

LITTLE MILLIONAIRES.

Twenty little millionaires
Playing in the sun;
Millionaires in mother-love,
Millionaires in fun,
Millionaires in leisure hours,
Millionaires in joys,
Millionaires in hopes and plans,
Are these girls and boys.

Millionaires in health are they,
And in dancing blood,
Millionaires in shells and stones,
Sticks and moss and mud;
Millionaires in castles
In the air, and worth
Quite a million times as much
As castles on the earth.

Twenty little millionaires,
Playing in the sun;
Oh, how happy they must be,
Every single one!
Hardly any years have they,
Hardly any cares;
But in every lovely thing
Multimillionaires.
—Youth's Companion.

Lafitte's Treasure

History was at fault in the first instance. For, had the characters figuring in this fearful tale not been compelled by stern parents to attend the Galveston schools they might never have heard of Jean Lafitte, and had they not read about him and his hidden treasure, John Erskine would never have gone in search of it and thus made a fool out of himself as he did.

The "Sons of Kest"—so named because none of them had ever been observed to do a useful day's work—constituted a club of young men, the principal members of which were Erskine, Gordon, Welling, Johnstone and an old colored man, Massa Sam Washington, who worked for the Erskines and was a sort of valet de chambre to John, the family priest. Now, the latter and Bruce Gordon were universally admitted to be the cleverest of the whole bunch, but both of the young men, being ambitious, were not satisfied to share the honor with another, and each was desirous of becoming the only rooster in the club coop.

Hence the rivalry between them was keen. And it is with this rivalry, into which, by a peculiar stroke of chance, Jean Lafitte and his buried treasure became involved and helped to solve the question of superiority between the two, that this story concerns itself.

Jean Lafitte, the reader may be informed, was the famous filibuster and pirate who during the early part of the last century made things hum in the Gulf, where he annexed every Spanish merchantman that came his way. In this dangerous but lucrative vocation he amassed a huge fortune in the shape of jewelry and Hispano doubloons. Alas, whenever he wanted to rest on his laurels he retired to Galveston Island, where he had fitted up a snug little pirate principality, over which he, Jean Lafitte, reigned as a sort of king.

This pleasant existence lasted for nearly six years. One day a number of Lafitte's men plundered an American vessel, and that was the finish. In the spring of 1821, Lieut. Kearney, of the United States Navy, appeared before the fort with a man of war and asked Lafitte if he didn't think his health demanded a change of atmosphere.

So solicitous an interest in himself Lafitte could not bear, and he departed for parts unknown. In his haste to get away he is believed to have left his treasure, securely buried in the ground, behind him, the inference being that he would return later and claim it. Instead of that death claimer him soon afterward in Yucatan; hence the treasure, if the tradition was true, should still remain untouched in the island's moist ground.

Erskine, who was a pretty bright fellow, and possessed of the peculiar knack of summing a person's ensemble in one word, had given each of the members of the Sons of Rest a nickname appropriate to their respective failings. Welling, for instance, who had learned the machinist's trade, but whose mind was bent on racing, was the Sporting Blacksmith. Johnstone, whose hair was strongly reminiscent of an impressionist painter's sunset, was known as Red; while Sam Washington had been nicknamed Old Kentucky. The Sons of Rest thought this a very witty name—all except Gordon, and Massa Washington himself, who indeed was much pained at the appellation.

It stood to reason under these circumstances that Gordon would not long remain a member of the Sons of Rest before the wit of Erskine would also find a suitable nickname for him. Gordon was one of those fellows sent to this planet to illumine the gloom of daily existence for the benefit of the rest of us mortal sinners. An adventurous youth, who had been around the world and fought for Cuba Libre, he was full of new and novel pranks. He could also tell some stories the artistic effects of which were heightened to no small extent by his vivid imagination.

But he differed from Erskine in that whatever his sins against truth he never hurt anyone's feelings if he could help it. He never called Sam Old Kentucky, for example, and Sam, being a grateful soul, remembered this fact. This was also one of the reasons why, although the latest addition to the membership of the Sons, he became so popular as to seriously endanger the supremacy of Erskine, till then, the undisputed leader. Erskine saw the danger, and believing with Napoleon that it was best to assume the offensive when waiting only makes the enemy stronger, he decided

to pitch into Gordon. So one evening, after winking at the rest of the fellows as much as to say, "Watch me," Erskine started in.

"Say, Bruce," he began "I'll bet you a cigar to each of the boys that you can't prove you're alive."

"It's a go," replied Gordon, without hesitation. "All I have to do is to say that you're a fool for making such a bet."

The laughter of the rest of the fellows at this sally, and their murmuring about a solar plexus to some one, undid Erskine for a moment, but he speedily recovered, saying, addressing Gordon:

"You win, Baron Munchausen." And after this Bruce Gordon was known only as Munchausen, and Erskine seemed to have retained his place.

It was perhaps a week later that the Lafitte subject happened to come on the tapis. Erskine announced his faith in the old tradition.

"I think there is something in it," he began. "Why, Old Kentucky knew Manuel Lopez, who was Lafitte's valet. He told Kentucky that he believed in the story himself. If I only had a clew to work on," he wound up, "I wouldn't mind looking for it myself, because I need the money."

While Erskine was talking, a peculiar smile had come to Gordon's lips. He walked home very thoughtfully that night. In the morning he called on Old Kentucky and unfolded to him a plan which made Sam show his toothless gums in great wonder, and, after some persuasion, nod his silvery head in assent.

It was a few days after this secret conference that Washington came to Erskine, and with a very mysterious air showed him an old rusty dagger. Erskine's curiosity was aroused; he asked the darky where he had found it. And then Sam, in a low and hushed voice, as if fearing to be overheard, confided how on the day before he had taken a stroll out along the beach. Getting tired, he had seated himself on one of the sandhills and there in the shrubbery had found the antique weapon.

"But what makes you think it is Lafitte's dagger?" Erskine asked, in some wonder at the darky's acumen.

The latter grinned, then pointed to the initials "J. L." on the blade. Erskine was convinced. It was a clear case, he thought, and visions of wealth began to pass in review before him. He warned Sam not to say a word to anybody about it, especially not to Bruce. Then he went to the hardware store and bought a regular miner's outfit.

That night about 12 o'clock a typical farmer's wagon might have been observed hurrying along the wet beach. In the wagon were Erskine, his dog, Sam Houston, and Old Kentucky. It was a typical Southern summer night. Far up in the dark blue sky the full moon was lighting up the barren landscape and converting the small rows of rumbling traves in the Gulf into a mass of rippling silver.

After two hours' ride the treasure hunters finally reached their destination. It was the most miserable place on the island, nothing but sand and shrubbery, fed on s. a. breezes. Erskine felt a sensation of uneasiness creep over him as he crawled out of the wagon, laden with the mining implements.

"You had better keep a lookout here on the beach," he said to Sam, "while I do the digging."

And then Erskine set to work. For an hour he toiled as he had never toiled before or after. Meantime, Sam, with a chuckle, was beginning to fall asleep, with an exclamation of triumph suddenly aroused him.

"Oh, Kentucky!" he heard Erskine's excited voice call out, in a suppressed sort of way, "I have it! Look!"

And John Erskine pointed to the bottom of the deep hole his industry had created.

Sure enough! There, deep down, mouldering in the moist air, reposed a 4 by 6 iron box, such as a pirate might have used in which to preserve his predatory wealth. Erskine's face was a study. He trembled, as if convulsed with fever. Then he took the spade and began to pound the box. Suddenly, with a bang, the lid opened and revealed a pile of rocks, scraps of iron and pieces of metal. On top of all was a sheet of paper. With an oath Erskine seized it and read:

"Gentlemen: I am sorry that I have to disappoint you. Yes, it is true, I buried my treasure here when called away. Last night, however, there was a big poker game down in Hades. Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, my old friend Nap, and your obedient constituted the party. You will remember the three first mentioned individuals were considered pretty slick in their days. Well, I can inform you that they have not forgotten them as yet. Result, I went broke, and as the necessary for me to collect my old treasure. Hopin', that by this I did not inconvenience you, I remain, yours truly,

"Jean Lafitte."

It would be impossible to describe the emotions of John Erskine. He seemed for a moment bereft of reason. When he recovered and Sam was entering the wagon, another thing occurred. The little figure of Gordon became suddenly silhouetted by the moon, as he emerged from some mysterious hiding place, his face convulsed with laughter. His appearance caused a light to dawn upon Erskine that did not tend to mollify him. But since that memorable night Bruce Gordon has been the undisputed leader of the Sons of Rest.—New York Sun.

Opportunity's Soft Knocks.
Opportunity knocks at the door of most men so gently that they can't hear it if their ears are glued to the keyhole.—New York Press.

FATAL POSSESSIONS.

Weird Romance of a Finger Ring That Killed a Bride.

Some of the most weird and curious romances which appear to have no other purpose than to bring misfortune and trouble on those who own them. A tragic instance of this is related in connection with the Lindsey family. According to the legend, Colin Lindsey, a former Earl of Balcarres, was quietly eating his breakfast when he should have been awaiting his bride at the altar. When reminded of the fact he hurried off to church, and, for getting the indispensable ring, borrowed one from a friend, which he duly placed on the bride's finger.

At the conclusion of the ceremony the newly-made countess took a glance at the ring and, on seeing that it bore a grinning death's head, suddenly fainted away. The incident affected her to such an extent that, on recovering consciousness, she expressed her conviction that she was destined to die within twelve months. And sure enough, in less than that period her life came to an end. Napoleon III was the possessor of two rings, which he constantly wore, and which had belonged to his predecessor, Napoleon I, who was a fatalist in the fullest meaning of the term. When Napoleon III died it was proposed that these rings should be removed from his finger; but the prince imperial refused to have them.

They were accordingly buried with his father at Chislehurst, and, so far regarding them from the same point of view as the prince, the emperor's servants firmly believed that he would come to an untimely end for discarding the rings. And when, in 1879, the unfortunate young man met his death at the hands of the Zulus, against whom he was fighting for this country, they saw in this deplorable event the realization of their fears. One of the best-known public men in New Zealand, a wealthy resident of Hokiangi, North Island, recently traveled all the way to St. Louis, U. S. A., in a fruitless endeavor to have an idol cremated which had cast an evil spell over him. The heathen idol had come to him as part of a legacy from his grandfather, to whom it had been presented by a Maori chief. Said its owner, "I have traveled 10,000 miles with the image, and it has brought disaster after disaster upon me. I have often endeavored to destroy it, but without avail. I once threw it under a train, and in running to get out of the way, fell and broke one of my fingers. Then I was arrested for endangering the lives of passengers. When in London three months ago I threw it into the Thames, and a drunken sailor who fished it out brought it back to my rooms, and in his rage at not receiving a reward, almost beat me to death. While in San Francisco I tried to chop it to pieces with an ax, when the ax rebounding, struck me on the forehead with almost fatal effect. The wood is so hard that an ordinary fire will not destroy it, and I am afraid to get rid of it otherwise because of the evil results." The image was a crude figure in rosewood and ebony, and about two feet long. Falling to get it cremated in St. Louis its owner started for New York, where he was determined to have it destroyed at whatever cost.

Buried in the shadow of Diamond Head Volcano, at Honolulu, is a violin known as the "Violin of Death." In the space of a few months two persons who had owned it took their own lives and a third mysteriously disappeared. The last victim of this weird instrument was George H. Scott, a sergeant of the United States army, 66th Coast Artillery. This victim killed himself at the barracks at Camp McKinley, but a few days before doing so he realized the evil influence of the violin and buried it as above stated.—Tit-Bits.

The Largest Cave in Europe.
In the Muota-thal, near Schwyz, Switzerland, there is what is probably the largest cave in Europe. The existence of the cave had long been known, but as it could only be entered by crawling no one had troubled to investigate the interior. This summer, however, three separate parties have explored it. The distance traversed amounts, altogether, to no less than 8,000 yards, and the end of the cavern has not yet been reached, says a contemporary. Evidently the grotto is greater than those of either Han or the Adelsberg, and is to be counted among the most striking of the curiosities of the Alps. The entrance is close to the village in which Suvoroff had his headquarters in the campaign of 1779; but that great general was kept much too busy to notice it.—St. James' Gazette.

More "Spoonerisms."
Prof. Spooner of Oxford once, at a special service, seeing some women standing at the back of the church waiting to be seated, rushed down the aisle and addressed the ushers as follows: "Gentlemen, gentlemen, sew these ladies into their sheets." Being asked at dinner what fruit he would have, he promptly replied: "Pigs, peas."

This is the way in which Dr. Spooner proposed to his wife. Being one afternoon at the home of her father, Bishop Harvey Goodwin of Carlisle, Mrs. Goodwin said: "Mr. Spooner, will you please go out into the garden and ask Miss Goodwin if she will come in and make tea?" The professor, on ending the young lady, said: "Miss Goodwin, your mother told me to ask if you would come in and make tea."

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Queer Rite of Jews

How Dwellers in American Cities Preserve Symbol of Desert Wanderings.

The oldest industry in the metropolis is that of a succoth carpenter, who finds employment one week of the year in the Ghetto among the orthodox Jews. His work is done in the fortnight which precedes the Feast of the Tabernacles and consists in building odd little booths known as succoths in the back yards of the tenement houses. The feast of the tabernacle is supposed to commemorate the time during which the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness, and probably also their sojourn in the land of Egypt. During this period they lived more or less in the open, which fact is symbolized by the booth having no roof, or else a covering of evergreens and bulrushes. According to another school, the booths represent the time when the Israelites came in such numbers that they were unable to get into the temple, and so built temporary shelters around the sacred edifice.

The succoth should be boxlike in shape, not less than six feet in height, six feet long, and four feet wide. It should be made of the cheapest and flimsiest building material to indicate what it represents. Some of the builders take pride in making the structures as ramshackle as possible. Others use the poorest materials, but saw and fit them with so much skill

that the finished succoth is neat and attractive. There is but little commercial element in the industry. The employer supplies the wood or the builder sells it to him at cost, while for the work of setting it up his price is nearly always fifty cents. Charitable Hebrews will often employ two or three builders and pay each the same as the rest.

Here during the festival week the family takes its meals and assemblies every day for prayer. It is not at all unpleasant in fair weather, but when, as often happens, it rains, the situation is decidedly uncomfortable. On a rainy day symbolism vanishes, as rain is practically unknown in the story desert where the Israelites wandered ages ago.

Still more suggestive is the way in which the prayers are said. Instead of kneeling or of clasping the hands, the one who prays holds a fruit, usually a pomegranate, in one hand and a bulrush or water reed in the other. At the end of the prayer each of these is shaken twice and then handed over to the next member of the family. The water reeds are supposed to commemorate the finding of Moses in the bulrushes, and the fruit the promise of the Lord to give them a land flowing with milk and honey.—New York Evening Post.

A "Wildcat" Mine

Dynamite Used to Dislodge Ferocious Felines from Their Stronghold.

Several mining men who had chanced to meet in a hotel lobby in this city were discussing the various mines in a certain district, when one of them spoke of a "wildcat" mine.

A logger who was sitting near pricked up his ears at this and chipped into the conversation. He said that there was the most productive wildcat mine he ever heard of near the logging camp where he had been working on the lower Columbia. One of the mining men remarked that his idea of a wildcat mine was one that yielded nothing but assessments and asked what this wildcat mine produced.

"Why, wildcats, of course," replied the logger. He then proceeded to explain that many years ago someone had run a tunnel into the side of a hill in search of coal and had run a number of short branches and had gathered about generally in the bowels of the hill, but finding no coal had finally abandoned the workings.

There were wildcats in that section and the parties who had been prospecting for coal left several cats at their cabin. The wildcats and the

tame cats had affiliated and had taken up their abode in the tunnel and had increased in numbers.

Finally a celebrated bear hunter of that region discovered the half-closed entrance to the tunnel, and thinking that perhaps some wild animals might be occupying the place, sent his dogs in to investigate. In a few minutes the dogs came rushing out, literally covered with wildcats and howling like lost spirits. While the fight was going on the old hunter took a hand to help his dogs and killed twenty-seven wildcats.

Dynamite was put in the tunnel at night when the cats were out seeking food and next day the fuse was lighted. As it burned some cats came out and were shot down. The shooting of the dead cats terrified those in the rear and they held back till the tunnel was fairly choked with a gurgling, squalling, spitting army of cats, and then the giant powder exploded and several tons of cats were shot out of the hole.—Portland Oregonian.

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