

SOME OF THESE DAYS.

Some of these days all the skies will be brighter—
Some of these days all the burdens be lighter—
Hearts will be happier—souls will be whiter—
Some of these days!
Some of these days, in the deserts up springing,
Fountains shall flash, while the joy-bells are ringing,
And the world—with its sweetest of birds—
shall go singing—
Some of these days!
Some of these days! Let us bear with our sorrow,
Faith in the future—its light we may borrow,
There will be joy in the golden to-morrow—
Some of these days!
—[Atlanta Constitution.]

MARIA.

When Harris went up into the Pennsylvania anthracite mining regions, he was a strong, handsome young fellow of twenty-three, with rose-colored views of this life and sadly vague ones of the life to come. He came from a grassy New England village, where he had lived a frank, free, open-air life about as exciting as a pastoral. He had spent four years at Columbia College, which had opened his eyes a bit, and then he had gone up into big, black Luzerne County, teeming with two hundred thousand people, three-fourths of whom would better have been drowned at their birth like so many blind kittens, some pessimists thought.

Words cannot describe the drear misery of a mining "patch" in North-eastern Pennsylvania, was an early conclusion of young Harris. You will come across group after group of black and dingy cabins, strung along like grimy huckleberries on a straw. Back of these looms the "breaker," a gloomy mass of shadow, blackened by wind and storm that have ground the fine coal-dust into the planking. Culm-heaps, mountains of refuse coal and slate, hide the natural horizon, and present a sky-line that is monotonous and uninspiring. Through the hollows, over trestles crossing the black swamp-land, out into the brighter world beyond the hills, crawl long trains of cars piled high with glistening coal.

It was at a cluster of huts in a valley like this that Harris was stationed. He had a room in an ungainly red frame structure where ham and eggs and raisin pie were the staple articles of diet, and which was endurable to him only because two-thirds of his time was spent beyond its pale. The name of this understudy for purgatory was the Mountain Glen Hotel, and it was presided over by one Mrs. Dwyer. Of course, he had no friends there. There was no one to interest him, and he had not yet learned to interest himself in common, everyday people, whom we often find to be uncommon and unique when we have once discovered the secret of really knowing. The whole world seemed dimly ordinary to Harris. Consequently, when he looked out of the window of his soapy, pine-floored boarding-house one evening, a few weeks after his arrival, and saw a slender female figure with a face that was moderately clean and immoderately pretty, he felt that he had made a discovery of some importance. In deference to the summer's Columbian craze, he called that window for some time the lookout from the Pinta. The girl was Maria (Mah-ree-ah, if you please) di Manicor, and the brimming pail of water she was bringing from the well did not monopolize her attention. She saw Harris.

At Columbia, Harris had learned how to look through a transit—if that is the proper expression—and, upon provocation, could talk about "back-sights" and "vernier" with the air of a master. From this it will be gathered that Harris was a surveyor. He was more—he was a mining engineer and had two letters tacked to his name to signify his prowess. Every morning he went into the mines, and, with the aid of a small Welsh boy and a big Hungarian laborer, he would perform prodigies of engineering skill which the layman will not attempt to detail. In the evening he would stroll among the culm-heaps and along the banks of the black, sulphurous stream of mine-water that flowed through the swamp-land on the outskirts of the village. Poor little stream! It was not much like his babbling New England brooks. It could not have babbled if it had tried. It could only mutter or yowl. For three weeks Harris took these walks alone. Then he took them with Maria di Manicor. Then his story begins.

Harris could hardly have told how his acquaintance with Maria began. First a word or two at the village pump, when she went to draw water; then he came across her once or twice on his solitary evening strolls, until finally it was no longer once or twice; it was no longer a word or two. It was every evening, and they would wander through the swamp for hours. These walks had to be accomplished circumspectly. Harris and Maria would start out separately and would return separately, but somehow or other they always managed to meet when well out of the village and beyond the peering power of curious eyes.

Harris was a good young fellow—as goodness goes, now—days. It did not occur to him that there was anything inconsistent in his going to Hazelton to mail a letter to a girl in Esene, New Hampshire, and at the

same time to hunt through the shops for a pair of heavy gilt earrings with garish blue enamel for Maria. Nevertheless, he said nothing about Maria in his letters, and, of course, he said nothing to Maria about the New England girl. They did not talk much in their walks along the edge of the stripping. He would ask Maria what she called this or that in her tongue and learned to jabber so fluently in the mongrel Italian dialect she spoke, that he thought seriously of buying a copy of Dante in the original if he ever got to a place where he could get so civilized a production. So it happened that Maria never told him of her betrothal.

For Maria was betrothed, and Harris did not know it; nor did he know that the day was set on which she and Angelo Rossi, and their respective parents and collective friends, were to go to Hazelton to purchase nine yards of purple cashmere, with a sufficient quantity of red velvet and silver and gold passementerie, calculated to make a wedding gown that would be the envy of the settlement. Angelo worked on the "night shift," and earned a dollar and a quarter a day. It was a good match, and, besides, her fiancé's nocturnal occupation gave Maria her evenings to herself.

It was after seven o'clock, one sweet, still evening in June, when Maria stole along behind the engine-house and through a tongue of swamp land, where the naked tree-trunks lifted their knotty branches from the oily, sulphurous ooze that had dried the sap in their veins and had reduced them to weird skeleton frames. She sat down wearily on a tree-stump at the edge of the swamp. Dark against the sun-stained glory of the west rose the black ridge of an immense culm-heap, and on its crest, silhouetted against the glowing sky, was the dark figure of a car, with mule and driver. Maria looked at the scene listlessly. The driver-boy stooped, pulled a bolt and the carload of refuse slate rolled, grinding down the slope. One big piece of rock bounded farther than the others, and fell at last with a "chug," on the treacherous, shifting sand of the swamp, and the slimy surface closed over it with a grin.

"Buon' notte, Maria mia!" called a cheery voice at her side. The girl's listlessness was gone at once. She turned to Harris quickly with a warning gesture, and he stopped a short distance away, standing, erect and good to see, on a little hummock in the swamp. She had risen to her feet, and was standing facing him on the projecting roof of a fallen tree. They were separated by a shallow stream of black water flowing sluggishly over the quicksand. She began to speak at once.

"You must come with me," she said; and then, before he had time to question, she plunged into her story, speaking rapidly, but in clear, low tones. She told him of her betrothal to Angelo Rossi; she told him how to-morrow was the appointed day for the purchase of the purple gown with its glittering accessories; how their secret could no longer be kept; how Angelo was beginning to suspect; how she hated him, and how she loved Harris more than all the world, more than the purple gown with its finest silk and decked with rubies. Then she disclosed her plan. So childlike and confident she was that Harris could not interrupt her. She showed him the contents of a bundle she had under her shawl. It was a parcel of belongings she had taken from her room, innocently gleeful at the thought of how she had collected them without the knowledge of Mrs. Dwyer. The bundle was done up in a towel and showed evidences of haste and inexperience on the part of the compiler. There were a pair of overshoes, a handkerchief-case of pale blue silk, two white lawn ties, a bottle of bromo-caine, a tumbler of blue glass, enveloped in a net of yellow crocheted-work with bows of pink "daisy ribbon," and intended by Mrs. Dwyer for the reception of burnt matches. There were also two oranges, a clay pipe and a copy of "Edwin Drood."

Harris stood like a statue on the hummock.

Maria went on with her story, speaking low and eagerly. Harris was not to go back to the boarding-house. Had she not here all his most precious possessions? And in the bosom of her gown she had sixty-seven dollars concealed, the sum set apart for her wedding equipment. With this they were to cross the mountain to Hazelton, where they would take the train for New York. Once there—ah, then that dirty Angelo might plead! She would have a husband worth a thousand of him.

Harris gave himself a little shake to make sure it was not all a horrible nightmare.

"But, Maria, my little girl, you are wrong. Don't you see it is all a mistake? Go marry Angelo. He deserves you more than I."

She looked at him a moment, and then, with a sob, turned away. She saw in his face the truth he dared not speak.

"Oh, say not, say not you cast me off!" she moaned and stretched her hands toward him. But she felt no answering touch. He was looking at her with a little smile and whistling softly to himself. For a moment she was transformed from a pleading angel to a demon of rage. She stooped quickly, picked up the bundle at her feet, raised it high over her head and flung it full in his face.

The clumsy missile missed its mark, however, struck at his feet and rolled down into the pool of coal-dirt, that gave a hideous gulp and swallowed the bundle of bric-a-brac, as it swal-

lowed everything else within its reach.

"But, ah! What was that? Did the branch on which she was standing turn, or did she lose her balance? A faint little cry of terror, and Harris saw Maria struggling knee-deep in the treacherous ooze. He sprang impulsively forward, but as his foot touched the surface of the swamp, and he felt the dead weight pulling it down, he paused for an instant. Maria saw the hesitation.

"Go back! Go back!" she cried. "It is not for me that you shall die! Here is another! Save yourself for her! She is to have your love, not Maria!"

The scene grew dim before the young man's eyes. He saw no longer the grim mass of the culm-heap, the writhing of the bare tree-trunks and the slimy surface of the swamps. A long, quiet New England street, the great lens, heavy with foliage, meeting overhead, and at a bend in the road, a tall, slender girl, holding her hand to him with a welcoming smile. The vision vanished as quickly as it had come; but it was enough. A moment before the murderous thought had flashed upon him: "How easy to escape from it all! A minute's delay, a mock struggle against the odds that grew greater every moment, and then—freedom!" Now he cast the thought from him with revulsion. He glanced quickly around. Was there no one to give him aid? Yes, there was the breaker-boy on the ridge of the culm-heaps who, though beyond hearing, could get a faint glimpse of the dim figures fifty feet below, and who now, with wild hopes of a row, was scrambling down the slope. And another. Deep in the twilight gloom of the swamp Harris saw approaching the tall, lithe figure of a swarthy miner. With a loud cry for help, the young fellow sprang toward Maria, who by this time had sunk in the quicksand nearly to her waist. She had stopped struggling and was waiting silently for the end.

Hardly had Harris's cry died away in the choking stillness, when another sound was heard—the sharp ring of a pistol-shot. The hiss of a bullet passed his ears, and Harris saw Maria give a sudden start, throw up her hands and fall, face forward, in the black slime.

Ah, Angelo! You are more used to dealing death with steel than with lead. A swift blow with the stiletto and the life you sought might have been deftly and quietly cut from the body, but with these clumsy portern tools no wonder your hand trembled, the bullet passed its mark and the wrong life sacrificed to your hatred. The work is done now. It is well for you to slink stealthily away and leave the two alone together.

And so the purple gown was never bought nor the trip to New York taken. But the breaker-boy saw his "row" and more, too. For it was he who found Angelo Rossi's body a day or two afterward on the mountain-side, with a bullet wound in the temple to show how the Italian's marksmanship improved with practice. Perhaps the only good that came of the whole thing was that Harris left the region and went back to New England, where he was much happier. For he was a good enough young fellow—as goodness goes, nowadays.—[New York Ledger.]

Spare the Birds.

An American dealer sold last year two million bird skins. All were used for ornamenting woman's attire. Women ought to cry down this vanity that feeds and pampers the destruction of the feathered tribes. The birds sacrificed are those of the richest plumage, and, of course, also, those that will be least easily replaced. In fact, if this thing continues American bird life of the gentler order will pretty soon become extinct. Is not the warfare the American Humane Society has opened upon the bird-skin traffic wholly justifiable? We think so. The destruction referred to contributes not one whit to human need or human comfort. It adds nothing to the intellectual, nothing to the mental. It is simply wantonness practiced at the beck of fashion, and as silly and meaningless a fashion, too, as ever was spawned from the brain of a man milliner. There are birds in plenty that shed their plumage to supply the vain demand for flaming headgear. Why should the fashion monarchs be inexorable, and also demand the bodies of our feathered songsters?—[Sacramento (Cal.) Union.]

A Brace of Brave Soldiers.

When the Birkenhead troopship went down, with her 488 brave soldiers and sailors, many heroic deeds were done that sad morning, none but the shore beholding them.

Here are two examples of true valor: Ensign Russell of the 7th High-liners, was picked up by one of the boats when he had all but gained the shore. Seeing a sailor in the waves, however, on the point of drowning, he lifted the man into the boat, and again took to the water, intending to swim to land. But in a moment he was seized by a shark and perished.

Cornet Bond, of the 12th Lancers, just before the vessel foundered, went below to a cabin where two children had been left, fetched them up on deck and put them in one of the boats. A few minutes later he thrust his horse into the sea. Imagine his delight when he found the noble animal waiting for him on the beach.—[New York Journal.]

Cleveland, Ohio, is about to annex another strip of territory containing 8,000 people.

A COSTLY WEED.

THE RUSSIAN THISTLE COSTS US FOUR MILLION A YEAR.

Unknown a Few Years Ago it Now Overruns Many Farms in the Northwest and is Still Spreading.

A box five feet square and over three high was carried into the room of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and, Senator Hansbrough presiding, the cover was quickly knocked up and off therefrom. A big brush heap was the apparent contents of the mysterious inwardness of the Senator's box. Appearances, however, are deceitful everywhere in general and around the Senate end of the Capitol in particular. The box did not contain a brush heap, but the ugliest, meanest, wickedest weed this country has ever known or can know—the Russian thistle.

A few years ago it was unknown in this country, and only travelers in the trans-Ural regions of southeastern Russia had ever seen it. But it is now in full possession of many a good farm in the Dakotas, and is spreading its domain towards every point of the compass, with the twin staves as its center and starting point. The plant in Senator Hansbrough's committee room is probably full grown, for it is five feet in diameter, fully three feet high and weighs twenty-four pounds. It is the result of one season's growth from a single seed, the plant being an annual. The root is comparatively small, being about half an inch in diameter and six to twelve inches long. That part of the plant which is above ground forms a dense, bushy mass full of branches. When it is young and green it looks very harmless and its soft, fuzzy, tender and juicy little leaves scattered abundantly all over its myriads of stems look not only edible, but fairly tempting from a bovine point of view.

When the long hot summer days of the subarctic summer have, however, brought Mr. Russian Thistle to maturity, and the juicy little leaves drop off, and the prickly stems harden and toughen in the dry air and the plant keeps on growing bigger and bigger and choking out every other growing thing near it, then it is that the farmer recognizes in this newcomer a terrible foe. At every half inch on the stems of the thistle there is a sharp spine about half an inch long, which grows harder and sharper as time passes. The Dakota farmers find it impossible to plow their fields when once the thistle has taken possession of it. The feet of the horses are cut raw in a single day's work, and at the end of a week are a festering mass of raw flesh. It is only by having leather boots made and worn on their plow teams that they can do their fall work. The poorer farmers wrap rags around the ankles of their horses, and so protect them.

Yet, to plow fields that have once become the prey of the Russian thistle is a hopeless and usually a fruitless thing to do. Plowing only puts in the ground millions of seeds to germinate another season and ruin the wheat, barley or rye that may be sown. Where each prickly spine in the mature plant joins the stem there is a little greenish black kernel with a winged blossom on it. The thing looks like a microscopic shuttlecock. This is the seed. A careful estimate computes the number in Senator Hansbrough's specimen at the Capitol to be 200,000. In the fall the tough, well-braced plant breaks loose from its root and gets out on a journey of propagation. When, as often happens, the prairies are swept by fires the Russian thistle diversifies its evil career by adding tenfold to the fury of the fire. A blazing, burning bush, speeding before the wind, will spread the flames to grain stacks, barns and houses more swiftly and surely than did Sampson's foxes in the grain fields and vineyards of the Philistines. In this way many miles of good wire fence are destroyed annually.

But as a weed that the thistle is most dreaded. It is tenacious of life and disputes successfully with every other growing thing of the ground it needs to wax great upon. It drives every living herd out of its way, and as it multiplies more rapidly than any other contemporary it holds fast all it once gains. Wheat is injured 20 per cent. by it the second season after it appears. After that the farmer hardly dares sow his fields less his loss should be total. Barley and rye fare almost as badly as wheat. Oats and millet have an even chance against it if they are well put in on good ground. Where the thistle has got into a grain field it makes life a burden for the threshers.

They can hardly get gloves tough enough to withstand the sharp cuts from the thistle spines. Flax is usually a total failure when the thistle once appears in it. It was in flax seed imported from Russia by some Mennonites in Bon Homme County, S. D., twenty years ago, that the weed was first brought to this country. By some it is said that these Mennonite Russians sowed the plant for purposes of forage. But this is wholly gratuitous conjecture. Nobody regards the plant as suitable for forage, although sheep will eat it in the spring when it is juicy and tender, and as it is an annual, hard grazing might kill it out. But there is little prospect that the Northwest farmers will increase their flocks for the purpose of combating the Russian thistle. They are too uncertain about the supply of subsistence during the rest of the year when the thistle is no longer succulent and other fodder crops are not to be had. Besides, the price of wool offers no

compensating incentive and mutton is only dead sheep when your flock is fifteen hundred miles from market.

That the thistle is spreading, is indeed coming rapidly eastward, there can be no doubt. It first appeared in Bon Homme county, South Dakota, and from there spread northward along the Jim river, for a long time seeming to be unable to cross that stream and advance eastward. At last, like the Yankee who crossed the Connecticut river by walking up to its source, where he could step across, the thistle leaped over the Jim several hundred miles to the north of Bon Homme county. It also went on to the west along the Chicago and Northwestern railroad to Pierre, on the Missouri. With the building of various railroads the weed traveled north and west as far as the Northern Pacific and to Bismarck on the Missouri. It is now at the international boundary, where the fertile Red River valley ceases to be American and becomes the domain of the old lady across the Atlantic. Indeed, the big weed of Senator Hansbrough's came from Lamoure in North Dakota, not a hundred miles from the Manitoba line. The Agricultural Department sent out inquiries to correspondents in every county in North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, northern Iowa, Montana, Wyoming and Nebraska. Over 300 replies have come, showing its widely and rapidly extending march of destruction. It is already in St. Paul and Minneapolis, where it first appeared in the stockyards, and is spreading all over the suburban streets to disfigure them into the hateful presence. At Hudson, across the Mississippi and the St. Croix rivers, it is to be seen.

It is even found south as far as Eau Claire. It has got as far as Arbor Lodge, Secretary Morton's home in Nebraska, on its journey to Texas. Out in Wyoming, it is now common, and Denver chronicles its unwelcome arrival there under the shadow of Pike's Peak. Northwestern Iowa knows what it is, and the eastern and southern parts of the State expect it to visit them next year. Like the English sparrow, it enjoys railroad travel, and as that little foreigner hopped from New York to Utah in ten years it is not unlikely that this other foreign visitor may get over the country quite as fast.

It is estimated that the Russian pest has now spread over 48,000 square miles of territory, and that the borders of this array are constantly increasing at the rate of ten to fifteen miles a year. There are ten over a million acres of wheat land embraced in this western thistle-dome, and careful estimates at the Agricultural Department last year place the loss at \$2,000,000 from this weed alone. This past year it has caused a loss in that region, it is calculated, exceeding \$4,500,000. At this geometrical rate it is easy to conjecture what is going to happen in a few very years. The danger is so appalling that the States and Congress have been asked to provide relief and protection. Senator Hansbrough has introduced a bill providing a scheme of warfare to exterminate the thistle by digging it up before it goes to seed. This seems to be the only way to fight it. It goes to seed about August 15. It is it is plowed before that time it is likely to die without hope of posterity.—[Washington Star.]

MORE VIOLENT THAN POLITE.

Some Marriage Customs of Savage Races.

From remote times brides have been the prize of the most daring, and marriage by capture has more or less prevailed in some part of our little globe from the time when the artful Romans, ignoring the laws of hospitality, seized upon their Sabine guests, nor waited for the decree nisi to be pronounced absolute before asserting their new prerogative, and from this enforced alliance sprang the conquerors of the world.

The Esquimau of to-day, having once established his manhood by killing a polar bear unaided, is sent forth by his kindred to seek a wife, and the first girl he can surprise unawares he seizes, and in spite of her screams and struggles, endeavors to carry her off. This proving no easy feat, owing to the substantial proportions of the Esquimau belle, together with the enormous weight of her clothing, an exciting race occurs, the lady darting among the aroused neighbors, dodges her suitor in the crowd which eagerly assists her, and it is only after he has succeeded in catching her the third time that he is permitted to lead his blushing and excited bride to the hymeneal altar, says a writer in Lippincott's.

The Australian aborigine adopts a more summary process when weary of a single life. He looks about for a partner, and, finding his opportunity, stuns her with a heavy blow, and carries her off to her new home, where, it is to be hoped, on her return to consciousness his after-tenderness makes some atonement for his somewhat rough-and-ready mode of wooing.

In parts of India the winning of the bride depends upon fleetness of foot, a circular course being marked out, half of which is traversed by the maiden (encumbered only by a waist-band) before the lover is allowed to start in pursuit, and if he does not succeed in capturing her before she has thrice completed the circuit he loses his prize.

Wild animals are very bold in some parts of Southern California this winter. Several instances have lately been noted in San Bernardino county of travelers on the highway being attacked by wildcats.

The Name of Alcohol.

The reservation of the name of alcohol for the product of the distillation of wine is modern. Till the end of the eighteenth century the word, of Arabic origin, signified any principle attenuated by extreme pulverization or by sublimation. It was applied, for example, to the powder of sulphure of antimony (kobeul), which was used to blacken the eyes, and to various other substances as well as to spirits of wine. No author has been found of the thirteenth century, or even of the fourteenth century and later, who applied the word alcohol to the product of the distillation of wine.

The term spirit of wine, or ardent spirit, although more ancient, was not in use in the thirteenth century, for the word "spirit" was at that time reserved for volatile agents, like mercury, sulphur, the sulphurets of arsenic and sal ammoniac, which were capable of acting on metals and modifying their color and properties. The term eau-de-vie was given in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to the elixir of long life. It was Arnaud de Villeneuve who employed it for the first time to designate the product of the distillation of wine. But he used it not as a specific name, but in order to mark the assimilation which he made of it with the product drawn from wine.

The elixir of long life of the ancient alchemists had nothing in common with our alcohol. Confusion of the two has led the historians of science into more than one error.—Popular Science Monthly.

Lime and Lime Water.

The uses of so homely an article as lime about the household are almost innumerable. One sees the mud man on a new building keep their drinking water in a pail coated with lime, and one thinks it is poor receptacle for the universal beverage. Yet it would not be so good or so pure served in a silver ice pitcher. The lime water of the druggist is indeed nothing more than the solution of the hodium. A piece of lime unslacked in a perfectly clean bottle, with cold water poured over it, the bottle corked and kept in a cool, dark place, is a full recipe for lime water. It is ready for use in a few moments. A spoonful of this in a glass of milk is a remedy for summer complaint. It corrects acidity of the stomach. It prevents the turning of milk or cream, and a cupful added to bread sponge will keep it from souring. Allowed to evaporate from a vessel on the stove, it will alleviate the distresses due to lung fever, croup, or diphtheria. It will sweeten and purify bottles, jugs, etc.

Lime itself, as every one knows, is invaluable as a purifier and disinfectant. Sprinkle it in cellars or closets, where there is a slight dampness, it will not only serve as a purifier, but will prevent the invasion of noxious animals. It is one of the notable instances of the economy and the bounty of nature that this article so common and cheap is serviceable in so many instances.

Signs of Eighteen Ninety-four.

The old saying: "A green Christmas makes a fat graveyard" is often verified, and it further says, that the year will bring forth much sickness, wherein pains and aches, rheumatic complaints, soreness of joints and limbs will abound. In the olden times there were few preventives for pain, few cures for complaints. It is not so now. Even old Santa Claus has learned a thing or two, for by a Christmas stocking was found a bottle of St. Jacobs Oil, the best known, sure remedy for all such troubles. All years have their prophesies, and no year is without its record of surprising cures wrought by this wonderful medicine.

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