

The Home Reading Circle

A VISITOR FROM KENTUCKY.

By JOSEPH A. ALTSHELER.

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SYNOPSIS.

Mr. and Mrs. James Pearson, natives and former residents of Wilkesburg, a small town in the hill country of Kentucky, after twenty years absence in New York (where he is employed), Mr. Pearson has established a large business, decide to pay a visit to their cousin, Tom Crockett, at Wilkesburg. They receive a cordial welcome from the bachelor, and make a favorable impression upon the village people. On leaving, they invite Crockett to visit them in New York. The following autumn his affairs having prospered, Crockett decides to do so, and he makes his first trip to the city, having written his cousin that he was coming. Pearson meets Crockett at the station, and takes him to the Pearsons' home far up town. They go up many pairs of stairs, and enter the Pearson rooms, Pearson explaining that he lives on a high floor in order to obtain fresh air. Crockett eats a small supper that Mrs. Pearson has provided for him, but remains hungry, not liking to ask for more. He goes to bed in a room which seems too small for him to breathe in.

PART III.

Mr. Crockett was awakened early in the morning by a rasping of ropes and jangling of bells. He thought at first it was fire, and leaped from the bed in alarm, striking his head against a projecting corner of the wall. But he soon decided that it was no fire. He could hear voices as if some one were shouting up a long chimney. The voices were distinct enough for him to understand many of the words that were said. There was a threat about never sending up any more meat unless the last month's bill was settled, and then a different voice was heard in exhortation and entreaty. Mr. Crockett did not catch the end of the discussion. Mr. Crockett did not sleep any more and was called to breakfast an hour later. The boys were there, small and sharp-faced like their parents. Mr. Crockett greeted them with affection for he was a warm-hearted man, but he could not say that he took to them very much. They seemed too old for their years. Jim ought to have let them stay at school longer. There was a thing as crowding a boy too much. The breakfast consisted of coffee, bread and butter, and some thin slices of bacon.

"We've grown out of that old Kentucky way of eating a big meal at breakfast," said Cousin Jim. "It's a very bad habit. Awful on the digestion. The Europeans, who know much more about the art of eating than we do, have only bread and butter and coffee or tea at breakfast. You country people suffer terribly from dyspepsia, and it's all caused by over-eating."

Mr. Crockett admitted that Cousin Jim might be right. Nevertheless, he was very hungry, when the breakfast was over. The boys said away so quickly that he did not notice their absence until they had been gone several minutes. "I s'pose you have 'em in the business with you, so they can take charge of it when you feel like retirin'," hazarded Mr. Crockett.

Cousin Jim did not deny the correctness of this supposition. The breakfast being finished, it was suggested that Mr. Crockett go down to Central park and spend the morning there. His host and hostess were sorry they could not go with him, but one was compelled to look after his business, and the latter, owing to the temporary lack of servants, could not neglect her household duties. But Mr. Crockett demurred. Central park could wait. He believed he would go down with Cousin Jim and see how a big dry goods store was run.

Cousin Jim, with rather more vigor than he had shown at any time before, sought to get this notion out of Mr. Crockett's head. Business was such a commonplace thing, he said, that a mere looker-on was bound to be bored. But Mr. Crockett did not think so. He could see grass and trees every day in Kentucky as good as they had in Central park, and the dry goods store would interest him much more. He was not to be dissuaded.

They went down together on the elevated road and entered the big dry goods store in the heart of the shopping district, just as the clerks were gathering for their work. Back in the aisle could see the high brass railing that could see the high brass railing that surrounded the offices. But Cousin Jim did not go back there. He hung his hat in a niche and stationed himself like a soldier beside a table that stood in front of shelves loaded with rolls of cloth.

"Don't you go back every mornin' to see the other partners?" asked Mr. Crockett.

"No," said Cousin Jim, a flush coming into his salmon cheeks. "We've had some trouble with salesmen at this counter and I'm looking after it myself today. I think you had better walk around the store and see things."

Mr. Crockett took his advice and strolled up and down the aisles, wondering if New York had enough people to buy all the goods in that big building. There were many girls behind the counters, and Mr. Crockett spoke gallantly to one of them, saying that he hoped that Cousin Jim treated her well in the store.

pass her on to Easton. He was a little skeptical and questioned her closely. "She said she had paid her fare on the train all the time, and the receiver asked her why she hadn't bought a ticket," Charleston. She said she had. "Where is it?" asked the receiver. "Here it is," she replied, untying another corner of her handkerchief. There it was sure enough, good for all the way from Charleston to Easton, and hadn't been purchased once. The ticket was redeemed and there were quite a few dollars left after the girl had bought a ticket for Easton."

HORSES WEAR SNOWSHOES.

Only Way They Can Travel Over Twenty Feet of Snow.

All the horses working at the placer mine under the shadow of Pilot Peak, Plumas county, California, wear snowshoes. The altitude of the place is about 5,000 feet and enormous quantities of snow fall there in the winter, not infrequently reaching to the depth of twenty feet. "To overcome the disadvantages of the snow and enable us to carry on our projects there," said Mr. Bowman, one of the owners of the snowshoes, "we put shoes on the horses. By doing this we are able to get in our supplies of groceries, meats, canned goods and other things, and to transport the product of our mines. All our picks, shovels, giant powder and similar things that have to be taken about in the winter are handled in this way."

"Only California bred horses are used. It has been found there are the best, and, if possible, we get mountain horses—those that are raised at high altitudes. The horses go right along in the snow. They usually take a fast walk, but sometimes trot a little."

"They get so accustomed to the snowshoes that they don't stumble or fall at all, and they like them so well that they don't like to walk without them. They will put up their feet to have the snowshoes put on."

"We used wooden shoes at first and they worked very well, but now we have something a great deal better, it consists of a thin steel plate eight inches in length, through which are bored four or five holes of the ordinary shoe. The plate is fastened by a steel spring to the lower part of the hoof, and there is a nut on it so it can be screwed up tight with a wrench."

"On the bottom of this steel plate is a coating of India rubber, and this, by the way, is a great improvement in horse snowshoes. It keeps the shoe free entirely of snow, whereas formerly snow used to get under and fill up the plate. This would cause the horse to slip and founder around. Even when the horses are tired out with snowshoes for the first time they rarely ever fall, and, if they do, they usually steady a little. If they get the bang of things, we are careful not to select nervous horses. We don't want a high miler, but we want a steady, sure-footed horse. We rather prefer those that are quiet and not easily perturbed."

"The trained snowshoe horse goes anywhere, to make the mountain roads, or to haul a load of lumber, or to haul a load of coal. We tried for awhile making snowshoes out of aluminum for the horses. The metal was light and strong, but it was so heavy that it would be just the thing. But we found that the aluminum, unlike steel, would bend, so we gave up the new idea and stuck to the steel, using a thicker rubber coating for the bottom."

WIFE OF SECRETARY GAGE.

She Was an Albany Girl—A Truly Modern Love Story.

New York Mail and Express. Mrs. Gage was Miss Cornelia Lansing. She is native of Albany. In girlhood she was a great favorite in the provincial society of which she was a part and which she has never forgotten. The belle of the vicinage. Her acquaintance with her present husband began while his brother was a suitor for her hand. This brother, George C. Gage, was a fine fellow of frail physique. When she was prevailed upon to be his wife, she accepted him with the full knowledge that the marriage would not be a happy one. The story of the proposal is a romance with modern improvements. They were betrothed by telegraph. Mrs. Lloyd C. Gage was in San Francisco. Lyman J. Gage was in Florida nursing his bruises. They had been in correspondence ever since the brother's death, but there had been little exchange of sentiment until one day, when she received a letter from him saying that after mature deliberation he had come to the conclusion that she was the woman to whom he would like to be married. He hoped she would agree with him. If she did he begged her to complete his happiness by wiring the word "Yes." If she did not, she need not say anything at all in reply.

"When the reply came Mr. Gage was in Thomasville, Ga., on his way north with the remains of his friend, George C. Gage. The marriage was a romance with modern improvements. They were betrothed by telegraph. Mrs. Lloyd C. Gage was in San Francisco. Lyman J. Gage was in Florida nursing his bruises. They had been in correspondence ever since the brother's death, but there had been little exchange of sentiment until one day, when she received a letter from him saying that after mature deliberation he had come to the conclusion that she was the woman to whom he would like to be married. He hoped she would agree with him. If she did he begged her to complete his happiness by wiring the word "Yes." If she did not, she need not say anything at all in reply.

"When his train was well beyond the limits of Jersey City Mr. Crockett raised the car window and took a long, deep breath of the crisp, fresh air.

The End.

IN SPITE OF SCHOOLS.

She Did Not Know the Use of a Railroad Ticket.

The conductor of a train running between Washington and Philadelphia is quoted by the New York Times as telling a story which illustrates the pitiful possibilities of human ignorance that still exist, despite the schools that are scattered so thickly over all parts of the country, and the migratory habits of a majority of its inhabitants. "On my last trip," says the conductor, "I found a young colored girl in the train who, when I approached, hurriedly untied one corner of her handkerchief and presented money to pay her fare to Philadelphia. I counted it out and she had just enough. When I told her there was no change she began to cry, and said she had come from Charleston, S. C., and wanted to go to Easton, Pa. She said she knew no one in Philadelphia and had no money left. I felt sorry for her and when we arrived at Philadelphia I took her up to the ticket receiver to see if he could

TEN BEST SHORT POEMS BY ENGLISHMEN.

A Selection Made by Richard Henry Stoddard.

To Lucretia on Going to the War. Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind, That from the numbing Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase, The first love in the field; And with a stronger faith embrace A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet the inconstancy is such As you, too, shall adore; I could not love thee, dear, so much, Loved I not honor more.

Death's Final Conquest. The glories of our blood and state, Are shadows not substantial things; There is no armour against fate; Death lays his icy hand on kings— Sceptres and crowns, Must tumble down, And in the dust be equal made, With the poor creaked shoe and spade.

Some men with swords may reap the field, And put their honours up to sale; Their sterner nerves may beat the field, And they must win or else must fail.

How Sleep the Brave. How sleep the brave who sink to rest By all our country's wishes blest! When spring, with dewy fingers cold, Returns to deck their hallowed mold, She there shall dress a sweeter sod Than flowers that a sower ever trod.

By fairy voices their knell is rung, By forms unseen their dirge is sung; Then silence comes, a pilgrim gray To bless the turf that wraps their clay; And freedom shall while repair, To dwell a weeping hermit there.

Mary Morrison. Oh, Mary, at thy window be, It is the wished, the trusted hour! Thy smiles and glances let me see, That make the miser's treasure poor; How blithely wad I bide the stour, A heavy slave free sun to sun, Could I thee rich reward secure, The lovely Mary Morrison.

Yestreen, when to the trembling string, The music of the lutes and light harp, To thee my fancy took its wing, I sat, but neither heard nor saw, Though this was fair, and that was brow, And you the loveliest at the town, I sighed, and said among them 'A 'Ye are na Mary Morrison.'

Oh, Mary, canst thou wreck his peace, Who for thy sake wad gladly die? Or canst thou break that heart of his, Which in thy love is lovingly? If love for love thou wilt na' show; At least be pity to me shown; A thought ungentle canna be, The thought of Mary Morrison.

Fair Inez. I saw you not fair Inez? She's gone into the West; To dance when the sun is down, And rob the world of rest. She took our daylight with her, And when only faint is left, The smile that we love best, With morning blushes on her cheek, And pearls upon her breast.

Oh, turn again, fair Inez! Before the fall of night, For fear the moon should shine alone, And stars unrivaled bright, Their brightness o'er her face, 'That walks beneath their light, And breathes the love against thy cheek, I dare not even write!

Would it had been, fair Inez, That gallant cavalier, Who rode so gallantly by side, And whistled on his steed; Were there no loving dames at home, Or no true lovers here, This he should have done, to win The dearest of the dear?

I saw, thee, lovely Inez, And whistled on the shore, With a band of noble gentlemen, And banners waved before, And gentle youths and maidens gay— And snowy plumes they wore; It would have been a beautiful dream, If it had been no more.

Alas, alas, fair Inez! She went away with song, With music waiting on her steps, And soundings of the throng, And some were sad, and felt no mirth, But only music's wrong. In sounds that sang farewell, farewell, To hear you loved so long.

Farewell, farewell, fair Inez! That vessel never bore So fair a lady on its decks, Nor danced so light before, Atlas, for pleasure on the sea, And sorrow on the shore, The smile that blest one lover's heart Has broken many more.

La Belle Dame Sans Merci. O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms, Alone and palely lit from the lake, And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms, Nor danced so light before, Atlas, for pleasure on the sea, And sorrow on the shore, The smile that blest one lover's heart Has broken many more.

Day Dreams. O sweet beneath this tree to lie, And watch the incense eye The broken glimpses of the sky, And where the sunlight through the leaves.

A subtle flickering broodery weaves, To hear the low eternal sigh Of happy winds in tree-tops high, Or gnats hung in a watery cloud, Now far and faint, now near and loud, Or bees that quickly come and go On noisy errands to and fro; To see the swallows far, far up, Like mice in heaven's azure cup; To lounge and lie with dreamy eye, And feel the world go whirling round, And half in sleep and half in sound, Of winds that shake the tree-tops high, —Fall Mail Gazette.

Lines to Indiana Air. I arise from dreams of thee, In the first sweet sleep of night, When the winds are breathing low, And the stars are shining bright; I arise from dreams of thee, In the first sweet sleep of night, To thy chamber window, sweet! Has led me—who knows how?

The wandering airs that faint On the dark, silent stream— The champak odors fall, Like sweet thoughts in a dream. The nightingale's complaint, It dies upon her heart, As I must die on thine O beloved as thou art!

O lift me from the grass! I die, I faint, I fall, Let the love in kisses rain On my lips and eyelids pale; My cheek is cold and white, alas! My heart soft and sad and fast; Oh! press it close to thine again, Where it will break at last.

She Walks in Beauty. She walks in beauty, like the night Of cloudless climes and starry skies; And all that's best of dark and bright Meets in her aspect and her eyes; Thus mellowed to that tender light, Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade, the more, one ray the less, Had half impaired the nameless grace Which thro' thy veins is so evenly spread, Where thoughts serenely sweet express, How pure, how dear their dwelling place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow, So soft, so calm, yet eloquent, The smiles that win, the tints that glow, But tell of days in goodness spent, A mind at peace with all below, A heart whose love is innocent.

Abou Ben Adhem. Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase) Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace, And saw, within the moonlight in his room, Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom, An angel, writing in a book of gold. Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold, And to the presence in the room he said, "What writest thou?"—The vision raised its head, And with a look made of all sweet accord, Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."

"And is mine one?" said Abou; "Nay, not so," Replied the angel, Abou spoke more low, But cheerily still, and said, "I pray, thee, Write me, as one that loves his fellow men."

The angel wrote and vanished. The next night it came again with a great wakening light, And showed the names whom love of God had blessed,

THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MERE.

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note, As his corse to the rampart we hurried; Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him dearly at dead of night, The sods with our bayonets turning; By the struggling moonbeams' misty light, And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast, Not in sheet nor shroud we wound him; But he lay like a warrior taking his rest, With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said, And we spoke not a word of sorrow; But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead, And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought as we hollowed his narrow bed, And smoothed down his lonely pillow, That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head, And we far away in the billow.

Lighly they'll talk of the spirit that's gone, And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him; But little he'll rock, if they let him sleep On the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half our heavy task was done, When the clock struck the hour for retiring; And we heard the distant and random gun That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down, From the field of his fame 'fresh and gay; He carved not a line, and we raised not a stone— But we left him alone with his glory.

—Charles Wolfe.

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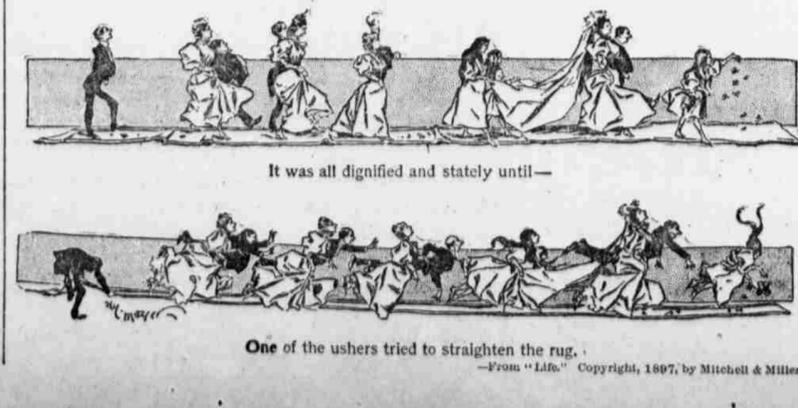
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