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Poetry.

The Old Man goes to School.

I know I'm too old to learn, wife; my lessons and tasks are done, The days of life's evening gladden in the light of life's setting sun. To the grave by the side of my father they'll carry me some day; But I wanted to see how the world has grown, so I hobbled to school to day.

I could have told 'twas a school horse, it towered up to the skies. I gazed on the noble structure 'till dimmer grew these old eyes. My thoughts went back to the log house—the school house of years ago. Where I studied and romped with the merry boys who sleep where the daisies grow.

I was started out of my dreaming by the tones of its muffled bell. On these eyes that are growing dim the sweet notes rose and fell. I entered the massive door, and sat in the professed chair— An old man wrinkled and gray in the midst of the young and fair.

Like a garden of blooming roses the school-room appeared to me— The children were all as tidy, their faces so full of glee. They stared at me when I entered, then broke through the whispering veil. And said, with a smile to each other: "The old man's coming to school."

When the school here was new, and I was a scholar boy, Our reading, writing and spelling were about all the studies we had; We cleared up the farm through the summer, then traveled through wood and snow To the log-house in the opening—the school house of years ago.

Now, boys go to school in palaces, and study hard Latin and Greek. They are taught to write scholarly essays, and drilled on the stages to speak. They go into the district hupper, but come out through the college spout; And this is the way the schools of our land are grinding our great men out.

Let them grind! let them grind, dear wife! the world needs the good and true. Let the children out of the old house and welcome them into the new; I'll cheerfully pay my taxes, and say to the age of mind.

All aboard! all aboard! go ahead and leave the old man behind!

Our system of public schools is the nation's glory and crown; May the arm be palsied, ever, that is lifted to tear it down. Tributes cannot endure the light of glowing skies. Let them go in appreciation's show, where liberty bleeds and dies.

I'm glad I have been today to the new house so long and grand; With pride I think of my tale in this liberty-loving land. I've seen a palace arise where the old school house stood. And gardens of beauty bloom where the shadows fell in the wood.

To the grave by the side of my fathers they'll carry me some day; Then I'll go to a higher school than one I've seen to day; Where the Masters of masters teacheth—where the scholars never grow old—From glory to glory I'll climb, in the beautiful college of God!

Select Tale.

COUSIN ALMA.

BY BELLE MONTICELLO.

It was a large, old-fashioned farm house, but very pleasant it seemed, with its broad piazzas extending the entire length of the building, the narrow paneled windows set in deep, oak frames, and although it was late spring they were still shaded by rich crimson curtains. The large bay-window was filled with rare plants, freighted the atmosphere with their fragrance.

A cage of canaries hung near, chirping and twittering as if in answer to the merry swallows that flew past the open window, busily engaged in building their nests under the drooping eaves.

Stretched at full length on one of the benches that ran along the side of the piazza was George, the only son of Squire Darrell.

George had been practicing law in the city for two years or more, but spent several months of each year with his parents.

The old house seemed dull and lonely to him, having no sister to brighten it with her presence, and he hailed with delight the arrival of a distant cousin whose visit was unexpected. She was now seated in a large arm-chair near him, and, in true girlish fashion, was teasing him most unmercifully.

"Don't, Cousin Alma!" he cried, as she pelted him with the flowers with which her lap was filled, trying to shield himself with his newspaper. "I'll take it all back and declare I never said it," for he had just been telling her that the women were all humbugs, and that it would be policy to have them transported to the Fiji Islands, where it would be impossible for them to practice their arts of witchery.

She was in the act of again deriding him with a floral shower, her blue eyes sparkling with mischief, her ruby lips parted in a silvery laugh; her yellow hair, escaped from its confinement, was thrown back from her sunny brow and rippled over her shoulders.

George, peeping up from behind his newspaper, was admiring her loveliness, when they were both startled by the sharp rattle of the gate, and a quick, firm tread on the gravel walk.

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Before she had time to retreat, Alma found herself face to face with the young gentleman, a stranger to herself but not to George, who sprung quickly to his feet, exclaiming: "Walter Howell! from what cloud have you dropped?"

Georging his hand cordially, he glanced upward as if in search of the supposed cloud.

"Welcome to Darrell farm! It has been a long time since you have honored it with your presence. Not since we were college chums together, eh?"

Then turning to his fair cousin, who from astonishment had remained motionless, looking more like a statue of Flora than a living woman, he said: "Cousin Alma, my friend, Mr. Howell, of whom you have often heard me speak."

Walter Howell, bowing low, thought, as he gazed, that never before had he seen a creature of such rare loveliness. "Miss Darrell, I presume?" and Alma, with a slight inclination of her stately head, answered in the affirmative; then, excusing herself, immediately withdrew, leaving them to talk over their college pranks and enjoy their fragrant cigars.

They sat thus talking until supper was announced, Alma did not appear at the table.

After supper, George led the way to the cozy library, "where they would not be disturbed," he said—and, although Walter would have preferred the society of Cousin Alma, he had not the courage to express his preference—he followed in silence.

"Why couldn't you have told a fellow you were coming, and I not take one so by surprise?" asked George, throwing himself into an easy chair, and pursuing another toward his friend.

"The fact is, Darrell, that I know nothing about it myself until our previous to my departure"—taking the proffered seat.

"Go to Miss Vane, and tell her for me, that I will never look upon her hated face. To-morrow the ceremony is to be performed. Let her be veiled, and deeply, that I may not be able to see the face of one who is the destroyer of my life's happiness. As soon as it is over I shall sail for some distant country, where I will try to forget my hopeless dream of love, and those who have been the cause of my sorrow."

"Nonsense, boy; when you see her, I'll warrant you will change your mind," replied his uncle, not in the least impressed by this tragic speech, saying which, he left the room.

The next morning dawned bright and glorious, as if mocking his doom, so thought Walter Howell as he arrayed himself for the ordeal.

A servant tapped lightly at the door and handed him a note from Miss Vane, saying that she was ready and awaiting him in the library, where she wished a few moments' private conversation before the ceremony.

Hastily obeying her summons, he entered the room. She stood, her bridal dress of white satin falling in lustrous folds around her graceful form. A veil of misty lace covered her face and descended to the floor. As he advanced she said, in a low sweet voice that thrilled him strangely, "Mr. Howell, I understand that you consider our marriage a mockery; that you are merely complying with your uncle's request; that, while wedding me, your heart belongs wholly to another. It is rather late to say what I am going to, but if you will consent to look at my face ere you would lead me to the altar, then, if you still desire it, I will release you from your engagement, and you will be free to wed whom you choose."

His hands trembled with excitement as he drew aside the veil. "Alma! my beloved Alma!" he cried, straining her to his throbbing heart. "What does this mean?" "It means that I am Alma Darrell Vane, and that I want down to Aunt Darrell's to avoid meeting you. I accidentally overheard your conversation with George that night in the library and determined to punish you for saying such naughty things about me. George was in the plot, and we soon informed your uncle how matters stood."

"But the letter!" he asked. "Oh! I wrote it and George had the post-mark blotted so you would be thoroughly deceived, and now, not wanting a bride-room with such a useful face, and thinking you had been sufficiently punished, I thought I would explain."

"The reward is greater than the punishment," he said, as with a smiling face he led her out.

George Darrell was there, of course, and after the ceremony inquired about his blighted hopes, to which Walter laughingly responded. "Uncle was right, after all."

Could I Help Her.

The gates at the passenger depot which shut out all the people not having tickets for the trains were yesterday closed at the Union depot against an elderly woman wearing spectacles and using an umbrella for a cane.

"Can't pass without a ticket," said the man at the gate as she came up. "I want to see if there's anybody on that train going to Port Haron," she answered.

"Can't pass without a ticket, madam."

"I've got a darter in Port Haron, I have."

"Can't help it, please. My orders are very strict."

"I'll tell you I want to send word to my darter," she exclaimed, adjusting her spectacles for a better view of the official.

"Yes, but we can't help that," you see. Please show your ticket."

"I want this very railroad to be started that I've got a darter in Port Haron, and she's got a baby four weeks old, and I'm going to send her word in spite of all the gates in this depot."

"Please show your ticket, madam."

Our Crocodile Hunter.

A young naturalist gives the following account of hunting the crocodile on the Orinoco: "We landed upon a huge sand bar and taking our guns, hatchet, field-glass, etc., started across the green bank that we saw on the other side of the bar. Before we got across we christened that bar the 'Great Desert.' As we neared the opposite side we saw that, as we had suspected, there was a little body of water between the sand bar and the shore. Very soon we sighted a fine crocodile, basking in the rays of the midday sun, near the edge of the water. There was not a bush nor blade of grass to afford us cover, but quickly making ready and throwing ourselves upon our faces began to creep our way toward the great reptile as fast as possible, taking advantage of some little ridges and depressions in the sand. But he was too smart for us, and before we were within good rifle shot he quickly slid into the water and disappeared. Just then we came in sight of another and larger crocodile much nearer to us, so near that we wondered why he had not taken alarm and fled. We at once turned our attention to him, and began creeping up, until we thought we could afford to fire. We lay flat upon the sand, made ready. Chat softly remarked:

"One, two, three—"

And our rifles spoke together. Without waiting to reload, I let my gun lying on the ground and ran full tilt to grab the tail of the reptile and prevent its gaining the water. For when a crocodile is badly wounded a man may keep it from getting away. I merely noticed that it was a large old fellow and stooped to grab his tail—when suddenly his tail was whisked out of my grasp, and the crocodile quickly swung around with his head toward me. He raised his head high up, opened his jaws to their widest and uttered a loud hoarse kind of snarl. It was the first time a crocodile or alligator turned upon me, and I was very much taken by surprise. I left the vicinity of those jaws as quickly as possible, and got around to the tail. Again the crocodile swung on his tail and lunged and feared me with his jaws open and still uttering that horrible angry snarl. I yelled to J—

"Bring the hatchet!"

"Shut your mouth! I won't do it!" bawled out Chat, running up and howling as he ran. I kept the crocodile busy turning round until Chat was ready to fire, when he sent a ball through its neck-bone and I ended its troubles in a moment. It was a fine male specimen, length ten feet eight inches, and from the exceeding roughness of its exterior very thick skin and blunt claws we were led to believe that he was very old, and had probably attained his full growth. We found that one ball had struck him in the neck, but missing the cervical vertebrae, and the other entered his shoulder. Why he did not retire to the water when he was so badly wounded was a mystery to us. We reached the skin as quickly as possible, filled it into a bundle and took turn about, carrying it across the desert to the canoe. Then we thought that our dogged perseverance in crossing the river in the morning had been rewarded. On returning J—generously offered to take the front seat, and before we had got across he remarked that it was harder to take it easy than he thought. After telling across another sand bar with the skin on our backs, we dumped it into Captain Rice's boat and went sailing up to Bivar with tired arms and legs and a fair wind.

Some Curious Facts—If a musket ball be fired into water it will not only rebound, but be flattened; if fired through a pane of glass it will make a hole the size of the ball without cracking the glass; if the glass be suspended by a thread it will make no difference, and the third will not even vibrate. Cork, if sunk 200 feet in the ocean, will not rise on account of the pressure of water. In the Arctic regions, when the thermometer is below zero, persons can converse more than a mile distant. Dr. Jamison asserts that he heard every word of a sermon at the distance of two miles.

Never go sailing with children. There is sure to be a squall before you return.

Can anybody tell why it is that when a man borrows your lead pencil he immediately rams it into his mouth?

Many a man who has not a cent in his pocket owns a corn which he would not allow you to step on for the world.

Home can never be transferred—never repeated in the experience of an individual. The place consecrated by parental love, by the innocence and sports of the human heart.

Learn thoroughly what you do learn, be it ever so little, and you may speak of it with confidence. A few clearly defined facts and ideas are worth a whole library of unimportant knowledge.

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