

### THE OLD HYMN.

I sat within a vacant room,  
A low-ceiled room, quaint-shaped, oak-beamed,  
With windows looking off to sea,  
O'er which the sunset's glory streamed.  
I watched the far-off flitting sails,  
And "Half-way Rock" that looming rose  
A tower from the heaving sea  
Whereon the scattered isles repose.

And some one near me gently played  
A dear old hymn that stirred my heart;  
'Twas "Children of the Heavenly King."  
And what it woke made quick tears start.  
The long years seemed to backward turn,  
And I a little child again.  
Held fast within his strong arms' clasp,  
While soft he crooned the old refrain.  
Oh! just once more to be that child,  
And know again the blissful rest  
The old hymn brought me, rocked to sleep  
With pillowed head upon his breast!  
But only yet a little while,  
Though earth may call it years that creep,  
I know he'll come to me again,  
And rock me to eternal sleep.  
—Mary Devereux, in Boston Transcript.

### Aboard the Silver Star.

One rainy night, about half past 8 o'clock, the train had dashed into McKibben's Corners, and the mail had been delivered at the store and post office.

John Fairjohn, the postmaster, had opened the bag and counted the letters. There were, as he made it out, just ten and one was larger than the others, and had a red seal; and then he had found that he had left his glasses on the newspaper in the back room, and without his glasses he could not read a line; and so, of course, he had gone after them, returning to find two persons in the store—Farmer Roper and Squire McKibben, whose ancestors had given name to the place.

"Wet, ain't it?" said Mr. Fairjohn nodding.  
"Wet, or not, our folks ain't going to do without their groceries, you see," said the squire. "Mall's in, I see. That train came near running into my truck, too. Wasn't noticing the flag, and drove across just in time to save myself. Any letters for me?"

"I'll see," said Mr. Fairjohn.  
He turned to the little pile of envelopes and told them over in his hand like a pack of cards.  
"Why, there's only nine," he said. "I'm sure I counted right. I counted ten, and I thought one had a red seal. I might as well give up keeping the office if I'm going to lose my senses like that. There wasn't any one in here while I was gone, was there, squire?"

"Only Roper and I," said the squire, "and Roper's son. But he didn't come in, did he?"  
"No," said Mr. Fairjohn. "I don't think Job came in at all. He just went on somewhere."  
"Well," said the postmaster, after another search, "well, I must be mistaken. Yes, there is a letter for you—your folks, anyway—and something for you, Mr. Roper. And I suppose you wouldn't mind tossing that in at the Smiths' as you pass."  
"Oh! no," said Farmer Roper. "Give it to me. That's from Smith that's clerking it to New York, I reckon. Can't get any of 'em to stay and farm."  
"Your son Job did," said the squire.  
"Oh! my son Job. He'd try the patience of his namesake," said Farmer Roper. "My son Job! Bah."

Just at this moment the door of the store opened and there entered at it a little woman, dressed in a cheap calico dress and wrapped in a thin and faded shawl.

She looked timidly about the store, still more timidly at the heap of letters, and then in an appealing voice, like that of a frightened child, said:  
"Mr. Fairjohn, is there any letter for me this time?"

The postmaster, who was a little deaf, had turned his head away and did not know that she had entered, and she came closer to the counter and to the light upon it before she spoke again. She was a faded little woman, and her face had signs of grief written upon it, but she was not either old or ugly yet, and there was something in the damp curls clustering under the faded calico hood, and in the little round dimpled chin, absolutely child-like, even yet.

"Is there any letters for me this time, Mr. Fairjohn?" she said again; and this time the postmaster looked up.  
"No, there ain't; and you're a fool for taking such a walk to ask," said he, with rough kindness. "Wouldn't I have sent it if it had a come, Mrs. Lester?"  
"Well, you see, I felt in a hurry to get it," said she. "You can't blame me for being in a hurry; it's so long."  
"That's true," said the postmaster. "Well, better luck next time. But why don't you wait? Mr. McKibben will take you over when he goes. He passes your corner."  
"Yes, wait, Mrs. Lester," cried Mr. McKibben. "I'll take ye, and welcome."  
But she had answered:  
"Thank you, I don't mind walking," and was gone.  
"Keeps it up, don't she?" asked the postmaster.  
"It's a shame," said Mr. McKibben. "How many years is it now since Lester went off?"

"Ten," said the postmaster. "I know, for it was the day I came here. She was as pretty a woman as you'd want to see then, wasn't she?"  
"Well, yes," said Mr. McKibben.

"Sailed in the Sphinx," said the postmaster. "And we all know that the Sphinx went down in that voyage, all hands along with her. The rest of the women put on widow's weeds, them that lost husbands—four in this town itself. They took what the Almighty sent and didn't rebel. She set up that her husband wasn't dead, and would come back. She's kept it up ever since; come for his letters regular; and he was drowned along with all the rest, of course, ten years ago. She must be 30. Well, she's changed a good deal in that time."  
"Yes," said the other old man; "but there's my son Job, wild over her yet. He's offered himself twice. He stands ready to offer himself again any day—ready to be a father to her boy and a good husband to her. He's better off than I be. His mother's father left him all he had. He's crazy, is Job—crazy, I call it. Plenty of pretty gals and healthy, smart widows, and he sees no one but that pale, slim, little thing that's just going out into the mud; and she—why, of course she's lost her senses or she'd have him. Works like a slave to keep herself and the child, lives in a rickety shanty, waiting and waiting for a drowned man to come back again. Why, every one knows Charlie Lester was drowned in the Sphinx. There wasn't a soul saved, not one. It was in the papers. Now, the bottle was found with a letter in it, writ by some one just before the ship sunk. And she's waitin' for him yet!"

"Crazy on that point," said the postmaster. "Well, poor soul, she'd only been married a week when the Sphinx sailed; that makes a difference."  
"Oh, yes," said the farmer.

Then, their parcels being ready, they went out to their wagons, and Mr. Fairjohn, having started up into the rainy night awhile, put up his shutters and went to bed. Meanwhile the woman plodded on through the mud. "Walking off her disappointment," she said to herself. "It was one she should have been used to, and now the absurdity of it seemed to strike her for the first time in all these years."  
"They laugh at me," she muttered to herself. "I know they laugh at me. Perhaps I am mad; but they don't know what love is. Charlie wouldn't have left me like that. If he had died he would have given me some sign; and yet—yet, if he were alive, it would be stranger still. No, no; they are right—I am wrong. He must be dead."  
And as though the news had just been whispered to her, she clasped her hands to her forehead, gave a cry, and sank down on her knees in the road. She knelt there a few moments and then arose. In this little interval the wind had blown the clouds from the sky, and the moonlight lay white upon the path, and lit her on her way to her poor home.

There at the door sat a man, a strong, determined looking fellow, who arose as she approached and held out his hand.  
"Here you come," he said, "tired to death. Jessie Lester, can't you give up this nonsense and think of the living a little. Think of me, Jessie, for half an hour."  
"I do think of you," she said. "I'm very sorry you should be so good to me when I must seem so bad to you."  
Then she sat down on the porch and took her little hood off, and leaned her head wearily against the wall of the house; and the man arose and crossed over and sat down beside her.

"Give it a softer resting place, Jessie," he said, "here on my heart."  
She looked out into the night, not at him, as she spoke.  
"Job," she said, "I begin to think you are right, that he went down in the Sphinx with the rest, ten years ago. But what good would I do you? What do you want to marry me for?"  
The man drew closer as he answered.

"Before you married Charles Lester, I loved you. All these ten years since that vessel went down in mid ocean, I've loved you. A man must have the woman he loves if he gives his soul for her."  
"What a horrible thing!" said she. "His soul?"  
"I should have said his life," said Job. "I don't want to shock you. But you don't know what it would be to me to have you. And then I'd do everything for your boy."  
"Yes," she answered. "I know you would."

There was a pause. Then she gave him her hand.  
"Job," she said, softly, "I shall pretend nothing I don't feel, but I know I've been crazy all this time, and if you want me you may have me. It's very good of you to love me so."  
And thus it seemed to have ended, that ten years' watching and waiting, and there was triumph in Job's eyes as he turned away and left her with his first kiss upon her lips. But at the end of the green lane he paused and looked back.  
"I told her the truth," he said, "when I said that when a man loved a woman as I love her, he must have her, if the price were his soul itself."  
And then he drew from his breast a letter with a great red seal upon it, looked at it for a moment, and hid it away again.

Married? Yes, they were to be married. Every one at McKibben's Corners knew that now. Jessie Lester went no more to the post office for her long expected letter. Job was furnishing his house—had furnished it, for on the morning the wedding was to take place. And it was night again. A month from that night, when she had

come for the last time, as every one thought, through rain and mud, to make her sadly foolish query, she was sensible at last—very sensible. She had chosen the substance instead of the shadow.

And now, as we said, it was night, and a wetter one than the other—later, too, for Mr. Fairjohn had closed the store, and was compounding himself; what he called a "nightcap" of warm water, lemons and sugar, and was sipping it by the stove, when there came upon his door a feeble knock, and when, being repeated, he heard it, there staggered out of the rain a dripping figure—that of Jessie Lester, the bride who was to be on the morrow.

She was trembling with cold, and as he led her to the fire she burst into a flood of tears.  
"I'm frightened," she said. "Some one followed me all the way. I heard them."  
"You've no business to be out alone at night," said old Fairjohn, bluntly. "And what's the matter?"  
She looked up at him piteously.  
"I thought there would be a letter," said she. "I dreamt there was one. I thought Charlie came to me and said: Go to the office once more. I have written, I have written, and I thought I saw a letter with a red seal."  
"So did I," muttered old Fairjohn to himself.

He went to the box where the letters were kept, and brought them to her in his hand.  
"Look for yourself," he said. "And now, Mrs. Lester, I'm an old man. Take my advice. Remember what your duty will be after tomorrow. Remember not to go crazy. Ten years have gone since your husband left this place. If he's alive he's a rascal, and you are free of him by law; but we all know that every man on board the Sphinx was drowned. So be a good wife to Job Roper and forget this folly. I'll take you home again this time. Don't come again."  
"I seemed to know it had a red seal."

And as she spoke, old Fairjohn, glancing at the door, saw a dark shadow there; saw it grow darker, saw it enter, and, starting up on his defense, if need was, recognized Job Roper.

He was very pale, and he took no notice of Fairjohn, but, crossing the store, stood beside Jessie Lester.  
"You love that man best, even now," he said. "You'd rather have found a letter from him than not, though tomorrow is our wedding day."  
She looked up into his face with a piteous glance.  
"I never lied to you, Job," said she. "You know that."  
"He grew whiter still."  
"I told you a man would lose his soul for such love as mine," said he. "Did you think those were idle words?"  
Then he plunged his hand into his bosom and the next instant a letter, with a red seal, lay in Jessie's lap.

"I've made you happy, and now I'll go," he said. "Fairjohn, I stole that letter a month ago off the counter yonder. I knew who wrote it at a glance, and then the door clanged behind him and he was gone."  
But Jessie had torn open the letter and never looked after him.  
And these were the words she read, old Fairjohn read over her shoulder:  
"Aboard the Silver Star."  
"Jessie, darling: I don't know what makes me believe that I shall find you mine still, after all these years; but something does."  
"Five of us were cast on a desert island when the Sphinx went down. The two yet alive were taken off yesterday in skins with our beards on our knees. We must go to England first—then home. Jessie, Jessie, if I do not find you as I left you I shall go mad. Your husband."  
"CHARLES LESTER."

And so Jessie's letter came at last, and as John Fairjohn looked into her face he saw how angels look in Paradise.  
And Job, Job was found drowned in the Kill next morning. Jessie never knew it, perhaps, for she and her boy were on their way to New York to meet the Silver Star when it made port.

An ingenious Sounding Apparatus.  
Rapid test soundings were required in some work on a railway line between Paris and Havre, where the cast-iron viaduct of Bezons was replaced by an arch bridge alongside. The old foundations for six channel piers were removed to the bottom of the river. It was required that the river bed should be carefully leveled. After it had been dredged, the bottom was explored by means of a horizontal bar of iron about 20 feet long, which was suspended at each end from a framework uniting two flat boats in catamaran fashion. This beam was lowered close to the bottom and the boats were gradually moved along in the direction transverse to the length of the bar. When the scraper encountered no irregularity the suspending chain hung vertically, but as soon as either end was deflected by contact with any obstruction an electric circuit was closed, which caused an alarm to be rung. The boat was stopped and the obstruction located by means of sounding poles. In this way small stones, down to a diameter of four inches, were easily located, and the bed of the river was leveled to within that amount of irregularity. This method proved rapid and successful.

Likes His Nicknames.  
Emperor William was recently told that three of his nicknames were "The Traveling Kaiser," "Alarm Frits" and "Gondola Billy." "Well," he answered, "inasmuch as they all make me out a busy man, I rather like them."

### NOTES AND COMMENTS.

It is said the debt of Greater New York is already \$50,000,000 beyond the constitutional limit.

With the present tendency toward breeding off and dehorning, will the next generation of children be obliged to regard long horned cattle as freaks? Asks the New England Homestead.

Not at all discouraged by the outcome of last season's experimental exports of butter, Secretary Wilson, of the Department of Agriculture, is about to resume them on an enlarged scale.

It is claimed that the late Roland Worthington of the Boston Traveler, that he first employed newsboys to sell his papers in the streets of that city, and set up the first bulletin to display the news.

No other large city is as quiet as Berlin. Railway engines are not allowed to blow their whistles within the city limits, and the man whose wagon-gearing is loose and rattling is subject to a fine.

Professor Galloway, who has no fears of a "coalless England," in a recent lecture at Cardiff, estimated the coal yet remaining in the South Wales coal fields at 31,000,000,000 tons, enough, at the present rate of 34,000,000 tons annually, to last 920 years.

Professor Benjamin Howard is the only American who has thus far been able to reach the Siberian island of Saghalien, where the worst Russian criminals are sent. He asserts that the commonly accepted tales of the horrors of this prison are exaggerations.

"It seems," says the London Echo, "that the Englishwoman's foot, long famous abroad for its prodigious size, is growing steadily bigger—so much so, in fact, that the shoemakers in Leeds have just been granted an increase of pay because of the increase in the average-size boot now required."

Kotzebue sound looms up as the scene of the next Alaskan gold rush. It is a long way from the Klondike, but probably none the worse for that. While some of the stories from the sound are clearly apocryphal, enough is known of the actual presence of gold in the hands of the Esquimaux living there to warrant the thorough exploration which is now promised.

The classic names of some of the old war monitors that are now obtaining publicity in the papers are a reminiscence of the time, subsequent to the war, when the then Secretary of the Navy took it into his head to re-name these low lying craft with appellations which suggest a classical dictionary, such as "Ajax," "Jason," and the like.

Life insurance is now in force in the United States to the amount of nearly 8,000 millions of dollars. The business is growing so rapidly that last year it increased about \$250,000,000. The companies' assets increased 100 millions, standing at 1,350 millions of dollars on January 1, 1898, while their surplus above all liabilities amounts to nearly \$200,000. Such results are significant of growth, yet comparatively few farmers (the largest body of the population) are insured.

The Melbourne Herald says: The mode of sending the message of condolence to the President of the United States regarding the Maine disaster was discussed by the Australian Premier now in Melbourne before it was dispatched. One or two of the Prime Ministers held that it should be sent through one of the Governors and the Secretary for the Colonies, but Mr. Reid brushed such arguments aside. The people of the United States, he contended, were not "foreigners" in the sense that those of France or Russia were, but our kith and kin, so he decided to send the message direct to President McKinley.

German officers in Berlin, says Self-Culture, enjoy many social and other dignities and advantages. But they can never carry an umbrella which is regarded as an unsoldierly practice, nor ride in an ordinary omnibus, for that is beneath their dignity. Emperor Frederick rode on the first street car introduced into Berlin twenty years ago, and officers are accordingly at liberty to use that mode of conveyance. But if they take a cab it must be a first class one, and if they patronize an entertainment they must do so in liberal style. It is evident that the Germans take the profession of arms as they do everything else, very seriously.

A return presented in the Dominion Parliament gives the Indian population of Canada as 99,364, and they are scattered through all its provinces. Nearly three-quarters of the whole number belong to some religious denomination, the Catholics numbering 41,813, the Anglicans 16,139 and the Methodists 10,203, the rest being divided among other Christian bodies. Of those not registered in known religious sects about 16,000 are pagans, probably keeping up some form of native worship, but making no particular display thereof and eluding statistical tabulations. From an industrial point of view the Canada Indians make quite a respectable showing, their earnings last year footing up about \$2,500,000.

Another Grand Army colony like the one at Fitzgerald, Ga., is planned. The second one is to be located about sixteen miles southwest of Staunton, Va., on the Stribling Springs property, which has recently been purchased, at a cost of \$100,000, by a stock company of veterans. The capital is \$100,000, divided into 1,000 shares, the first payment of each share being \$2 and the remainder being paid in monthly installments of \$10. Each share entitles the holder to a plot of ground. This property acquired consists of 2,000 acres of land, twenty-six commodious

cottages, and a large hotel equipped with all modern appliances. On the grounds are nine varieties of medicinal spring waters. The hotel will be used as a sanitarium for the veterans who, through age or other disability, need medical attendance. A railroad will be built from Staunton to the springs, and manufacturing and other industries started. All profits accruing from the sale of land or franchises will be divided among the stockholders. Each stockholder will erect a residence on the lot assigned to him, and his livelihood, in addition to his pension, will be obtained from the industries to be started.

Could Have Been Robbed at Home.  
"I want to expose a game tnat is going on here in town," said a visitor with a bad taste in his mouth this morning.

"What is the game?" was asked.  
"I have been lied to and robbed of \$600."

"You should have reported such matters to the police."  
"No; you are a-thinking I'm a-worrying about that \$600, but I ain't—the being fooled is worse than that."

"How were you fooled? Did somebody bunco you?"  
"Yes, that money business was a sure-enough bunco, but the other was the worse—they lied to me."

"In what way?"  
"Well, you see, I came here to Denver, from the East, and a couple of fellows were showing me around. They took me up in a high building and showed me Pike's Peak, and I wanted to get a peep at that pretty bad. After this we got to drinking and I missed my money."

"Pretty mean trick to roll a friend who trusts you."  
"That ain't it. I don't care a rap for that—for the money or for anything else—if they hadn't lied to me."  
"What did they lie about?"

"About the Peak. That's what makes me mad. They showed me Long's Peak, instead of Pike's, as I discovered just a minute ago. Such treatment of strangers ought to be stopped. I came out here just to see Pike's Peak, and I don't need to have come this far to get robbed, for I could have got that experience right at home in Chicago.—Denver Times.

Making Wood Rims for Bicycles.  
The average annual output of wood novelties in Maine has a value well over \$1,000,000. One of the most interesting branches of the industry is the manufacture of wood rims for bicycles. The factory where the manufacture is carried on has a floor space of 78,800 feet; its daily output averages about 1,800 rims, and the value of its yearly product if about \$120,000. The wood used is rock maple, and each rim is composed of three pieces glued and pressed together with such force and exactitude that the rim appears like one piece, and only the most searching examination can detect the joints. After these pieces have been steamed, bent and glued, they are submitted to an enormous pressure in a steam power machine. They are then taken to the lathes, one of which turns the concave surface of the outside, and another the convex surface of the inside of the rim. After passing on to the sandpaper machine for smoothing, they are stained and varnished and bored for the spokes, and are ready for shipment. The wood must be perfect, and not the least defect or discoloration is allowed to pass. Much of the machinery has been designed expressly for this plant, and the machines, as well as all the steps in the construction of the rims, require the supervision of skilled mechanics.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Little Tables.  
In good housekeeping, as in nature, nothing need be wasted. One might suppose that an old chair had a legitimate ending when the seat was quite gone, and the rungs falling apart. Yet see—the four legs will support a square board, and when the whole is stained and varnished, there is a most useful little table for the porch; or, painted white, it may become a stand to keep close by the sewing chair and hold the work basket. A second table may be evolved by using the longest spokes of the chair back as legs, only in this case the shape of the table's top had best be triangular, and for it three legs will be sufficient. This will make a very small table, and need not be stained or painted if a bright cover is thrown over it; but its most convenient use will be to hold a light tea kettle at four o'clock. All these handicraft trifles should be handed over to our amateur carpenters—boys and girls—for it is the right of every family of children to possess a tool chest and a work bench set in the garret. A tool chest is an excellent investment in a household.—New York Ledger.

A Useful, Strong Paste.  
This article, so useful in the home, can be depended upon to do duty well, if prepared as follows: In half a quart of warm water dissolve a small teaspoonful of alum, and when it cools add enough flour to make it into a thin paste. Stir it till smooth, then add a pinch or so of powdered resin, and pour on to the paste half a cupful of boiling water. When well mixed and thickened, turn into a receptacle with a cover, and store in a dry corner of a cupboard. When required for use, soften a small quantity with warm water.—Philadelphia Times.

The New Orleans Picayune says: All sections of this glorious country are now a unit in sentiment. The U. S. now means U.S.

### THE STAGE DRIVER'S BLUFF.

Narrowbreadth Stories of Accidents Faded in Awe Passenger With Suicidal Notions.

As we left Sandy Gulch for Rising Star, there were six male passengers to go by the stage, and the route was over the mountains and full of chances of disaster, relates a correspondent of the Atlanta Constitution. The driver came out from breakfast as soon as the passengers, he selected a small, pale faced man and invited him to climb up beside him. While the pale faced man was climbing the driver whispered to the rest of us:

"I picked him out in order to scare him to death. You fellows will see a heap of fun before we've gone ten miles."

Two minutes west of the Gulch the road made a sudden turn, with a sheer fall of a hundred feet down to Wild Cat Creek, and the driver put his horses at the gallop and said to the man:

"We may get around all right, or we may fetch up down below. Hold your breath and say yer prayers!"

The passenger made no move and did not change countenance, and, after making the course all right, the driver rather dignantly demanded:

"Didn't you see that off-wheel run within a foot of the edge of the precipice?"

"It ran within six inches, sir!" was the reply.

Beyond that curve was a down grade of a mile, and with a yell and a flourish of his whip the driver urged his horses to a dead run. The five of us inside had to hang on for dear life, and every half minute the stage seemed bound to go over.

"Did you know that if we'd struck a rock we'd all been dead men in no time?"

"Of course."

"And you wasn't prayin'?"

"Not at all."

Three or four miles further on the driver tried his man with another curve. In his determination to make a close call of it one wheel ran off the edge of the precipice, and only a sudden effort of the horses saved the coach. We were flung in a heap and frightened half to death, but the man beside the driver never lost a puff of his cigar. When things were safe the driver turned on him with:

"That, surely, was a brink of graves."

"Guess it was," was the quiet reply.

"The closest shave you will ever have till the last one comes."

"Yes."

"See here, now, but what sort of a critter ar' you?" was the query. "Don't you know 'nuff to git skeart?"

"Nothing has happened yet to scare me."

"But mebbe ye want me to drive plum over a precipice a thousand feet high?"

"If you conveniently can. The fact is I came off up here intending to commit suicide, and if you can dump the whole of us over some cliff you'll oblige me."

A Pair of Trained Goldfish.

William F. Simon, No. 485 East 46th Street, has a pair of trained goldfishes. They are of the Japan fantail variety and four years old. He began training them when they were very small, and now they perform many remarkable and amusing tricks. One of them is leaping through a ring. This he suspends by a cord in the natorium, and at the word of command they jump through it after the fashion of a dog through a hoop, back and forth, so long as the ring is held in position for them. Mr. Simon also has taught them another novel but more intricate feat. It is no less than going through the figures of a quadrille. This, Mr. Simon says, required a great deal of time and a vast amount of patience, but he was finally rewarded with perfection in the unique performance. As there are only two of them, they cannot be said to perform a quadrille proper, but they go through all the movements of the genuine article. "Forward and back," "across over and back to places," "swing corners," "grand right and left" and "all promenade" are rendered with the utmost precision.

The Mosquito's Sting.

The bill of a mosquito is a complex instrument. It has a blunt fork at the head and is apparently grooved. Working through the groove, and projecting from the angle of the fork, is a lance of perfect form, sharpened with a fine bevel. On either side of the lance two saws are arranged, with their points fine and sharp. The backs of these saws play against the lance. When the mosquito alights with its peculiar hum it thrusts its keen lance and then enlarges the aperture with the two saws, which play beside the lance until the forked bill, with its capillary arrangement for pumping blood, can be inserted. The sawing process is what grates upon the nerves of the victim and causes him to strike wildly at the sawyer.

What They Called a Chicago Street.

There was once a street on the North Side called Goetha.

There was once a street on the North Side called Geatie.

There was once a street on the North Side called Gothie.

There was once a street on the North Side called Gattie.

There was once a street on the North Side called Geethy.

There was once a street on the North Side called Goethy.

There was once a street on the North Side called Goot.—Chicago Times-Herald.