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POETRY.

THE OLD COUPLE.

They sat in the sun together,
Till the day was almost done,
And then, at its close, an angel
Stepped over the threshold stone.
He folded their hands together,
He touched their eyelids with his palm,
And their last breath floated upward
Like the close of a summer psalm.
Like a bridal pair they traveled
The unseen, mystical road,
That leads to the Paradise City,
Whose Builder and Maker is God.
Perhaps, in that miracle country,
They will give her lost youth back,
And the flowers of a vanished Spring time
Shall bloom in the spirit's track.
One draught of the living waters
Shall restore his mother's prime,
And eternal years shall measure
The love that outlives time.
But the shapes they left behind them—
The wrinkles and silver hair—
Made sacred to us by the kisses
The angel imprinted there.
We'll bide away in the meadow,
When the sun is low in the west,
Where the moonbeams cannot find them,
Nor the wind disturb their rest.
But we'll not tell tale to the tombstone,
With its age and date arise,
O'er the two who are old no longer—
In their Father's house in the skies.

THE STORY-TELLER.

OUR PASSENGER.

I was stopping at the Hotel Windsor, on the Rue Rivoli, Paris. One morning I sat smoking on the front veranda, when a tall, elegantly-dressed gentleman asked permission to light his cigar by my pipe.
"I saw at a glance that he was a Frenchman, although his 'English' was nearly perfect.
"Have you heard the news?" he inquired.
"No."
"Is it possible? Why, all Paris is alive with it at this moment."
"What has happened?"
"The Countess de Marville—the fairest of the fair—was found murdered in her bed last night, her bureau broken open, and ten thousand francs missing from it. Ah! it was terrible! There were marks of fingers on her throat; the brute who did the deed effected his entrance through the window of her chamber, near which, unfortunately, was a tall tree, planted years ago by the distinguished grandfather of the countess. Little did he imagine the terrible use that would be made of it."
"This is bad news. How any man could harm a woman thus, in cold blood, is more than I can imagine. How could he, Monsieur, if you had ever seen the countess you would marvel still more. She was beautiful—beautiful as an angel," he added, stroking his whiskers with an unmistakable air of vanity. "I knew her well."
"Indeed."
"Oh, yes. There are in Paris few popular women unknown to me."
His manner, now, was decidedly condescending, and I felt disgusted with him. My coldness evidently repelled him, for he soon left me.
Afterward I heard from other accounts of the late tragedy. Among the details of the affair was one which peculiarly impressed me, and which my first informant had not spoken of—an oversight that surprised me, as the occurrence he had not mentioned was of that kind which would be most apt to strike the fancy.
Upon the throat of the countess the murderer, in throttling her, had left a mark from a ring he wore, the mark being a chariot wheel, with a star in the centre!
"This," said my latest informant, "may lead to the discovery of the murderer. Jean Mosqueau is already visiting the jewellers' shops, to find out from which, and by whom, a ring with the chariot wheel device was purchased."
"Who is Jean Mosqueau?"
"Parbleu! monsieur, have you not heard of Mosqueau, our famous detective? Although his courage is well known, you would not, to look at his fair, girlish face and delicate form, believe that he could fight a grut!"
A week later I was aboard the steamer, bound from Orleans to Dover. Among the passengers I beheld one whose face had a familiar look. I was not long in recognizing this person as the same I had seen at the Hotel Windsor, and who had first informed me of the murder of the countess.
He moved languidly hither and thither, now and then turning his brown eyes admiringly upon the pretty lady passengers, while stroking his whiskers with one white hand, upon the middle finger of which was a superb diamond ring.
I am of a rather suspicious nature, which, combined with a lively imagination, has often led me into singular errors.
Now, a strange impulse moved me to advance and hold out my hand to a man whom I had involuntarily disliked from the first, in order that I might have a chance to glance at his ring! Somehow, the idea had possessed me that I would discover a chariot device upon the glittering bauble!
The stranger did not at first recognize me. He soon did, however, and frankly extended his left hand, which was not the one containing the ring!
My brain fairly reeled; the man's behavior was conviction of my suspicions.
"The other hand, if you please!" I said, in a low, stern voice.
"Monsieur will excuse, if he pleases. My other arm is lame with the rheumatism."
He beheld me glance toward the half hidden ring, and I was sure I saw him start and turn pale, while, at the same time, looking much surprised.
He, however, opened his right hand, as if perfectly willing for me to shake it, if I chose. Then I had a good look at the ring, and felt ashamed of my suspicions. The device was a common heart, which certainly bore no resemblance to a chariot wheel!

After a little commonplace conversation, to recover my self-possession, I turned away, resolving in future to have a better opinion of my fellow-creatures. The stranger's beauty seemed to attract the attention of many of the ladies. One, especially, a modest-looking little thing, attired in black, kept directing furtive glances at the handsome passenger. Finally she glided so close to him that, in turning, he brushed against her.
An apology, smilingly received by the little lady—a remark about the weather on the part of the man—and the two were soon conversing with animation. Meanwhile the blushing cheek and bright eyes of the fair one seemed to betoken that she was well pleased with her companion, whose air was now more conciliated than ever.
"I am afraid we will have a storm," she remarked, pointing toward a dark cloud, upon which the captain of the boat was anxiously gazing.
"We may, but do not be alarmed, madame!"
With an air of nonchalance, he pulled a red cigar-case from his pocket, asked his companion if she objected to smoke, and being answered negatively opened an case. Then he started, and quickly returned this to his pocket, pulled forth another, of a blue color.
"How many cigars do you smoke a day?" inquired the lady, evidently amused at the sight of two cases.
The other colored, and it struck me that his voice faltered slightly and his hand trembled, as he made some laughing retort.
Soon the storm came pouncing down upon us. We were midway in the channel, so that we caught the full force of the sea and the gale. Both were terrific. The sea swept the boat, which lay so far over that her machinery soon was damaged, so that it could not work.
The wind, screaming like a demon, threw her over still further.
Suddenly we observed, the sailors endeavoring to loosen a long boat on davits astern. Meanwhile there was an ominous grinding, smashing noise under the counter.
The truth could not long be concealed; we were sinking!
The ladies screamed—the handsome passenger lost his self-possession, and ran wildly hither and thither.
Meanwhile, the cool behavior of the little lady in black contrasted strangely with the agitated demeanor of those around her. There she stood, calm and immovable, her bright, steel-blue eyes fixed upon the handsome stranger, of whom she did not lose sight for a moment.
"Keep quiet, ladies and gentlemen!" sang out the captain. "Keep quiet and don't crowd round the boat so! There will be room in it for you all, and besides, there is a schooner coming to our assistance," pointing toward a large vessel, bowing along toward us.
There was, however, a panic among those addressed. The moment the boat was lowered, into it they all bundled, among them the handsome passenger. A huge sea, coming along, roaring thunder, parted the tackles, tearing the boat from the steamer, before either the lady in black or I could enter it. The handsome passenger, losing his balance, fell over the gunwale, and, unable to swim, wildly threw up his arms!
I must acknowledge that I was so engrossed with the perilous situation of my fair companion and myself—now the only two left aboard the steamer—that I paid little attention to the drowning man. The steamer was in fact going down fast—was already nearly engulfed in the stormy waves, her heeled and half submerged boiler hissing, as the steam came gushing out like the spout from a whale.
I was advancing to throw an arm round the little lady, fearing to see her washed away, when, quietly and coolly motioning me back with one hand she seized a coil of rope, and threw the end to the handsome passenger.
He caught it, when, turning to me, the lady requested me to help haul the man aboard!
I complied, marveling at the love and devotion thus shown by a woman toward an acquaintance of an hour!
His power over the female sex must be great, I thought. He is conceited, but without reason.
This idea flashed clearly over across my mind, in spite of my danger. The schooner, however, was now quite near, and I had every reason to believe we would be picked up.
I was right. We were all taken on board the schooner, the handsome passenger among the rest.
Then the lady in black, quietly pulling forth a revolver, pointed it at the head of him whom she rescued.
"Out with that red cigar-case!" she said, sternly. "I would like to see what monsieur carries in it."
"Why—why," stammered the stranger.
"Before he could say another word, the little Amazon, thrusting her disengaged hand in his pocket, pulled forth the red cigar-case, and opening it, a ring dropped to the deck. This ring she picked up, and holding it before us all exclaimed:
"I have found it at last. The jeweler assured me it was the only kind of device in all Paris—a chariot wheel! This ring is the murderer of the Countess de Marville!"
The handsome passenger stood as if frozen to the deck, making no resistance as the lady in black slipped a pair of handcuffs over his wrists.
"By what right," he then stammered, "do you—"
He paused, as the other threw off her dress and false hair, revealing the person of a slender man with delicate, girlish features.
"I am Jean Mosqueau, the detective!" he quietly remarked; "and I robbed the waves of this rascal, that the galleys might not be cheated!"
There is little to add.
The main proof having been obtained, brought forth, showing him guilty beyond doubt.

Long before his execution, his name was ascertained to be Louis Roscouen—a noted adventurer and gambler, who, however, by cool effrontery and a winning address, backed by his great beauty, had been enabled to move among the first circles of Parisian society.
The Catawba Grape.
The following extract from a letter of H. W. Ravelin, Esq., the distinguished botanist of South Carolina, written to the *Gardener's Monthly*, gives a true statement as to the native home of the Catawba grape. We have seen the wild vines in that section so identical in fruit and general appearance that no botanist could doubt the parentage of this best known of our wine grapes. And we believe that in that section the cultivated grape will yet be produced in greater perfection than in any other locality. There are thousands of acres of fertile hillsides which only need the hand of energy and capital to produce from them an article of Catawba wine surpassing in quality and flavor any article of that name ever placed before the public. Dr. Ravelin says:
"With respect to the Catawba grape we have more trustworthy data. The place of its origin has always been ascribed to the French Broad river, in Buncombe county, North Carolina, not far from Asheville, and on the farm of William Murry. In 1833 I had from the late William Murry, the son of the Murry on whose farm it was first found, an account of this grape. He remembered when a boy seeing the original vine at his father's place, and had often eaten grapes from it. He said that General Davy, in 1807, then Senator from South Carolina, living at Rocky Mount, on the Catawba river, in South Carolina, transplanted some of these vines to his residence, and from these took them to Washington, where they were distributed. From this source they came into the possession of Major Adlum, and also of Mr. Longworth, of Cincinnati. I had this statement from Mr. Murry himself, who was then living at Catawba Springs, in Georgia, and he spoke confidently and earnestly of its undoubted origin there. This grape also, there can be no doubt, is a chance seedling of V. Labrusca, having all the characters of that species except in the superior quality of the fruit, and in rather less hoarseness of the under side of the leaf, which are not essential characters."
The Phantom Train.
A writer in the Albany (N. Y.) *Evening Times* relates a conversation with a superstitious night watchman on the New York Central Railroad. Said the watchman: "I believe in spirits and ghosts. I know such things exist. If you will come up in April, I will convince you." He then told of the phantom train that he had seen with the body of Abraham Lincoln. Regularly in the month of April, about midnight, the air on the track becomes very keen and cutting. On either side it is warm and still. Every watchman, when he feels this air, steps off the track, and sits down to wait. Soon after the pilot engine, with the phantom train, and a band of black instruments, playing dirges, and grinning skeletons sitting all about, will pass up noiselessly, and the very air grows black. If it is moonlight, clouds always come over the moon, and the music seems to linger, as if frozen with horror. A few moments after, the phantom train slides by. Flashes and steamers hang about the track ahead seems covered with a black carpet, and the wheels are draped with the same. The coffin of the murdered Lincoln is seen lying on the center of a car; and all about it, in the air, and on the train behind, are vast numbers of blue-coated men, some with coffins on their backs, others leaning upon them. It seems then that all the vast armies of men who died during the war, are escorting the phantom train of the President. The wind, if blowing, dies away at once, and over all the air a solemn hush, almost stifling, prevails. If a train were passing, its noise would be drowned in the silence, and the phantom train would ride over it. Clocks and watches always stop, and when looked at, are found to be from five to eight minutes behind. Everywhere on the road, about the 20th of April, the time of watches and trains is found suddenly behind. This, said the leading watchman, was from the passage of the phantom train.
Packing Butter.
A new method of packing butter for the retail trade has been invented, and it promises to answer a want long felt. The new process is described as follows: A firkin or barrel is prepared by filling to a proper depth with strong and pure brine. The butter, as it is taken from the churn and prepared for market, is carefully selected as to color and quality and enclosed in plain cotton bags or sacks, weighing from five to ten pounds each. These sacks are placed in the barrel or firkin, fresh and sweet, and as the brine completely covers them they can be kept in this condition for any length of time, it is claimed, without any deterioration in quality. One great advantage that is claimed for this new style of packing is, that dealers can take out from them in the hands of the customer, one or more of the bags from the original package, leaving the rest safe under cover of the brine and excluded from the air. The bags are suited to the retail trade, as they are just about what is generally needed for family use, but are at the same time so conveniently arranged that any smaller amount can be cut from them in the hands of the customer. This is an experiment in packing butter, but it is worthy of consideration by retail dealers.—*Buffalo Commercial Advertiser.*
A bookbinder said to his wife at the wedding: "It seems that now we are bound together, two volumes in one, with clasps." "Yes," observed one of the guests, "one side highly ornamented and Turkey morocco, and the other plain calf," and the next moment was making rapid strides down stairs.

General Washington's Farm.
A Virginia correspondent to the *Country Gentleman* writes as follows:
"The farm of General Washington, at Mount Vernon, contained in his day ten thousand acres of land in one body—equal to about fifteen square miles. A great portion of it was a vast valley or basin surrounded by a range of hills, a third of it was a neck of land on the Potomac River, with Little Hunting Creek Bay on the east and Dogue Creek Bay on the west. These creeks are navigable for about two and a half miles up from the river channel, and certainly would have afforded the General great facilities, as they made our farms, in boating and landing, more or less, which the father cherished and cultivated with care. In the same village resided an antiquated maiden lady, who, having no cares of her own to occupy her time and attention, magnanimously devoted herself to those of her neighbors. One morning she called at the doctor's and requested to see him. When he entered the room where she was seated, he perceived at a glance that something was amiss, and before he had time to extend her the usual 'How do you do?' she added:
"I think, Dr. Pond, that a man of your age and profession might have had something better to do, when you were in New London last week, than to buy Enoch a fiddle; all the people are ashamed that our minister should buy his son a fiddle! Oh, dear, what is the world coming to, when ministers will do such things!"
"A violin? what's that?"
"Who told you I had a fiddle?" inquired the Doctor.
"Who told me? Why, everybody says so, and some people have heard him play on it as they passed the door. But ain't it true, Doctor?"
"I bought Enoch a violin when I went to New London."
"Did you never see one?"
"Never."
"Enoch" said the Doctor, stepping to the door, "bring your violin here."
Enoch obeyed the command, but no sooner had he entered with his instrument than the old lady exclaimed:
"La! now; there, why, it is a fiddle!"
"Do not judge rashly," said the Doctor, giving his son a wink; "wait till you hear it."
Taking the hint, Enoch played Old Hundred. The lady was completely mystified; it looked like a fiddle, but she never heard Old Hundred played on a fiddle! It could not be so, rising to depart, she exclaimed, "I am glad I came in to satisfy myself. I am just think how people will lie!"
Let Us Have the Steam Plow.
It is no longer a question whether steam plowing is practicable or profitable. That has been abundantly shown by the constant use for several years in England of these instruments, and the proof that the heaviest lands may be plowed thereof, in some cases, not over one dollar per acre. The question is with us:
Can we apply this system of plowing to our peculiar circumstances? We need it. By no other means can our soil be properly prepared. It has been shown that clay soils which have been cultivated in the best manner by horse power, when cultivated by steam to a depth of three feet, gave immediately double the usual crops. Such cultivation is manifestly impossible without the aid of steam. With this power the heaviest soil can be loosened and mellowed, and made to admit air and heat—made in fact, to breathe and live—as deeply as we may desire. The very impossibility of doing this in our present circumstances has given rise to a prejudice against it, and deep cultivation has come to be a bugbear with many.
But if we were once able to penetrate and loosen the soil (not invert it) to a depth of thirty inches, we should never hear the least objection to the practice. The result, of course, as the conditions are equal, will be the same here as in England, and this is sufficiently profitable to lead us to make an attempt to secure it. Co-operation is the method in which it may be done. Congress has removed all import duty on foreign-made steam plowing apparatus and engines, so that the objection of the enhanced cost is removed. Manifestly private enterprise, at least among ordinary farmers, is insufficient to undertake this task single-handed, but jointly it may be done.
The first attempt should be made in such States as Illinois or California, where level ground, heavy dry soil, farms of considerable size, and sufficient capital and public spirit, are all to be met with. Joint stock steam plowing companies in England have made a profit of fifteen per cent. in addition to laying aside a fund for renewal of plant, and have done the work at half the cost and four times as well as with horse power. Then why should not the attempt succeed here? There is everything to gain and not much to lose by making it.
A Mississippi River Story.
A couple of flat-boat men on the Mississippi river having made an extraordinarily good speculation, concluded that while they were in New Orleans they would go for a real first-class hotel dinner at the St. Charles Hotel. Having eaten the meal, they called for their bill. The waiter in attendance misunderstood them, and supposing that they wanted the bill of fare, laid it before them, with the wine-list uppermost.
"Whew, Bill!" said Jerry, "here's a bill! Just look at it! Here you add up one side and I'll add up the other, and we'll see what the old thing comes to."
So Bill added up the prices of wines on one side of the list and Jerry added on the other, and they made the sum total \$384.
"Wh—ew, Bill!" said Jerry, "that's pretty nigh all we've got! What are we going to do about it?"
"We can't pay that," said Bill, "it 'ud clean us right out. The waiter ain't here now, let's jump out o' the window and put it!"
"No, sir—no," said Jerry, "I'd never do such a mean thing as that. Let's pay the bill and then go down stairs and shoot the landlord."

The Difference between a Violin and a Fiddle.
Half a century ago, or less, the somewhat facetious Dr. Pond dwelt in the quiet and out-of-the-way village of A—, The Doctor's ideas were liberal—much more so than many of his congregation; nevertheless, he kept on the even tenor of his people. He had a son named Enoch, who at an early age manifested a remarkable talent for music, which the father cherished and cultivated with care. In the same village resided an antiquated maiden lady, who, having no cares of her own to occupy her time and attention, magnanimously devoted herself to those of her neighbors. One morning she called at the doctor's and requested to see him. When he entered the room where she was seated, he perceived at a glance that something was amiss, and before he had time to extend her the usual "How do you do?" she added:
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A Robber who Must have Known Something.
For some days past there has been considerable excitement in certain circles over a robbery which, in its peculiarity, has had no precedent in this country. The scene of the affair was the Allegheny Observatory, with which all our readers are acquainted, and the circumstances, so far as they are known, are as follows: Professor Langley had been absent on professional business for several days and returned on the 7th about ten o'clock. He repaired immediately to the observatory on the hill above Allegheny, and found everything in perfect order, an assistant having been in charge during his absence. After the inspection of the premises, he and the assistant closed the place securely and left for their lodgings. The next morning upon returning to the building they were astonished to find that it had been broken into, and a valuable part of the property carried off. The burglar or burglars were acquainted with the building, and it would seem were of a scientific turn of mind. Entrance had been effected by prying open the window in the west wing. The burglar having once gained admittance directed attention to the large equatorial telescope. This had been left the evening previous pointing skyward, and in the morning was found reversed, and the large object-glass gone. The glass was held in its place by bolts, and to a person acquainted with the machinery its removal would be but the work of a few minutes.
This, evidently was the object of the burglar; as nothing else in the place was disturbed. Indeed, great care seemed to have been exercised that nothing else should be taken. A few tools which had been on the window sill were found in their places in the morning, and the window was carefully closed, so that a casual observer would not have known that the place had been entered. The great object-glass, which was the prize carried off, was made by the late Henry Pitz, of New York, and was one of the largest in the country—thirteen inches in diameter—being surpassed only by those in the Cambridge and Chicago observatories. The direct loss to the observatory management would not have known that the place had been entered. The great object-glass, which was the prize carried off, was made by the late Henry Pitz, of New York, and was one of the largest in the country—thirteen inches in diameter—being surpassed only by those in the Cambridge and Chicago observatories. 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