

At Evening Time,
 Love, give me one of thy dear hands
 to hold,
 Take thou my tired head upon thy
 breast;
 Now sing to me that song we loved
 of old—
 The low, sweet song about our
 little nest.
 We knew the song before the nest
 was ours;
 We sang the song when first the
 nest was found;
 We loved the song in after, happier
 hours,
 When peace came to us, and content
 profound.
 Sing the old song to me, tonight, be-
 loved.
 While I, my head upon thy faithful
 breast,
 See wondrous visions in the fair fire-
 light,
 And our whole hearts are satisfied
 with rest.
 Better than all our one-time dreams
 of bliss
 Are peace, content and rest secure as
 this.

What though we missed love's golden
 summer time?
 His autumn fruits were ripe when
 we had leave
 To enter joy's wide vineyard in our
 prime,
 Good guerdon for our waiting to
 receive.
 Love gave us no frail pledge of sum-
 mer flowers,
 But side by side we reaped the har-
 vest hours;
 Now, side by side we pass the winter
 hours,
 And day by day new blessings are
 revealed.
 The fever heat of youth, its restless
 glow,
 Its high desires and cravings man-
 fold,
 Its wild delights, its victories and de-
 feats,
 Have passed; and we have truer
 joys to hold.
 Sing, then, the dear old song about
 the nest—
 So long withheld, and yet, so full of
 rest.

—The Commoner.

RUNNING THE GAUNTLET.

Precisely at two o'clock on the morning of February 14th "Scotty" McLean, night-watchman in the four-story building which was the temporary fireworks factory of French & Fiske, turned down a leaf of the magazine he was reading in his warm armchair close to the basement furnace, snapped on his electric lantern, roused his bull-terrier, Celsus, from his lair in a heap of shavings, and started on his hourly tour of inspection.

Scotty was a twenty-year-old luster from the Brockton shops, who, under the double pressure of a dull season in the shoe business and a desire to see something of the country outside his native State, had drifted westward, finally bringing up in his present position in an Ohio town. The building, once a shoe factory, was occupied by the firm in the interval between the burning of their old iron shops, and the completion of their new ones.

A midwinter storm was at its height. The thick snow blew in sheets against the windows and eddied round the corners in shrieking blasts. The steam had run down in the heating boiler, and the big building was cold and lonesome. Scotty buttoned his coat tight, as, with Celsus whimpering at his heels, he trudged up the broad covered staircase built outside the northern end of the factory.

On the highest landing he unlocked the door and entered the single large room, two hundred feet long by seventy-five broad, occupying the upper floor. It took him about five minutes to make his rounds between the tables strewn with colored paper of various hues and fireworks in different stages of incompleteness. In the temporary arrangement most of the processes of the work were carried on in the great unpartitioned rooms on this floor and the floor below.

Satisfied that all was well there, he shut the door and was turning the key, when his ear caught a muffled explosion below. Celsus barked loudly.

Three jumps took the watchman to the foot of the stairs. He unlocked the door, sprang into the room, and switched on the electric lights.

Already the third floor was on fire! From a table along the eastern wall came a crackling and snapping. As McLean turned his eyes that way a rocket started with a loud whir, and whizzed across the room, scattering its fiery train over the other tables and disappearing through the window with a jingling crash.

In a little glass-partitioned counting-room at the other end of the building was an alarm box. The watchman might have gone down to the next floor and rung in from there, but that would have wasted precious seconds; in a fireworks factory things happen quickly.

Heedless of his own safety, he ducked his head, and scurried between the tables toward the office. Celsus bounded in advance, barking furiously, his hair bristling. Even then there was no small risk, for fireworks were beginning to explode

everywhere. McLean's haste was disastrous, for as he rounded the last table he slipped, wrenching his ankle. An instant later man and dog were in temporary safety in the office.

There was no time to bother with the box key. McLean smashed his fist through the glass front of the little door and pulled the hook. Instantly the bells began to clang! clang! clang! from the tower a hundred yards up the street. The watchman snatched up a patent fire-extinguisher, and turned to battle single-handed with the flames. But a single look convinced him of the utter futility of any such attempt. A dozen could have accomplished nothing.

The air was crisscrossed with fiery rocket-trails, the sparks from which were falling everywhere. Had the flames been confined to one spot, it might have been possible for the watchman to master them. But now every moment was sowing fresh fires. The tables were littered with paper and half-finished pieces; the racks above were full of completed fireworks of every sort. The hands had been working overtime, and everything had been left ready for the next morning. A ripe condition for a conflagration could not have been imagined.

McLean dropped the extinguisher. Conscience told him that he had done his duty to his employers; it now behooved him to save himself. Sharply conscious of his inability to do more than hobble along with his twisted ankle, he stood appalled at the volcano through which he must pass to reach the stairs two hundred feet away.

Could he ever do it? He would have jumped from the window; but a three-story leap to the frozen ground was dangerous for legs and spine. But he could not stop where he was, for the building contained many boxes and kegs of high explosives.

Crash! A shower of splintered glass cut his face and hands, as a big rocket burst through the partition window in front of him, barely missing his head.

McLean dodged instinctively. Celsus cowered in terror between his legs. It was not safe to linger a second longer. He must run the gauntlet to the stairs.

He stumbled out into the main room. Through the smoke the electric bulbs glistened palely. Steady discharges of fireworks shot back and forth from wall to wall; in the space between there was no security. Reflected rockets were darting in every direction. Roman candles, flower-pots, star shells rained fire. One place was as safe as any other.

As McLean hesitated, a rocket whizzing over his shoulder made him drop suddenly on his hands and knees. One of those giants might go straight through him. He did not dare to creep along the floor, for the alleys were now alive with exploding fireworks, and his eyes might be put out.

A Roman candle from an adjoining table set Celsus's hair on fire. It was too much for the bull-terrier. He turned to bit the spot and put out the flames. Then, yelping, his tail between his legs, he bolted ignominiously for the door.

On a low truck close by the office stood a large empty tin can, like a metal ash-tray, which during working hours was wheeled from table to table to receive paper and pasteboard waste. It was four and a half feet deep and a good yard in diameter. The last rocket had quickened the watchman's wits. The instant this receptacle caught his eye he saw a safe way of reaching the door.

Grasping the can with both hands, he swung it into the air, inverted it, and dropped it over his head letting his arms slide gradually up the inside, until his palms rested on the bottom. It served as a movable bomb-proof, protecting him effectually from the knees up. Below that he must take his chances. As fast as his injured ankle would permit, he began to limp down the central alley.

The sounds from without came to him muffled. The whirring of rockets, the banging of cannon crackers, the fusillade of smaller bunches blended together into a pandemonium that would have been deafening to unprotected ears.

Whang! The impact of a rocket against the tin close to his left ear set the metal vibrating under his fingertips. Crash! bang! A giant dynamite cracker exploded on the floor not three feet away, and the shock struck his calves like a blow from a club. He trod through several bunches, snapping round his ankles like spiteful puppies. His feet struck against all sorts of debris, exploded and unexploded, swept from the tables by constant explosions.

The can was fairly heavy, and when McLean's arms became tired bearing its weight, he let it rest partly on the top of his head. The great trouble with his suit of armor was that it had no peep-holes. All the light that reached him was a lurid duskiness reflected from the floor. Now and then he banged against a table, brought up all standing, and was obliged to change his course. But he was making very fair progress when an unexpected calamity befell him.

A mine of red fire ignited under his feet. Up puffed a mushroom-shaped cloud of smoke, pungent, irritating, blinding. The suffocating fumes instantly filled the inverted can, rushing into the watchman's eyes and nostrils, until he could neither see nor breathe.

At any cost, McLean must free his lungs; already he was strangling. He threw off the can, and stood un-

protected in the midst of the bombardment.

Blif! Boom! S-s-s! Bing! R-r-r! Bang! Bang! Bang-bang! Bang!

McLean was something more than two-thirds of the way down the alley; the door was at least fifty feet away. A pungent, lurid smoke, lighted by incessant explosions, overhung everything. Pinwheels gyrating like mad, zigzagged viciously and aimlessly here and there. Purple green and violet flames told where mines were burning. The floor shook with the deafening detonations of the dynamite crackers.

The watchman wondered if his eyes and ears would ever be good for anything again.

A crash shook the building; a partially emptied box of powder had ignited. Then on a sudden the whole room was lighted with the glare of red fire. It was a most gorgeous celebration. McLean was having it all to himself, and not enjoying it a bit.

One glance he cast into the can; but the smoke still clung there, thick and heavy. He could not put his head into it again.

Shielding his face with hands and arms, he stumbled toward the door. In its black opening he caught a glimpse of Celsus's blunt muzzle and sparkling, beady eyes peering anxiously round the jamb. Then a giant cracker barked between them, and the dog disappeared. The next instant a sight filled him with horror.

On a table that he must pass stood a wooden box, which he knew to be full of packages of strong powder used in preparing certain fireworks.

Close by it a heap of paper waste was burning, and the flames were creeping rapidly nearer. When they reached it—

Forgetting his sprain the watchman plunged wildly forward. Compared with that box even the rockets and giant crackers sunk into insignificance.

Could he get to the stairway before the fire touched the powder? Terror cramped his muscles. His eyes were fastened on the creeping flames. He passed the box and hurried on. The door was still ten feet off.

A paralyzing nightmare seemed to oppress the watchman. He felt as if his soles were glued to the boards, as if he were dragging an invisible ball and chain.

Now the door was only a yard away. Now his hands grasped the jamb. Round it he swung, and tumbled down the stairs just as the box exploded with the report of a cannon, shaking the wall beside him until it seemed almost ready to fall. On the second landing he stumbled into the arms of an ascending band of firemen, summoned by the alarm he had risked his life to give.—Youth's Companion.

RUNNING A FAST TRAIN.

Means Used in Preparing the Schedule of a New "Run" on Our Railroads.

With the physical condition of the road in readiness and the faith of all its employees in its supremacy assured, the introduction of even a record-breaking train is merely an incident. The general scheme is laid out among the higher operating officials and discussed exhaustively before the general and division superintendents are called together in conference. The details of the schedule are discussed, the general schedule formulated as to the terminal figures of each division, and the division superintendents submit a tentative table of running time, which must be approved by the chiefs of the transportation and operating departments. With this approval the running schedules are printed and distributed among the trainmen of each division a week or ten days before the new train starts. No special ceremonies announce its entrance into train life, no special instructions are issued as to its treatment. The starting and arrival time at division terminals is given, the stopping-places are indicated, with the passing time at signal towers, and every one who has anything to do with the movement sees to it that it moves on the given time, unless some insurmountable obstacle intervenes.

In order to accustom engineers to a new degree of speed, test runs with a train of like composition are frequently made in advance of the inauguration of a train of exceptional speed. These tests disclose the evenness or unevenness of the track, the relative effect of curves or the steadiness of the trains, and the degree of power requisite to surmount grades.—Colin Studds, Eastern Passenger Agent Pennsylvania Railroad, in Harper's Weekly.

The Man On the Steps.

They were going to the matinee. She was up in the boudoir putting on finishing touches and he was sitting impatiently on the front steps.

"George," she called down sweetly, "just one minute more until I find my gloves."

Fifteen minutes passed.

"George," came from above, "wait another second. I've lost my pin."

Twenty minutes slipped by.

"George," she continued, "don't go. One moment. A button just jumped off my shoe."

Long silence. Then George calls wearily:

"Hurry a little, Ethel. If you get down in another five minutes we can make the evening performance. Matinee's over long ago."—Chicago News.

One of the features of Jaypore in India is the wonderful Sambur salt lake.

LIFE'S LITTLE PLEASANTRIES

THE WAISTLINE VARIABLE.
 Mary had a little waist
 Where waists were meant to grow
 And everywhere the fashions went
 Her waist was sure to go
 —New Orleans Times-Democrat.

THE OLD STORY.
 "She married him to reform him."
 "Has she succeeded?"
 "No; supporting him takes all of her time."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

THE WAY OF IT.
 Fido—Does your mistress keep any pets?
 Mignon—Yes; a husband and a baby.—New York Sun.

WOMAN'S WANTS.
 Squibb—The modern tendency of women, I believe, is to want the earth.
 Squilligan—Well, my wife doesn't want the earth, but she certainly does want the "dust" every pay night.

MANY SUCH.
 Benedick—Not married, eh? I'll bet you're fond of a girl, though.
 Batchelor—Oh, yes, indeed.
 Benedick—Who is she?
 Batchelor—Her name is Legion.—Chicago Tribune.

FAMILIAR QUOTATIONS.
 "George proposed to me in such beautiful language! I wish you could have heard him."
 "I did hear him. But he hadn't had as much practice then."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

VICES.
 "I suppose you prefer a cashier who won't drink or gamble?"
 "Yes; and if possible we also like to get one who won't steal."

THE COURAGE OF VENUS.
 The Venus of Milo explained.
 "I wore elbow sleeves in the winter and they froze off," she vouchsafed.
 Thus indeed do we see what women will endure for fashion.—New York Sun.

ROBBED OF A TREAT.
 "Goin' to the hangin', Bill?"
 "Betcher life I am!"
 "Betcher life yer ain't." The Governor has just pardoned the cuss.

A STOCK EXPRESSION.
 "We have nothing in common," said the steel magnate to his wife.
 But she was not distressed.
 She thought it wiser to have it all invested in preferred.

REBUKE OR ENCOURAGEMENT.
 "He kissed her on the forehead. The proud beauty drew herself up to her full height."
 "And then?"
 "He couldn't reach any higher than her lips, of course."

A TRIPLE HORROR.
 Sunset Sims—So yer jeas had three jobs offered yer all ter once! How did yer feel?
 Northern Lytes—Oh, goodness! Just like a woman if she should see a ghost, a mouse and a burglar all simultaneous!—Liffe.

INTERPRETED.
 "Father," asked the youth, "what is your understanding of the saying: 'The race is not always to the swift'?"
 "Practically, my son," replied the wise father, "it means that in the race of life the fast men don't usually come out ahead."—Catholic Standard and Times.

PERPLEXING.
 Wiseman—Here's an account of another hunter lost in the woods. Every hunter should carry a pocket compass.
 Dumley—Why? How would that help him?
 Wiseman—Help him to find his way, of course. You see, the needle of the compass always points to the north.
 Dumley—Yes, but suppose he wanted to go east, south or west?—Philadelphia Ledger.

CAUTIOUS.
 "Yes," said Miss Passay, "Mr. Shrupe has called upon me several times lately, but he always brings some other young man with him."
 "My dear," replied Miss Pert, "I know all about him. He's terribly cautious and just hates to be proposed to."—Philadelphia Press.

INCIDENTAL.
 "The new congressman seems to be a good, amiable sort of fellow, but I wish he wouldn't put on that forced, mechanical smile when he shakes hands with his constituents."
 "You mustn't mind that. It's merely one of the cortortions incident to the struggle he thinks he has to make to hold his job."—Chicago Tribune.

A REAL OLD ACTOR.
 Jenks—Your father was an actor, you say.
 Bragg—Certainly; Bragg, the tragedian, you know.
 Jenks—Funny I never heard of him. He played Hamlet, of course?
 Bragg—Sure! He originated the part.—Philadelphia Press.

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