small paper in a country town; but we speak of prominent papers in great cities. It is a common remark that we hear with regard to Chicago newspaper fortunes. There are five principal newspapers in Chicago, and we understand from most excellent authority that there has been no money made by them for the past year. We know the newspapers of Milwaukee have not paid expenses the past year. The difficulty has not been with the papers, for they have been good. It is the loss of advertising. Business has been dull and merchants and manufacturers have not attempted to expand by advertising. In the United States are printed some six thousand publications. We do not call to mind twenty men who have made fortunes in the business. So we repeat, it is not a money-making business.

Perhaps the worst popular fallacy with regard to newspapers is that generally entertained that newspapers ought to be printed and published in the interest of the community—particularly the indigent portion of the community. Churches, poorhouses, asylums and all sorts of charitable enterprises run to the newspapers for gratuities, as a child runs to its mother for help. Politicians, office-seekers and scallawags generally count on the unpaid support of newspapers. Now a newspaper, to be worth anything as a business enterprise, should be printed in the interest of its proprietor—just as much as a merchant should run his business in his own interest alone. This popular fallacy has been largely bred by the establishment of party and personal organs, that live by begging for support, and other newspaper mendicancy.

Another very common fallacy that has possession of the average mind—and in Milwaukee particularly—is that an advertisement of one's wants and business inserted in a newspaper, is patronage, in a sort of generous sense. The fact is that the publisher of a first-class newspaper usually charges less than the cost of the white paper covered, for the insertion of an advertisement. So, if there is any patronage in the transaction, it is on the part of the publisher. A stranger picking up a paper from an unknown city, judges of its business and general reputation for enterprise more by the advertisements than by the editorials. The little advertisements on the fourth page of the *Evening Wisconsin* index the city of Milwaukee better than all the editorials or commercial reports that can be written. When that index goes up business is good, when it goes down business is dull.

A Mayor on Idleness.

P. T. Barnum was inaugurated as Mayor of Bridgeport, Conn., and delivered a short address. Concluding he said: It is painful to the industrious and moral portions of our people to see so many loungers about the streets, and such a multitude whose highest aspirations seem to be to waste their time in idleness or at base ball, billiards, etc. No person needs to be unemployed who is not over fastidious about the kind of occupation. There are too many soft hands (and heads) waiting for light work and heavy pay. Better work for half a loaf than beg or steal a whole one. Mother earth is always near by, and ready to respond to responsible drafts on her never-failing treasury. A patch of potatoes raised "on shares" is preferable to a poulticed pate earned in a whisky scrimmage. Some modern Micawbers stand with folded hands waiting for the panic to pass, as the foolish man waited for the river to run dry and allow him to walk over. The soil is the foundation of American prosperity. When multitudes of our consumers become producers; when fashion teaches economy, instead of expending for a gaudy dress what would comfortably clothe the family; when people learn to walk until they can afford to ride; when the poor man ceases to expend more for tobacco than for bread; when those who complain of panics learn that "we cannot eat our cake and keep it;" that a sieve will not hold water, that we must rely on our own exertions, and earn before we expend, then will panics cease and prosperity return. While we should by no means unreasonably restrict healthy recreation, we should remember that "time is money," that idleness leads to immoral habits, and that the peace, prosperity, and character of a city depends on the intelligence, integrity, industry, and frugality of its inhabitants.

A Real Cracker.

A correspondent, who signs himself a "Georgia Cracker," writes to a newspaper as follows: In a recent number of your paper I saw something like an inquiry as to the meaning of the word "cracker," as applied to a certain class of the Southern people. Being an humble descendant of that honorable class, I beg leave to state for the benefit of your readers that the term is very significant, and is the legitimate result of one of the rural customs of the first settlers of the United States. Years ago, before mills were established in this country, when the backwoodsman, or those who lived in the interior, remote from the ports of entry, were unable to procure transportation, they adopted a way by which they cracked corn with huge rocks. The interior people were thus labeled with the distinction, corn-crackers—hence the term "cracker,"

Wanted an Idea.—You have heard of the jockey who, seeing a country lad with a balky horse upon which he was vainly using the whip, caught up a handful of snow and applied it lustily to the equine nose. The horse immediately started. In response to the look of surprise from the lad, the jockey calls out: "Whippin' ain't allers the thing; what he wanted was a new idee."

The Coolest Woman.

If all women were as cool and matter-of-fact as Mrs. Stum! But she is one of a thousand, says the Detroit *Free Press*. She was over at Mrs. Moody's, on Macomb street, the other day, her iron-gray hair combed down flat and her spectacles adjusted to gossip range, when she suddenly rose and said:

"Mrs. Moody, be calm. Where do you keep the camphor bottle?"

"Why?" asked the surprised Mrs. Moody.

"Because they are bringing your husband through the gate on a board! I think he's mashed dead, but be calm about it! I'll stay right here and see to things!"

Mrs. Moody threw up her arms and fell down in a dead faint, and Mrs. Stum opened the door as the men laid the body on the porch.

"Is he dead?" she asked in an even tone.

"I think so," answered one of the men. "The doctor'll be here in a minute."

The doctor came up, looked at the victim, and said life had fled, adding:

"His back and four or five ribs are broken."

"That's sensible, that is," said Mrs. Stum, gazing at the doctor in admiration. "Some physicians would have said that his vertebræ was mortally wounded, and would have gone on to talk about the 'larynx,' the 'arteries,' the 'optic nerves' and the 'diagnosis.' If he's dead it'll be some satisfaction to know what he died of. Well, lug in the body and send a boy after an undertaker."

The men carried the body through to a bedroom, and Mrs. Stum went back to Mrs. Moody, who had revived and was wailing and lamenting.

"Don't, Julia—don't take on so," continued Mrs. Stum. "Of course you feel badly, and this interferes with taking up carpets and cleaning house, but it's pleasant weather for a funeral, and I think the corpse will look as natural as life."

"Oh! My poor, poor husband," wailed Mrs. Moody.

"He was a good husband, I'll swear to that," continued Mrs. Stum, "but he was dreadfully careless to let a house fall on him. Be calm, Mrs. Moody! I've sent for one of the best undertakers in Detroit, and you'll be surprised at the way he'll fix up the deceased."

When the undertaker came in Mrs. Stum shook hands and said that death was sure to overtake every living thing sooner or later. She mentioned the kind of coffin she wanted, stated the number of hacks, the hour for the funeral, and held the end of the tape-line while he measured the body.

Several other neighbors came in and she ordered them around and soon had everything working smoothly. The widow was sent to her room to weep out her grief, doors and windows were opened, and as Mrs. Stum built up a good fire she said:

"Now, then, we want pie and cake and sauce and raised biscuit and floating islands. He'll have watchers, and the watchers must have plenty to eat."

When the baking had been finished the coffin and the undertaker arrived, and the body was placed in its receptacle. Mrs. Stum agreed with the undertaker that the face wore a natural expression, and when he was going away she said:

"Be around on time! Don't put in any second-class hacks, and don't have any hitch in the proceedings at the grave!"

From that hour until two o'clock of the second day thereafter she had full charge. The widow was provided with a black bonnet, a crape shawl, etc., the watchers found plenty to eat, a minister was sent for, eighteen chairs were brought from the neighbor's, and everything moved along like clock-work.

"You must bear up," she kept saying to the widow. "House-cleaning must be done, that back yard must be raked off, the penstock must be thawed out, and you haven't time to sit down and grieve. His life was insured, and we'll go down next week and select some lovely mourning goods."

Everybody who attended said they never saw a funeral pass off so smoothly, and when the hack had landed the widow and Mrs. Stum at her door again, Mrs. Stum asked:

"Now, didn't you really enjoy the ride, after all?"

And the widow said she wouldn't have believed that she could have stood it so well.

The Common Lot.

"There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there!
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair!"

The hour of bereavement is the common lot of us all; and we come back from the new-made grave when we have laid our loved ones to sleep, come back to the vacant chair, the desolate room, the empty life—oh, how empty! Yet not for all this do the cares and duties of life press on us with any less weight or diminish aught of their demands. Wisely is it thus ordered. To sit down and nurse our grief, to give full rein to the indulgence of sorrow and tears, is the worst possible thing for us and for those around us. If grief opens our hearts to feel the woes of others, inclines us to forget self and selfish sorrow in binding up other bruised and bleeding hearts, leads us to double our diligence, that before we too are summoned away, the whole work given us to do shall be done and well done; it will be possible in some near future for us to say from the heart: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

Bitter as is the cup of bereavement, says the *Tribune*, cruel as are the pangs of separation at the jaws of the sepulcher, lasting as is the sense of loss, yet, from these all good may be evolved, for only those who have had this baptism know how to feel for others' woes, to speak words of consolation and to keep silence when no words can be of any avail. Death runs his plowshare through our household tearing up the sod, cutting off at the root roses and violets, and the tender blossoms whose fragrance cheered our lives wither and perish, but-by-and bye a richer harvest justifies the ways of God; and, as little by little, our affections are transferred from this to another world and the fruits of patience and hope and resignation ripen above the sod thus rudely up-torn, we begin dimly to perceive that "whom God loveth He chasteneth."

Street Improvements.

The practice of placing down boards in the mud is revived this spring. It is a good idea. The board always warps downward in the center, leaving the ends sticking up about six inches above the walk. The hastening pedestrian comes along in the dark and picks up one end of the board on his instep and shoves it along some six feet, the other leg all the while trying to get a foothold and control itself.