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The Best That I Can.

"I cannot do much," said a little star
"To make the dark world bright
My silver beams cannot struggle far
Through the folding gloom of night
But I'm only a part of God's great plan
And I'll cheerfully do the best I can!"

"What is the use," said a feeble cloud,
"Of these few drops that I hold?
They will hardly bend the lily proud,
Though caught in her cup of gold!
Yet I am part of God's great plan
So my treasure I'll give as well as I can!"

A child went merrily forth to play,
But a thought, like a silver thread,
Kept whirling in and out all day,
Through the happy golden head;
Mother said, "Dear child, do all you can,
For you are a part of God's great plan!"

She knew no more than the gleaming star,
Nor the cloud with its shining trail,
How, why, and for what, all strange things
Were;
She was only a child at school!
But she thought, "It is part of God's great plan,
That even I should do all that I can!"

So she helped a younger child along,
When the road was rough to the feet,
And she sang from the heart a little song
That we all thought passing sweet;
And her father, a weary, toll-woman,
Said, "I, too, will do the best I can!"

Our best! Ah! children, the best of us
Must hide our faces away,
When the Lord of the vineyard comes to look
At our task at the close of the day!
But for strength from above, 'tis the Master's
Plan.

We'll pray, and we'll do the best that we can

A CONFESSION.

Most men would hesitate at telling such a story of themselves. But I am convinced that it will afford a suggestion of mercy toward such as do fall, and some may be turned away from temptation by its recital.

I had been an under clerk in a large establishment for many years. Naturally economical, my savings had attained to such a respectable sum that I ventured upon married life, quite as much as a refuge from the monotony of my inexpensive style of living as in obedience to those yearnings of nature which a man is either very foolish or very bad not to heed in due season.

Like most men, however, whose adventures of this kind are not followed by the comfort and ease which depend upon money for their possession, in the course of time I came to regret the undertaking; for I was in debt, and my family had increased, while my income had not kept pace with my expenses.

My wife lacked the courage to practice the proper self-denial which would be consequent upon a retrenchment of our expenses. I was daily annoyed by demands I had borrowed money in every available quarter, and a walk in the public streets was literally denied to me by the fear of encountering some one to whom I was in debt for house expense.

Returning home late one night, jaded by a illness which I brought the town, I found the junior member of the firm awaiting me. The house had received intelligence, after business hours, of a transaction entered into on their account, which secured the immediate transmission to an isolated inland town of several thousand dollars, together with certain papers and statements necessary to conclude the affair. It was too important a matter to be intrusted to the insecurity and uncertainty of the mail. Upon a consultation of the members of the firm I had been selected to perform the necessary two days' journey. I accepted the mission with alacrity, for the reason, among others, that it would be such a recreation as would divert my thoughts for a time from the perplexities of my miserable condition.

With the usual foresight of the firm everything necessary to my prompt departure had been prearranged. The needed papers and accounts, and the indispensable money required to finish the transactions, were placed in my hands in an envelope addressed to the gentleman who had acted as agent of the concern in the matter. The letter of instructions were also inclosed.

I remember well the bright September morning on which I started on horseback and alone on my journey, of which I accomplished half the first day, arriving at a farmhouse, whose occupants unhesitatingly granted my petition for a share for the night in its humble hospitable.

The weather grew colder as the evening came on, and by the time I had reached the house I experienced a sensible chill. I had with me a flask of liquor, and was furnished, at my request at bedtime, with a small quantity of hot water with which to compound a sort of punch, as an antidote to the cold I apprehended having taken.

I had removed the package of money from my pocket and laid it on the table, with a view of putting it under my pillow before going to bed. As it lay on the table the address was uppermost; on the left-hand upper corner was a memorandum, "\$5,000 inclosed." I was standing with my back to the door. Succeding a few moments of entire silence I heard a foot behind me, and I almost thought a breath upon my face. Turning suddenly round I beheld my host with the hot water I had called for in a tumbler in his hand. He was quite beside me, and his eyes rested, or I fancied they rested, on the package upon the table. I must confess I was sensibly startled by this incident. My concern was not diminished by observing that he had removed his boots from his feet, and was then standing as he had come and went was to take the water out of his hand. Not being quite ready to use it I put the envelope of money on the top of it as the most convenient thing to keep it hot. I did not turn the perscription downward, because I feared it would betray the suspicion which I now positively entertained of evil intentions on the part of my entertainer, who had entered the room as noiselessly as he had entered it. I imagined a great many ways in which he could have become acquainted with the cause of my journey, and came rapidly to the

New York's River Thieves.

New York has a large number of professional thieves, many of whom apparently lead an honest life and are not known as dishonest members of society except to a small circle of friends. Chief among the class referred to, says a metropolitan paper, are river thieves or pirates, all of whom at some period of their lives learned the art of handling a vessel either as an accomplishment or in the line of duty. If one of these should be found hawking in the sunlight and mentally mapping out his piracies for the night, he could easily pretend that he was an honest man out of employment. Groups of these fellows can be seen lounging around the Erie basin in the daytime, playing cards or gazing at the vessels at anchor. As a rule these men are rough-looking fellows, although many appear almost enough. Some of them live in tenement houses in New York or Brooklyn, and have good reputations not only among their neighbors but also in their own families. Many are young men, the sons of honest parents, with whom the law is a stranger. They are the subjects of the articles which find their way into his possession. There are a number of persons who make money by buying stolen goods from river pirates. The junkmen, at best, are regarded with suspicion. Some of them, beside purchasing junk from the masters of vessels, will steal whatever they can lay their hands on. If a boy or an apprentice should be found alone on a vessel the junkman will offer him a trifling sum for some of the gear or stores. Watchmen on vessels at anchor in the stream are sometimes in collusion with the junkmen, by whom they are well paid. According to the genuine boatmen, such as those at the Battery, the junk business, although it is licensed by the authorities, is dishonest, and the men who follow it should be classed as pirates.

On dark nights the watchmen of the vessels at anchor in the bay are told to keep a sharp lookout. Every approaching small boat is viewed with suspicion. If the latter should be hailed and should fail to answer, but row hastily away, the watchman can feel himself free to fire at the retreating boat without being called to account for his conduct. There are usually two or three pistols in the cabin of a vessel, and a crew, when warned, is able to repel a boatload of river pirates, or at least to attract the attention of the vessels in the neighborhood. Consequently the pirates have to proceed with great caution. They usually select a dark night for making an attack on a vessel at anchor. If it is summer they generally pass themselves as honest workmen enjoying a quiet row, but if it is winter they go on their dishonest mission with the expectation of meeting with danger. If the captain of a boat should be anchored in the bay, the pirates are apt to select that vessel.

When there is brisk and quantities of rum, molasses or other liquids are left on the piers, the river pirates row in under the docks and bore holes through the planks in the flooring and into the hogsheads above. The liquid pours through the holes and is caught by the men in the boat below. One night in the spring of 1880 a boat containing four river pirates approached a fleet of coasting schooners anchored in Flushing bay. But the alarm was given in time and the crews were prepared to defend themselves. One of the pirates endeavoring to escape fell overboard and was drowned. Several of the crews in the neighborhood were aroused, and the three remaining pirates were caught and were arraigned before the authorities next morning. In a day or two the trio were "rattled to Sing Sing." This proved a wholesome lesson, and for some time afterward no attack was made on a vessel at anchor. There have been a number of cases of collusion between the landmen, who buy and sell river pirates. The former wait until the coast is clear and then give their confederates the signal to approach and begin operations, while they mount guard and stand in readiness to give their warning of the approach of any one. But for the watchmen on the vessels the river pirates would come on board and cut the ropes below the belaying pins and carry them off.

Scientific Notes.

Thirty-four species of insects new to science have recently been discovered in the Sandwich Islands.

It is maintained that if meteors did not fall into the sun the temperature of the earth would sink to 200 degrees or 300 degrees.

Sulphurous acid is rare among the products of Vesuvius and the volcanoes of equatorial America; more common in Asia, and abundant in the volcanoes of Iceland and Java.

A paper recently read before the British association contends that crops must have been formed from a compact mass of vegetation, and could not have arisen from large trees.

After experimenting for a quarter of a century on the variation of plants, Doctor H. Hoffman inclines to the opinion that variation takes place in definite directions, and that its cause is in a preponderating degree internal.

Last summer, says the *Journal of Science*, some common live bees built a comb against the flat wall of a house in Dorsetshire, England. A few pieces of the comb were exhibited at the November meeting of the Entomological society, London, and they had evidently contained bee grubs. This is an unexampled departure from the habits of the species.

Adamscobite stone is found in only one place in the world, and that is in the State of Missouri. The company which now owns the whole quarry in Dorchester, N. H., where it is to be manufactured into articles as are deemed salable. The stone is very peculiar in its structure and properties. Its cutting power is diamond-like, cutting away steel very rapidly and still retaining an exceedingly fine edge.

The general experience of observers has been that the removal of forests results in diminishing the size of rivers and smaller streams traversing the territory. This effect is often very marked—small streams disappearing entirely and large rivers dwindling to mere brooks. Quite a different experience is reported from New South Wales. A tract of land embracing the watershed of three creeks was partially cleared in 1870. Soon after, these creeks, which had been dry water courses for years—became permanent streams, and have so continued to the present time. The explanation offered to account for this phenomenon is, that a large proportion of the rainfall formerly taken up by the gum trees and evaporated now finds its way to the streams.

Reveries of Some Eminent Men.

Swift relieved his tense and tragic moods on one occasion he insisted on harnessing his learned and respectable friend Dr. Sheridan—and driving them up and down the stairs and through the rooms of his deanery. Peter the Great sought to subvert himself by being wheeled over the flower-beds and neat parterres of his host's garden in a wheelbarrow, as poor Sir William Temple found to his cost. That accomplished diplomatist appears to have felt his chagrin at the failure of the triple alliance more child's play to his feelings at beholding the Russian monarch riding roughshod over the principles of Moor park. Glover, the once famous author of "Leonidas and the Athenaid," had the same disagreeable weakness, though, not being safe in the "divinity which doth hedge a king," his plebeian back received on more than one occasion infuriated edgelings at the hands of insulted horticulturalists. Cardinal Mazarin once had to have a room and jumping over the chairs, arranged in positions varying according to the degrees of difficulty in clearing them. Of this weakness on the part of his excellency an amusing anecdote is told. On one occasion, while engaged in these athletic feats, he forgot to lock the door. A young courtier, inadvertently entering the room, surprised the great man in his undignified pursuit. It was an embarrassing position, for Mazarin, who knew, as haughty as he was eccentric, but the young man was equal to the crisis. Assuming the interest interest in the proceedings he exclaimed, with well-feigned earnestness: "I will bet your eminence two gold pieces I can beat that jump." He had struck the right chord, and in two minutes he was measuring his leaping powers with the prime minister, whom he took care not to beat. He lost his two gold pieces, but he gained before long a miter. Samuel Clark relieved his theological pursuits in the same way, and on one occasion seeing a pedantic fellow approaching, said to the pupil who was sharing his amusement: "Now we must stop for a fool is coming in." Old Belton, the author of the "Anatomic of Melancholy," the only book which got Dr. Johnson out of his bed two hours before he intended to rise, found his chief recreation in going down to Polly bridge, at Oxford, and listening to the ribaldry of the barges, "which did clear away his vapours and make him laugh as he would die."—*Temple Bar.*

Why Some are Poor.

Cream is allowed to mold and spoil. Silver spoons are used to scrape kettles. The scrubbing brush is left in the water. Nice handled knives are thrown in hot water. Brooms are never hung up. Dishcloths are thrown where mice can destroy them. Tubs and pails are left in the sun to dry and fall apart. Clothes are left on the line to whip to pieces in the wind. Pie crust is left to sour instead of making a few tarts for food. Dried fruit is not taken care of in season and becomes wormy. Vegetables are thrown away that would make a good dinner. The cork is left out of the syring jug and the flies take possession. Bits of meat are thrown out that would make excellent hash for breakfast. Coffee, tea and spices are left to stand open and lose their strength. Pork spoils for the want of salt and because the brine wants scalding.

Forty-Seventh Congress.

On the opening of the Senate after the adjournment of the House the Senators were called to order by the president pro tempore, Mr. Davis, after which a number of bills were introduced, among them being the following: By Mr. Anthony, to promote the efficiency of the navy; by Mr. Maxey, to increase the efficiency of the signal service of the army. The morning hour was mainly occupied in the presentation of petitions of which a large number prayed for the exercise of government control over rail transportation charges. Mr. Miller presented an amendment offered by Mr. Cross, to amend an act of Congress, introduced a joint resolution to reappropriate the amount (\$275,000) appropriated by the act of March, 1877, to pay in full to certain Southern contractors a sum greater than the amount of the contracts for the years 1859, 1860 and 1861.

The resolution offered by Mr. Davis, of West Virginia, relating to pension frauds, calling for statements of their nature and character, what amount of arrears has been paid, etc., came up on the calendar. Considerable discussion followed. Mr. Logan, replying to Mr. Davis, in the course of the debate said that the secretary had estimated that \$100,000,000 would be required for this year to pay the pension roll, and this estimate was not increased by the commissioner to \$120,000,000. He (Mr. Davis) had stated last year that the arrears of pensions had not cost the government a sum greater than the national debt, and the statement was laughed at. Present indications seemed to justify the statement he then made. Mr. Logan, replying to Mr. Davis, said that statements not based on accurate information should not be allowed to go to the country uncontradicted. The assertion that the pension arrears would cost more than the national debt was certainly not based upon any reliable basis. The report of the commissioner was not to be taken as gospel. In his command the arrears of pensions could be paid in two years, and that after these were paid the roll would be reduced to forty, or not over fifty, millions.

Honors.

The session of the House after the holiday recess received with a novel incident of a sensational character. Mr. Orth (Republican, of Indiana) rose to a question of privilege, and raising a matter of internal discipline, a protest against the committee assignments as an injustice to himself and his constituents. The members listened attentively, and Mr. Springer was called upon to report on the matter. He was stopped by Mr. Robinson, who called promptly for the regular order. Mr. Springer said he should, therefore, make another session to bring up the matter. Mr. Orth asked to be excused from serving on the committee on rules, of which the speaker is chairman. His request was granted by Speaker Keifer, who said that he did not consider it necessary to violate himself by saying anything in reply to Mr. Orth. The following list of appointments were referred: By Mr. Hawk, to reorganize the militia; also to require manufacturers of oleomargarine to label their product with the name of the manufacturer. To the committee on Mississippi levees. Mr. Hewitt offered a resolution relating to the fact that the Executive of Egypt had been elected to the United States the obelisk known as "Cleopatra's Needle," and tending to his highness, the Khedive, the thanks of the people of the United States. It was the only obelisk the youngest could most highly prize. Adopted.

The Lost Child.

In Uvalde, Texas, the little three-year-old daughter of Mr. Sam Johnson, living on the Sabinal, wandered off after flowers. His absence attracted attention before it had been gone an hour and the family began to look for it, but not finding it on the place at once roused their neighbors to assist in the search. Callow Brown, who had stopped over night in the place, Ben White, Henry Shane, several Mexicans and the distressed parents hunted all that day and night, and at about 1 o'clock on the next day the dim track of the child's shoe was discovered by the practiced eye of Mr. Brown. The party, buoyant with hope, followed the trail with great difficulty until night, when fires were built up in the hope of attracting her attention. On Friday morning the search was resumed and fresh tracks found, which were followed by Mr. Brown, Mr. Shane and a Mexican, the rest of the party having decided and keeping up the search in different directions. About 10 o'clock the little one was discovered on a high hill by a hole of water, three and a half miles from home, with its clothing torn to shreds by the thorns and prickly pear through which it had worked its way. On the approach of the hunters the child commenced crying, and the first remark she made was that she "wanted to go to her mamma." Signal guns were immediately fired, which soon brought the balance of the party to the spot, and the feelings of the overjoyed but heretofore frantic mother at the finding of her living child, instead of its bones, can be better imagined than described. It was out two days and nights, without any food whatever, and where the tracks of panthers, and wolves and wild-cats are found thick by the hunters.

From Caudles to the Electric Light.

The materials used by the ancients for producing light were wax and tallow, oil of various kinds being also used at a later day. Their candles and lamps were exceedingly rough and unclean, and the light yielded was of the feeblest description, and gave out the most disgusting odors. Even up to the present century little or no progress had been made, gas being unknown, and the perfect-burning oil lamps with which we are so familiar having no existence until many years later. Gas was first introduced in 1802, but as late as 1842 the Haymarket theater, in London, continued to be lighted by candles. Mary, the contrast. Less than forty years ago London witnessed the drama by the dim, flickering light of foul-smelling candles, while within the past few days Paris has had the privilege of listening to the opera beneath the brilliant, noon-day glare of the electric arc!

It appears that bromide of potassium, which is so extensively used as an antidote for sleeplessness, is largely composed of lead, and those who employ it are exposing themselves to ead poisoning. This statement is made by a German chemist.

A Tramp's Philosophy.

In the hip pocket of an old vagrant pulled in by the police the other night was a memorandum book full of his own writing with pencil, and some of his philosophy is good enough to be preserved. His first paragraph reads: "Drinking water is like getting in the way of bullets purchased by an enemy."

A second reads: "Honesty is the best policy, but some folks are satisfied with second best. It is hard to be honest on an empty stomach."

A dry plank under a rain-proof shed is better than a horse and a pig in jail, and one isn't annoyed by the jaller bringing in a square breakfast."

A fourth says: "Pay as you go. If you haven't anything to pay with don't go. If you are forced to go record your indebtedness and let your heirs settle bills."

The fifth explains: "We should do charity for all. When the winter winds blow cold and drear we rags should pity the cold and lows in India who are having red hot weather."

A sixth is recorded: "Politeness costs nothing, but it is not expected that you will wake a man up at midnight to ask permission to go through his hen-house. It is more courteous to let him enjoy his needed repose."

The seventh and last was noted down as follows: "When you pick up an apple core do not find fault because it is not the apple itself, but be satisfied with the grade of descent. Do not be ashamed of your occupation. We cannot all be lords, nor can we all be vagrants. As I can't be a lord I should not lament at being a vagrant. Be truthful and outspoken—that is, tell 'em you are a Chicago fire-sufferer. Keep reasonable hours or some other rags will get your plank first. Be hopeful, cheerful and good-natured. Growing wot'll cure a sore houl."

A Mexican Salutation.

Mary Hallowek Foote, in "A Provincial Capital of Mexico," in the *Century*, says: As the white mules pace sedately down the roughly paved streets the ladies keep a hand ready to make the customary signal of greeting from the carriage windows to their friends at the windows and balconies of the store. It is an indescribably fascinating gesture—so swift and subtle, almost like a fleeting expression across the face. It is made by a quick flutter of the second finger, the hand being raised, palm inward, to a level with the eyes. How much its charm is enhanced by the beauty of those dark Southern eyes that convey to the beholder a very stolid character to decide. It seemed to me excessively intimate in Mexico, I believe, it is kept for one's friends only, but in the capital it is the usual greeting at a distance between acquaintances. I have seen nothing prettier in their social customs, except the way the ladies meet and lean their cheeks together, and pat each other softly on the back of the shoulder.

The Jeannette Party.

It is announced from St. Petersburg that there is little chance of receiving further news from the Jeannette party inside of some weeks. The exact whereabouts of De Long and his party is not known, and the relief expedition must travel 1,400 miles in wintery weather before it reaches the region where Neudemann left them, over a country which has no roads. But the assurance is given that the Yakuts, into whose hands they are supposed to have fallen, are a good-natured, hospitable tribe of natives, skilled in caring for disorders caused by the cold.

Governor Crittenden, of Missouri,

employs convict labor in his household, a number of men and women being detailed from the penitentiary for this service.

Gov. Crittenden, of Missouri, employs convict labor in his household, a number of men and women being detailed from the penitentiary for this service.