

RAIN IN THE WOODS.

Silence first, with gloom overhead
Not a stir in bush or tree;
Woodfolk all to covert fled;
Dumb the gossip chickadee.

Then a little rustling sigh:
Treetops toss, and bushes shake,
And a silent wave goes by
In the feathered fern and braka.

Now a murmur growing loud
In the pine tops far and near;
And the woods are tossed and bowed,
Like a soul in sudden fear.

Hark! the music of the rain
On a thousand leaky roofs,
Like an army o'er a plain
Galloping with silver hoofs

Patter, patter on the ground,
Bustle, rustle in the trees;
And the beaded bushes round
Drip when shaken by the breeze.

Ah! if you would nature know
Close and true in all her moods,
Flee not from the show'r, but go
Hear the raindrops in the woods!

—JAMES BUCKHAM, in Youth's Companion.

The Picture On the Cuff.

BY HARRY HOW.

I had known Franklin about a month. He was a man worth knowing. His honest and genial-looking face spoke truly of the honor of his heart within, and his friendship was something to be desired. Moreover, he was clever, very clever, and among his associates was freely regarded as an artist who some day would be with the much-coveted R. A. after his name. I was, therefore, particularly happy when he asked me to come round and smoke a pipe with him in his studio. It was a typical Bohemian little den in Chelsea—a studio among studios, for it was situated among a number of such "painting rooms," in a building specially designed for the purpose. His greeting, as I anticipated, was most cordial. We lighted our pipes, and, as though we had known one another for years, he took me by the arm, and, walking me around his studio, commenced pointing out the various curios and the like hanging upon the walls and crowding corners in picturesque negligence.

"Curiosity" in a little black and gold frame, however, seemed to impress me more than anything else. It was a linen shirt cuff, and on it, drawn in pencil, was the face of a beautiful girl. I recognized the features at once; it was the face that figured in his celebrated picture, "Tired of Life," which created such a sensation with the public, and made such a marked impression on the art critics two years ago at one of the great art exhibitions in London. Franklin noticed and understood my curiosity.

"Sit down, old fellow," he said pointing to a basket chair covered with flowered cretonne. "Curiosity aroused, eh?"

I admitted that it was.

"Well," he said, "I am just in the humor for telling the story, and I think you will vote it a pretty one; yes, and as romantic as the finale of it was happy. This is a linen shirt cuff, and he reached it down from the wall, and the face you see there was the one which went into my 'Tired of Life.'"

I told him I recognized it as soon as I saw it.

"I was walking along the embankment one day a little more than two years ago," Franklin commenced, trying to hit upon a good subject for a picture. I paced up and down the water side for an hour or more, but still without an idea. I was just about to turn down the road leading back to my place when I saw a woman coming along. Her eyes seemed to be fixed upon the water. I had never seen such a sorrowful face before; so pale and so sad; there was trouble written on every feature. Yet it was a very beautiful face, and it seemed to inspire me in an instant, and the subject I had been in search of appeared to be mine at last. Now, you must know that I have a habit of sketching a striking or characteristic face upon my cuffs likely to stand me in good stead for introducing into a picture. Fortunately for me the woman stood quite still for a few moments leaning over the stone-work and gazing dreamily into the water. My pencil was out in an instant, and her face was quickly transferred to my cuff. I felt very excited. Here, here was my subject! the very thing. But possibly she might pose as a model for me, I thought. Better still.

"I crossed to her, and, raising my hat, spoke. She started and looked at me with tear and trembling. I apologized to her for the strange inspiration that her presence had suggested to me. I told her I was an artist; that her face had given me an idea that might possibly bring me fame and fortune. 'Tired of Life,' I should call it. Again I apologized as I further explained to her my idea. She stared at me vacantly.

"It will be the picture of a young and beautiful woman," I said, "gazing dreamily into the water by night, and seeing in the dark stream a resting place for her and her troubles. Would she become a model for my picture?" I saw how poorly she was clad, so I felt I should not be insulting her if I told her I would pay her for her services.

She started and trembled at my request. She looked at me in a way I shall never forget.

"Do you know—do you know," she said, "but no, of course, you cannot, I must go; please let me go. I cannot do as you ask."

"The woman made a movement.

"You seem in trouble," I said, and putting my hand in my pocket—well, the truth is, old fellow, I gave her a sovereign. I shall never forget the grateful look she gave me; there was a smile there, and tears were in her eyes. She took the money without a word, but I read all she wanted to say. I gave her my card, and told her if she thought anything more of my proposal to come and see me. She took the card, and with a thankful face turned quickly and hurried away.

"Well, I started on my picture, and day by day it grew. I seldom had to refer to the sketch on my cuff though I kept it carefully, for the woman's face was too vividly impressed upon my memory. I must tell you that at that time we had an old man here, named Glover, who used to clean and dust our rooms and do odd things about the place in general. He was a quiet, say little sort of old fellow—a man, I should say, who had evidently seen a bit of trouble as well as better days. We men used to talk to him pretty freely, and he always evinced a deep interest in the various pictures upon which we were engaged. But I never knew him so interested in any canvas as he was in my 'Tired of Life.' He was silent about it, however, and seldom spoke. I used to surprise him of a morning sometimes when I entered my studio for work. There he would stand before my easel with wondering gaze, watching my picture growing and evidently wondering what was to come next. There on the canvas was the river by night, the lights reflected in the water, the bridge in the distance, and some river craft lying idle by the water's edge. Just by the parapet stood a woman in black—a shawl loosely thrown about her shoulders, her hat old and shabby her face—'Tired of Life.'"

"I had not quite completed the painting on the woman's face, it was not realized yet, but the old man was always looking at it and apparently was wondering what expression and what features would eventually be placed there. All this time I had not seen or heard anything of the woman who had suggested the character to me. It wanted just a month to sending-in day and I had only another day's work on the face, and I should be through in capital time. I spent the whole of this day on the features of the woman and just as it was getting dusk I surveyed my work with satisfaction. It could not have been better, and I heartily shook hands with myself. The following morning when I entered my studio and opened the door I saw that which made my heart almost cease to beat. I stood holding the handle of the door and could not move, my whole frame was trembling. The face of the woman had been cut out of my picture! In a moment I had pulled myself together. I shouted out for 'Glover—Glover!' but no reply came. I rushed round my fellow artists' rooms. The old man was not there, neither had he been there that morning, for their rooms were unswept and untidy as left the previous night. The whole truth flashed across me, Glover was the miscreant who had ruined and stole my work. I remembered it all then—his interest in my picture, his anxious waiting, waiting, waiting for the woman's face to appear on the canvas. The wretched thief and robber, I muttered. And in the midst of all this the great question rang through my ears and haunted my brain—'Who was this woman that induced this man to want the picture of her face? Search was made for him, but he had gone none knew where.

"It was a supreme effort, I tell you, but I did it—I did it! I had a clear month before I should have to send in my work, and I set to and painted the whole thing again. You remember what a success it was, and I think I may say truly that had I never painted 'Tired of Life,' I should not be what I am to-day.

"It was the day before the opening of the—Exhibition. I was sitting thinking quietly in my studio when I heard a rap at the door. I cried, 'Come in.' The door opened, and there stood—the woman I had seen on the Embankment! Her face was still pale, and the lines of trouble were not entirely effaced, but she appeared more composed and contented. She was better dressed too. It was such a sudden surprise to me that I practically jumped from my chair. She was the first to speak.

"Oh, sir," she said, 'forgive me this; I should have come before. Tell me, tell me, have you painted the picture you spoke to me about? If you have it is all a mistake; it will not be true now. It might have been, but you came to me as a friend in need. Tell me, sir, have you painted it?'"

"There was great anxiety in her voice. I told her that I had; that it would be exhibited on the morrow.

"She fell down on her knees before me.

"Then, sir, it will all be known to the world?"

"What?" I asked.

"What I was going to do, yes, I was tired of life—oh, so tired. I thought I should find rest in the river, and a home for my troubles there. You won't let my face be seen—you won't let the people know the truth?"

"Well, I argued with her quietly. Told her that the world was wide, and in this great seething crowd of fighting humanity she would not be known or recognized.

"There is one who might, though," she cried.

"Who?" I asked.

"My father.

"Her father! I seemed to realize the whole thing at once. Her father was the man Glover—the man who

ruined the work of many a day and caused me ceaseless toil and anxiety. Here, then, was the cause of his spoiling my picture. He, too, recognized the face on the canvas, and he did not want those features to be given to the world. 'Tired of Life!' and a father living, a daughter forgotten and forsaken. This, then, was the motive of his crime.

"My father," she said, "whom I want to see again. He was so good to me; but I left home for one who has deceived me, and I cannot face my father now. But I want to: I want to kiss him, to take his dear hand and fall on my knees at his feet and say, 'Take your Mary home again, father, for she loves you still. Forgive your Mary, father, for she loves you more than ever now. Oh, forgive me, dear, dear father!'"

"My heart was touched. I told her to rise to her feet again. I took her by the hand and sat her down in my chair. I had made up my mind exactly what I would do. Glover knew for which exhibition my picture was intended. He evidently destroyed my work thinking I should not be able to paint another in its place in the time. Possibly, I argued to myself, he might have had his doubts, and I should not be surprised if on the morrow he was there to see whether I had once more conveyed his erring daughter's face to the canvas.

"I turned to the weeping woman and asked her name. It was Mary Glover, she said. Then I was right.

"Will you meet me to-morrow evening at 6 o'clock at Charing Cross Railway Station?" I asked; "if you will I may be able to—"

"What do you mean?" she cried excitedly.

"I don't know yet. But, come there at that time; and who knows what may happen?"

"Well, the poor girl went away. The morrow came, and with it the opening of the—Exhibition of pictures. My work took the town. It was as I expected. I kept a sharp lookout and there was Glover among the crowd. I shall never forget his face when he saw that picture. He only gave one glance at it, his face went deadly pale and he flew from the room. I pursued him through the streets to a little by-turning off Hatton Garden. He entered a house there, and I soon ascertained that he lived at this place. There was no time to lose; I hired a cab and got to Charing Cross just as Big Ben was chiming the appointed hour. She was there.

"Jump in—jump in," I said. She obeyed me with a trustful look. In as careful a way as I could I told her that I had found the whereabouts of her father. That I thought that he, too, was waiting to welcome her back to his arms again. I shall never forget that woman's face when she heard those words. Her cheeks became flushed, her eyes shone with brightness.

"At last we reached the house. The door was open, and bidding her follow me up the creaky stairs we reached the third floor, where the door of a back room was partially open. I asked her to wait until I called her. I peeped through the door and there I saw the old man, holding in his hands the piece of canvas he had cut from my picture. He raised it to his lips and kissed it. My heart leaped, for that action told me that my mission would not be in vain.

"I tapped quietly at the door. Hurriedly I saw him place the canvas under a cloth on the table. With trembling hand he pulled back the door and he saw me standing there. He could not speak. He stared at me vacantly. I almost felt sorry for him—poor old fellow!—and all the trouble he had given me seemed to fade away. He was about to fall on his knees, but I stayed him.

"Never mind, Mr. Glover," I said as well as I could, for there was a great lump in my throat that made it difficult for me to speak. "Never mind, I understand all."

"Thank God!" the old man cried. "The sound of his voice must have reached the ears of the one waiting on the landing below. I heard her hurrying footsteps up the stairs, and at their tread the old man started. He stood as one afraid to move, but when he saw the form of his child he flew out of the doorway and caught her in his arms.

"That's all, old fellow. I couldn't tell you anything more—save that I found the tears trickling down my face just then. I often hear from them now. You are not surprised I keep that old linen cuff, are you?"—[London Million.]

Wool Fat.

A recent discovery in Australia goes to show that the sheep is even a more valuable animal than it has been generally esteemed. Its latest contribution to man's welfare is a fatty substance called wool fat, derived from the grease that is skimmed from the scouring vats.

It is used as a basis for the ointments for medical purposes, and is said to be more readily absorbed by the skin than any other oil or fat known. It is able also to adhere to moist surfaces, which no other unguent in present use will do. The sheep owners of Australia are carefully saving the refuse of their vats for this purpose.—[New York World.]

Raggedy Wayside—Why did you swipe that scientific paper when der wuz lots wid gals' pictures in dem lynn' round?

Wandering Willie—I like ter read 'bout de invention of labor-savin' machinery. Diss will be a boss worker ter live in when dere's no more work done by hand.—[Puff.]

SOMEWHAT STRANGE.

FACTS THAT PROVE THAT TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION.

Queer Facts and Thrilling Adventures Which Show that Truth is Stranger Than Fiction.

A LILLIPUTIAN electric light has been invented for the benefit of newspaper reporters. It is fastened to the end of a pencil, so that the reporter may carry his own light with him, and be able to make his notes even in the darkness.

An ordinary-sized man bears constantly upon his body a pressure of about fourteen tons, but as this pressure is in all directions, and from within outwards as well as from without inwards, the compensation is perfect and reduces the actual pressure to practically nothing.

The jewelry found recently in an excavation near one of the pyramids of old Memphis, Egypt, exhibits about as much skill in working gold and precious stones as now exists, although the articles found were made 4,300 years ago. The figures cut on amethyst and cornelian are described as exquisite and anatomically correct.

ROBERT E. STONE, of Lexington, Ky., has just erected over the grave of his dog a monument that cost \$650. The stone is a pointed shaft of seashore granite elaborately and fancifully carved. It has a deeply chiseled inscription: "Don, for sixteen years our silent brother and friend. His faithful dog shall bear him company."

WHILE HORACE CLINGER was cutting wheat near Manchester, Ky., he stirred up a large black snake, which became so enraged at being disturbed that it coiled itself about him. His fellow-workmen soon arrived, and after much effort succeeded in dispatching the reptile, but it was none too soon, as the snake had him down and was slowly but surely crushing him to death. Clinger's hair, which was of a jet black color previous to the occurrence, turned to a silvery white within a short time after. The serpent measured over eight feet, being one of the largest specimens seen in that vicinity.

SINCE the recent death of John Hunt at Seekonk, Mass., the neighbors have been talking about his peculiarities. They say he was a "set" man. For twenty years he did not speak to his wife. Five or six years after his marriage Hunt wanted to sell a piece of land. His wife's signature was needed, but for a long time she refused to give it. Hunt at once became sullen and refused to speak to her. Thinking to please him at last she told him she would sign. He didn't answer her, but let her sign. The property was conveyed, but Hunt would not yield. He had vowed never again to speak to her, and he didn't, not even when dying. Hunt's father had such an experience, and for twenty years never spoke to Hunt's mother. In 1864 Hunt was a member of the State Legislature. His wife and two daughters survive him.

J. J. GAGE, of Clarksdale, Miss., is the owner of a mule which is one of the greatest curiosities in this country. This mule has a small, white, or cream-colored snake in his right eye. The reptile is apparently about two inches in length and wiggles continually, going from one point of the eye to another with wonderful rapidity. Mr. Gage says the mule had a sore eye some four months ago, and in treating it he made the discovery that this small snake was in it. The mule is in perfect good health and apparently suffers no pain. The sight of the right eye is evidently gone, the pupil being of a bluish color and slightly enlarged. In what appears to be a globe of bluish-looking water the strange reptile has his home. Mr. Gage says that at night the snake coils up and rests, and at such times its head and eyes may be plainly seen.

At the Home for Aged and Infirm Colored Persons in West Philadelphia two remarkable cases of longevity exist, and the fact that the birthday anniversaries of both were celebrated on the same day lends a peculiar interest to the aged pair. "Aunt" Mary McDonald, as she is known by her friends, was one hundred and twenty-eight years old on a recent Wednesday, the fact of her birth in 1766 being established by reliable proofs. She was born on the farm of Reese Howell, adjoining what was later the encampment of the forces of Gen. Washington, in the vicinity of Norristown, her parents being slaves. She claims to remember the Father of his Country, and to have frequently come in contact with his soldiers. The other centenarian is John Gibson, also born in slavery, in Maryland, July 11, 1774, two years before the proclamation of American independence. Both have long been members of the home and are still active and in possession of their faculties.

"It seems quite possible that the swallow will prove a successful rival to the carrier-pigeon in its peculiar line of service," says Harold W. Swain, of Washington, D. C. "I know a man who has been experimenting with these birds for years, and who managed to tame them and make them love their cage so that they will invariably return to it after a few hours' liberty. The speed of these messengers can be judged from a single experiment. The man of whom I speak once caught an untrained swallow which had its nest in his farm. He put the bird in a basket and gave it to a friend who was going to a city 150 miles distant,

telling him to turn the bird loose on his arrival there and telegraph him as soon as the bird was set free. This was done, and the bird reached home in one hour and a half. Their great speed and diminutive forms would especially recommend swallows for use in war, as it would not be an easy matter to shoot such carriers on the wing."

An unusual electrical accident, which occurred at the Norfolk (Va.) Navy Yard, appears to have been explained, and with the explanation comes the necessity of making provision to ground steel or iron vessels that are in dry dock, especially during the season of electrical storms. Two men standing in water under the vessel, which was insulated by its supports of dry wood, were apparently struck by lightning, although men on the deck of the vessel felt no shock. One of the men was killed instantly and the other died in a few hours. The explanation now given is that the vessel was not struck by lightning in the ordinary sense, but that it acted as an enormous condenser, such as is used for collecting static electricity. As it was insulated from the ground it became heavily charged, and was discharged through the men when they, standing in the water, and thus making a good ground, touched the metal sides. The remedy will be to ground such vessels while they are in dry dock.

"The idea of using a telephone to make a taciturn subject talk is, I believe, original with a detective in our city," said Henry F. Mackey, of Richmond, Va., to a Times reporter. "A man who has been born and raised away back in the hills, where neither telegraph nor telephone was known, was brought in on a charge of horse-stealing. It was suspected that he had stolen several horses, but the evidence against him was not very strong. The detective had him in his office and cautioned him that if he did not tell the truth the information would come against him through the funny-looking instrument in the corner. The man laughed and said he was not as ignorant as he looked, whereupon the detective rang up the chief's office, and by a preconcerted signal the suspected thefts of the prisoner were called through the 'phone in a very gruff voice. The detective placed the 'phone firmly against the prisoner's ear, and his astonishment when he heard his thefts narrated was ludicrous. His innate superstition proved his ruin, for he promptly admitted his guilt and gave information which led to the recovery of most of the stolen horses. The mountaineer's disgust when informed how he had been tricked was very palpable, but he still declined to believe that one man could talk to another along a wire."

A STARTLING phenomenon was witnessed at Clinton, Iowa, on a recent Sunday morning from four to half past four o'clock, greatly frightening many superstitious people. It began with an illumination of the northwest heavens, in blended red and yellow, like the reflection from a great fire, and sufficiently bright to awaken many people from a sound sleep. It increased in brilliancy until objects looked as they do when viewed through a pair of yellow spectacles. In the southwest near the horizon, lay a large bank of clouds, of inky darkness. Soon the illumination shifted to the northwest and as the sun rose bright shafts of the yellow were shot upward in various directions, contrasting sharply on the background of red. The awe-inspiring part of the display came about twenty minutes past four, when a slender ribbon of delicate yellow stretched athwart the sky from northwest to southwest, the extreme end reaching far into the black clouds. It resembled the ray from a powerful searchlight, set in the lens of yellow glass, except it hung in the sky like a rainbow. It lasted about ten minutes, when it vanished, together with all the bright colorings, and the sky was quickly overspread with gray wintry looking clouds.

The efficacy of a black cat as a lightning rod has been too frequently the subject of discussion and assertion to be treated at length at the present time. An illustration of this popular belief can be deduced from an incident that occurred to the wife of a well known business man of Washington. The young matron had been expending considerable time and attention upon a handsome black cat, which she continued to stroke, notwithstanding the assertion of her family that by so doing she was charging herself with electricity. Finally one evening she decided to go for a ride on the electric cars to Bethesda. Accordingly, inviting two of her friends to accompany her, she set out for the ride in high spirits. The trio found places together near the middle of the car and had gone a short space beyond the power house, when their conversation was interrupted by the conductor hurriedly bending over them as though to avert some catastrophe from beneath, and telling them to leave the car with all speed, as it was on fire. Scarcely had they left their seats before a sheet of flame burst through the floor just under the very spot over which the young matron had been sitting, the electrical apparatus beneath having ignited at that very point. She declares she will never stroke another cat.

PARADING FAMILY AFFAIRS. "Newlywed seems to find particular delight in parading his little family affairs before the eyes of his acquaintances."

"Does, eh? What are they? Scandal?"

"Nop; twins."—[Buffalo Courier.]

A DANGEROUS MAN.

When the Stage Was "Held Up" He Came to the Front.

"The business of holding up stages in the west and robbing the mails and the passengers would not be followed by so many desperados if a few more of the travelers were like old Robert Lane, who lives near Dillon, Montana," said George Craig of Butte, at the Riggs House yesterday. "Lane is as quiet and peaceable a citizen as ever went to church on Sunday and put his four bits into the contribution box. He has lived in Montana for twenty years, and even in youth he never personally indulged in the old-time wild excesses of life out there, nor in any of the hurly burly of frontier existence. He has always pursued the even tenor of his way on his little ranch, near Dillon, and ever been regarded as the safest and most peaceable citizen in the community. He is called 'Old Man Lane' out in Montana, and everybody knows him. Several years ago the old man went down to Red Rock, which is nearer to his ranch than Dillon is, to take the stage for Junction. The mules were pulling the outfit along pretty lively through a right nasty piece of road, when the passengers were startled by hearing a voice commanding the driver to throw down his reins. There were three or four passengers on the inside, and if it had been light enough to see them they would have looked mighty white, I tell you. But old man Lane was made of different kind of stuff. When he heard the agent tell the driver to drop the reins he just reached back and pulled out two guns that he used to carry, because it was the custom of the country to do it, and kept his eye fixed on the doors, looking at first one door then the other quickly, so as to see the thieves when they made an appearance. A shadow fell in each door window about the same time, and quick as a flash old man Lane's guns were stuck through either opening and off they went. He got meat both cracks. Then he leaned out the window and banded loose at the fellow who had ordered the driver to hold up. He got him, too, and then jumped out of the stage. There were four of the road agents, and the last one, alarmed at the fate of his companions, stuck spurs into his horse and rode away up the trail. The passengers, who had nearly recovered from their terror and surprise, were now amazed to see old man Lane cut the harness from the lead mule, jump on his back, and go sailing away after the fleeing fugitive. Shots were heard pretty soon, and in ten minutes or so back came old man Lane, leading the bandit's horse, while the man himself was sitting up in the saddle, shot through the back. On examination it was found that two of the attacking party were killed and the other two wounded, and the whole quartet was brought into Junction. When old man Lane was asked what caused him to bloom out into such a progressive citizen of the territory, he drawled out: 'Well, I had a good deal of business to attend to up here at Junction, and I didn't like the idea of being stopped when I was on my way to attend to it.' One of the men was not very badly wounded, and before leaving Junction to return home old man Lane went to see him in the temporary lockup. 'Look here, my friend,' he remarked, 'I just want to give you a little bit of advice. If you persist in a following of the business that you have started out in when I sort of stopped you, I think it would be safer for you if you would look over the way bill of any stage you might intend to hold up, and find out in advance who it was a-carrying.' Old man Lane is living yet, and is hale and hearty as you please, and if he starts on a stage ride now anywhere in Montana the driver don't even feel it necessary to lock the treasure box."—[Washington Star.]

Porcupine's Diet.

"You don't have to skirmish around much to get feed to fatten one of those hemlock porcupines on," says an old Potter county woodman to the Philadelphia Times. "Just sprinkle some salt over a stick of cordwood, or a sawlog for that matter, and he'll eat the whole business and enjoy it like you would a mince pie."

"The customary diet of these animals, though, is hemlock browse. They make themselves a home in a hollow log or under the roots of some old tree, but always in reach of a big hemlock. The hemlock is their pasture, and they make beaten paths going to and fro between the tree and their home. The porcupine climbs the tree as readily as a squirrel would, provided you don't slip up and cut his tail off while he is going up. Somehow or other he can't climb the tree without his tail, nor he won't come down without it."

"If you watch one of these porcupines climbing a tree and chop his tail off close he will stop where he is and will stay there until he starves to death unless he is taken away. Once up the tree, the porcupine goes out on the big limbs and pulling the smaller branches in with one paw brushes on the pungent leaves. In going through the woods you will find little piles of these fine leaves on the ground under hemlock trees. That means that a porcupine is feeding in the tree, the leaves on the tree being dropped from his feast. Sometimes a porcupine will remain in a hemlock tree for a week at a time, hugging close to a trunk at night and feeding during the day. This curious little beast is the only known living thing that eats the foliage of the hemlock."

New Hampshire was formerly called Laecia.