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THE SHIRT-TAIL FIGHT.

From Grandfather's recollections of the Revolution.

Said my grandfather one evening: "About fifty of us had been engaged for several days in performing a secret duty, and were returning. We had to pass very near the British lines, and to avoid being taken, and also to save a wide circuit of miles, we resolved to encamp in a secret place we knew of, through the day, and under the shadow of night pass unseen on the direct course of Gen. Morgan's camp. The day was beautiful, and the spot we chose for our resting-place was one of those grassy nooks, shut out apparently from the rest of the world by lines of hills, impenetrable underbrush, and a gigantic forest; a small but clear and deep stream run by it, and the sun was at such an inclination as to throw half the light spot in the shade. We laid down our arms, relieved ourselves of knapsacks, and spreading the scanty store upon the grass, ate with a good appetite, refreshed ourselves from the limpid waters of the stream, and then each amused himself as he could.

"After resting a while, some went in to bathe, and one by one, as the pleasure seemed to increase, followed until the whole party were in the stream. This lasted for about half an hour, and most of us had returned to the shore and were dressing, when a figure was given to the scene by one of the number, saying that he was going to wash his shirt. Now most of us had worn these peculiar garments, two, three, or four weeks, and some even longer, without their having been once washed, and there is no doubt of their needing it very much; for, mind you, the man in those days who could afford two shirts—whole shirts—was a curiosity. The idea, therefore, was a good one, and many immediately began disrobing themselves again, and soon were busy as wash-women, rubbing away like fulling-mills. As the pieces were finished, they were hung in the sun on the limbs of trees, or spread out on the grass. Many were still engaged at their washing; some were wrestling; some jumping, some collected in knots, telling stories; nearly all naked as the day they were born—in fact, as fellows could be with but one shirt, and that drying in the sun, and but a morsel in the knapsack, when we were started; yes, indeed, really frightened—by a volley of musketry, the balls of which whistled by us, fortunately, only making a few slight flesh-wounds.

"The sound of musketry, although it surprised us at first, we were too much accustomed to hearing, to remain long under a panic, so the next moment found each man of us in the possession of a tree, musket, and himself covered by a tree. We had not long to wait before a large body of British broke through the underbrush, which had before concealed them, and rushed with fixed bayonets upon us. But their progress was suddenly checked by our fire, which laid a large number of them dead before us. We had not time to reload, when the enemy again charged down upon us and we were forced to give ground some distance, and reloading, stood our ground. Up to this time we had not thought of the condition we were in, when one of the officers, all at once, cried out, 'Boys, will you lose your shirts?' then casting our eyes around quickly, we gave a shout, 'Now for our shirts!' and rushed forward like so many naked devils. As soon as the British came to our view, we poured in a well-directed fire, and immediately charged with the bayonet. So suddenly had this movement been made, that, having supposed that we were still running the other way, they were completely surprised, and then came their turn to run. After them we shouted still with our new watch word, 'Shirts!'—The officers of the enemy having at length succeeded in securing the attention of the men, wheeled them, and gave us a return fire, which killing as we supposed some of our party, we again took to our heels; and our red coats taking up our cry of 'Shirts,' came pell-mell after us. Again we turned and charged the British running; they in turn again charged upon us, each party shouting 'Shirts,' until it finally became a regular shirt-tail fight.

"At length, becoming somewhat exhausted with the game, and constantly reminded of our shirts by the enemy screaming in our ears, and recollecting too that we would not cut a very pretty figure returning to quarters sans culottes, we made desperate charge, and finally succeeded in gaining the day by driving the British into the field. Several of our party were wounded, but none killed. Not so with the British. The dead were scattered all the little green space, and through the trees; and putting on our garments and giving the dead to be buried by their own people, we took the circuitous route which had avoided in the morning, (thereby being obliged to fight a little battle) and reached the camp about midnight, where we caused our little merriment, and afterwards, as we related our adventures of the 'shirt-tail fight.'

"To get angry at nothing, and to be irritated at nothing, are said to constitute steps towards perfection.

A Thrilling Sketch.

AN ADVENTURE IN A BARBER'S SHOP.

In the month of October, 1820, my vessel was lying at Mobile. I went ashore one bright morning to do some business with the house to which I was consigned, and as I passed along the street, it occurred to me that I might as well have a beard of a week's growth reaped before I presented myself at the counting room. I stepped into the barber's shop and told the barber to proceed.

He was a bright mulatto, a good-looking young fellow, not more than two and twenty years of age it appeared. His eyes were large, black and unusually lustrous. His manner at first was quiet and respectful. I thought he was a long while interacting my face, and I told him he must have bought his soap at wholesale price. Laughing, he replied that mine was a long beard, and that he knew what he was about.

"Are you the boss here, my man?" I asked.

"Yes, he answered, "my master set me up, and I pay him twenty dollars a month for my time."

"That is a good interest on the capital invested," I remarked, "can you pay your rent and live on the balance of your savings?"

"Oh, yes! and lay up something besides. Sometimes I receive thirty bits a day."

"Then I suppose you will buy your freedom one of these days?"

"As for that he replied, I care but little. I have all the liberty I want, and enjoy myself as I go along."

By this time he had down the brush, and commenced running his razor over the strop, looking at the blade every time he drew it across the leather. His hand trembled a little, and his eyes absolutely trembled like coals of fire. I did not feel uneasy, but I could not avoid watching him closely.

At last he commenced shaving me. My head being thrown back, I was able to keep my eyes fixed directly on his own. Why I did so, I cannot tell; certainly I apprehended nothing, but I did not remove my gaze for a single instant while the razor was passing over my neck and throat. He seemed to grow more and more uneasy; his eyes were bright, but not so steady as when I first observed them. He could not meet my fixed and determined look. As he commenced shaving my chin he said abruptly—

"Barbers handle a deadly weapon, sir."

"True enough, my man," although I notice that your hands shake a little."

"That's nothing sir—I can shave just as well. My hand shakes because I did not have much sleep last night. But I was thinking just now, he added with a laugh, "how easy it would be to cut your throat."

"Very likely," I replied, laughing in return, but looking sternly at him—"very likely, yet I would not advise you to try the experiment."

Nothing more was said. He soon finished, and I arose from the chair just as an elderly gentleman was entering the shop. The last comer divested himself of his coat and cravat, and took the seat I had vacated.

I went to the glass, which did not reflect the chair, to arrange my collar. Certainly I had not stood before it a single moment, when I heard something like a suppressed shriek, a gurgling horrible sound that made my blood run cold. I turned—there sat the unfortunate gentleman covered with blood, his throat cut from ear to ear, and the barber a raving maniac, dashing the razor with tremendous violence in the mangled neck.

On the instant the man's eyes caught mine, the razor dropped from his hand, he fell down in a fit. I rushed to the door and called for assistance.

The unfortunate man was dead before we could reach the chair.

We secured the barber, who I subsequently learned had been drinking deeply the night before, and was laboring under mania apata. His fate I never heard.

Happy the man who is an early riser. Every morning, day comes to him with a virgin love, full of bloom and purity and freshness. The copy of nature is contagious, like the gladness of a happy child. I doubt if any man can be called "old," as long as he is an early riser and an early walker. And a youth I take my word for it—a youth in dressing gown and slippers, dawdling over breakfast at noon, is a very decrepid, ghastly image of that youth which sees the sun blush over the mountain, and the dews sparkle upon blossoming hedge-rows.

Sombody says that the Devil is a mean word any way you can fix it. You can't make a respectable word of it any how. Remove the d and it is evil, remove the e and it is vile, remove the v and it is ill, remove the s and the l itself is the Englishman's hell.

Every man's actions form a centre of influence upon others, and every deed, however trivial, has some influence in determining the future destiny of the world.

CHINA AND JAPAN.

The revelations of the English press show that the Burmese war, now in progress, has a somewhat higher and more interesting purpose than the chastisement of the petty monarchs of the Golden Foot, or even the annexation—although that will doubtless follow—of a portion of his dominions of the wide spreading empire of British India. It begins to be perceptible that China is the real object, and that the government of her Majesty has discovered a new and available road to the heart of the celestial realm through the northern part of Burmah—a road which has the merit of being a short and direct one leading from the banks of the Ganges to the valley of the Yang-tse-kiang, or Blue River, one of the most prodigious streams which flow through the whole breadth of China from west to east, watering innumerable provinces, the seats of population, wealth, and trade. In point of fact the Burmese carry on by their route a considerable traffic with China, the centre of which is at Bhammo, a town only forty miles from the Chinese frontier, and having the advantage of being situated on the Irrawaddy river, through which it possesses a water communication with the Bay of Bengal. It will be very easy for the English to extend their boundary to the Irrawaddy, or to annex the northern regions around Bhammo, connecting them with their possessions on the Brahmapootra; when they will obtain command of the passage, of the trade properly appertaining to it, along with a position from which to exercise a new and superior influence on the affairs of the Flowery Land.—Considering the greatness of the prize here offered, it is not surprising our English friends should be so friendly—which means so indifferent to—our supposed designs on Japan. They appreciate, because they have well weighed, the relative attractions of the two undertakings; and they are quite willing we should acquire all the glory to be gained by a conflict (should it ever come to a conflict) with his high mightiness of Yeddo, while they seize the more solid advantages of extending their commerce and their power in China. They are perhaps willing we should invade and conquer the Japanese islands, if we can; while satisfied that by the Burmese enterprise they are strengthening their hands in view of any ambition of a similar kind they may choose hereafter to indulge at the expense of the Celestials.

In the meanwhile, there is something of strange and melancholy interest in the situation of the two great Oriental empires—the last remaining relics of the ancient forms of Asiatic civilization and pride—the living semblances and cotemporaries of the Egyptian and Assyrian monarchies of old—both threatened, or appearing to be threatened, by the leading powers of the younger world which have risen into existence since Egypt fell and Assyria became a word and a desolation. We do not say, nor even suppose, that these two nations are so much grandeur even amidst their decline and decrepitude, and after to be thrown by England and America. It is, however, very obvious to those who consider all the circumstances in which they are placed that there are in each of the former the elements of change and revolution, and that if the latter were embarked in the purpose of destroying them, there are means that might be resorted to by which the object of it could be sooner or later effected.

China is, at this moment, distracted by a rebellion in the southern provinces, which every day assumes a graver and a more formidable aspect. A Pretender of the ancient Imperial stock has arisen, and the ancient Imperial stock has for now wears a crown, which he has for some time maintained, threatening or promising to restore the ancient dynasty of the Sons of Heaven and drive back the children of the Tartar invaders to the rude haunts of their fathers in the Mongolian deserts. The path of the British through Burma will bring them near to the portion of the Empire, in the south-east, occupied by the rebels; and it would not be difficult for them, if they chose, hereafter to render such aid and afford such encouragement to the latter as would perhaps seal the fate of the young monarch who occupies a tottering throne at Peking.

We cannot penetrate the veil which conceals from foreign observers the true situation of things in Japan, and we do not know that there is, or even likely to be, any insurrection there. It is most probable there is not; but it is not unlikely there, sooner or later, may be. In fact we have but to remember that there is some resemblance, as regards dynastical matters, between the two empires to perceive the germ of great possibilities which it would be in the power of a wily and persevering invader to turn to account. The family which rules at Yeddo is an intrusive one, which rules at Yeddo in every respect like a usurper, who wields a sceptre which does not belong to him; while at the same time, the legitimate dynasty, which has been degraded, not destroyed, exists in the concentrated city of Miacco, where it is represented by the Dairi, or Mikado, the lineal descendants of the ancient Emperors of

TWO GOOD STORIES.

We are indebted to the New York Spirit of the Times for the following laughable sketches, written by "a man from Arkansas." The first is admirably illustrative of the characteristics of a conscientious voter; an up and-down, no-favors-shown party man:

About the year 1830 politics ran very high in Arkansas. Col. A. H. Sevier was a candidate for the office of delegate to Congress, and Ben Desha was his opponent. Judge Andrew Scott was a warm friend of Desha and utterly hostile to Sevier. He had a neighbor living about fifteen miles from him, on the 'far side of Gallery creek, named Logan, commonly called "Stuttering Jim Logan," who was exactly "quacy wery" in his politics; and so frequently had been their encounters, that two neighbors had come cordially to hate each other.

One pleasant morning in the spring, when the sun shone out warmly, and all nature was green and fresh after a heavy rain of two or three days duration, Logan went down from his house, through the little strip of creek bottom, to the bank of the creek, and sat himself down on a "lick-log," musing, perhaps, as Col. Jack McCarthy once said, "on the evanethence of thubinary thingh."

The creek was about twenty yards wide, and the rain had raised it, so that it was swimming, covered with foam, and running like a mill-race with a full head of water. Where the road crossed, on the edge of the opening in the woods, which fringed the stream on each side, and their branches the trees leaned over, and their swang hung gracefully in the water, and went and fro, in the swift current.

After Logan had sat there a little while, Judge Scott came riding down the road on the other side, halted when he reached the water's edge, and looked across, without saying anything, but looking as if he thought, "Hang you, if it's swimming why don't you say so?" Logan took out his jack-knife, split a piece from the lick-log and commenced whittling it, looking steadily across toward Scott all the while.

Logan was a large, stout, heavy-looking man, Scott, small, wiry, passionate, petulant, and as brave as a bull-dog.

After waiting a moment—for each hated the other too much to speak; Scott tightened the reins and rode into the water. His horse had not taken more than six steps, before kerchug! he plunged in over head and ears. In a moment more Scott was washed from his back; the rider went on, the horse the other, and the saddle-bags a third. The horse turned towards the side which he went in, and got ashore some little way below; the saddle-bags floated down the stream, and Scott managed to reach Logan's side of the creek, and caught hold of the swinging limb of a Sycamore which dipped into the water.

"Help, Logan, Help!" cried Scott. "I shall be drowned! Help!"

"S-s-s-say you'll v-v-vote for Sevier!" bawled Logan.

"Help, Logan, Help! I shall drown!"

"S-s-s-say you'll v-v-vote for Sevier!" again bawled Logan, not rising from the lick-log.

Just then the sycamore limb snapped, and the same moment Scott sunk out— "I'll see you d—d first, you infernal old scoundrel!" and away he swept round the tree and out of sight below.

Luckily the current made a sweep below the eddy round in the concavity at the upper edge of a sand-bar, upon which Scott was flung, and scrambled out. He walked along the bank, and towards Logan, spluttering with rage, and streaming with water. Luckily he had no weapons but a pistol, and that, of course, was unfit for service; and Logan was too big to be whipped by him in a fist fight.

"D—n it!" cried Scott, as he got pretty near him, "do you stop to ask a man how he's going to vote before you save him from drowning?"

Logan never stopped whittling, but looking comely up, slowly said—

"Every g-g-gentleman has a right to v-v-vote as he likes, and d-d-drown when he likes; and I d-d-don't suppose anybody's bound to dive into the creek, to f-f-fish out a vote to h-h-his own."

The second story is entitled, "Raising the Price of Board." It speaks for itself. At the time of Gen. Taylor's inauguration, a long, tall, hungry, ungainly fellow, whose hands hung as low as his knees when he stood up straight, made his appearance at Coleman's, and took lodgings. He sat pretty near the end of the table every day at dinner and ate inordinately Soup, fish, fowl, desert, his enormously long arms kept swopping round like the arms of a huge windmill, gathering in every thing that fell within the arc of a circle they described.

His voracity and beastly gluttonness so disgusted the other boarders, that about a dozen of them went to Coleman and told him that he must get rid of the fellow, or they would positively quit the house.

Coleman reflected a while, and finally thought he had hit upon a plan. So he took the fellow aside, and told him that,

THE YOUNG MEN OF THE AGE.

Not long since we saw a tear gathering in the eye of an old man, as he spoke of the past and the present—the time when he burned pine knots upon the rude hearth for light to obtain a scanty education, and then compared the ten thousand privileges which are now scattered broadcast around every door. "Oh," said he, in tremulous tones, "the young men of this day do not appreciate the light of the age they live in." The words of the old man made us sad, while at the same time, we felt mortified that so many of our young men fail to improve the advantages within their reach. They are even continually muttering about their lot, and pushing for positions where they can win the reward without the sweetening, purifying, ennobling sacrifice of toil. The mist-cloud enjoyments of the day, are eagerly sought after, to the exclusion or neglect of—more honorable, intellectual and useful. In truth, few of our young men know anything of the value of the privileges around them.

NOT A PRIVILEGED MEMBER.—A gentleman on a visit to Washington, recently, and anxious to listen to the debates, opened, very coolly, one of the doors of the Senate, and was about to pass in, when the doorkeeper asked,

"Are you a privileged member?"

"What do you mean by such a man?" asked the stranger. The reply was,

"A Governor, an ex-member of Congress, or a foreign minister."

The stranger said "I am a minister."

"From what court or country, if you please?" asked the official.

(Very gravely pointing up.)—"From the Court of Heaven, sir."

To this our doorkeeper waggishly remarked, "This Government, at present, holds no intercourse with that foreign power!"

He who in this world would rise, must take the paper and advertise.

THE YOUNG WIFE'S RESPONSE.

"Why art thou sad, my love, to-day? what grief is frowning o'er thy heart? why dost thou droop and turn away, and why do tears unbidden start? When first I wooed thee in thine isle—thy Erin; emerald of the deep—I saw thee, sweetest, only smile, nor even thought that thou couldst weep. The sun of summer lights the earth, the zephyr's kiss is on thy cheek; all nature calls thee back to mirth; then be not, prythee, love so weak." While thus I spoke, my boy's queen, one deep, fond glance upon me stealing, exclaimed, "Be jabsers, but you're green! It's onions sure I'm afeather peeling!"

A person complained to a lady of his congregation that her daughter appeared to be wholly taken up with trifles and worldly affairs instead of fixing her mind on things above.

"You are certainly mistaken sir," she replied "I know the girl appears to an observer to be taken up with worldly things but you cannot judge correctly of the direction her mind really takes as she is a little cross eyed."