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Twilight.

I.

I've been roaming
In the gloaming
Of a mellow autumn eve;
Twilight lingers,
While its fingers,
Countless, boundless beauties weave.

II.

Day is dying,
Beautifying
In his death the land and lea;
Clouds in splendor
Shed their tender
Soul-subduing light on me.

III.

Night's descending,
Softly blending
Twilight glories with its own;
Till the shadows
In the meadows
To their fullest length have grown.

IV.

And this token,
Tho' unspoken,
Tells us that the day is dead;
Stars are peeping,
As if keeping
Silent watches round its bed.

V.

Thus the glimmer,
Dim and dimmer,
From our lives must pass away;
Till the morning,
In its dawning,
Ushers in another day.

VI.

May that morning,
When its dawning,
Beams at last upon our eyes,
Be the waking,
Be the breaking
Of a day that never dies.

—*E. D. Snow.*

BEHIND MINERVA'S SHIELD.

Homer Ashton one autumn evening listened to stories of witches and ghosts told around him, and joined in them, until he felt an occasional shiver creeping down his back. Not that he believed in the supernatural, but the fire light into which he sat looking grew pleasanter to him than the corners of the great room, for lamps had been banished to accord with the subject under discussion, and it seemed that the shadows flickering behind the young people grouped about the grate of blazing coal were massive and weird, and that when one glanced at them sideways suddenly, there was something about them like ghostly visitors. When he faced them, to be sure, they were only ordinary shadows. Homer was ashamed of himself, he was afraid his nerves were unsteady, and resolved to test them. He knew a way to do it.

Near the place at which he was staying, an English country house, were the ruins of the older part of a castle said to have been built in the time of the Crusades. The whole castle was at present uninhabited, but the part which had been allowed to fall into hopeless decay was the width of the courtyard away from the rest of the house. Probably it had once been connected with it by buildings which had formed three sides of a hollow square, but if so it had been left out in the changes made at different times, and now it was roofless, the walls were crumbled, and the underground portion was all that made any pretense to a habitation, and offered a suitable home to the unearthly beings who were said to roam in it, for a dampness covered all the stones and the air had a deadly chill. But these facts seemed conclusions from the nature of things rather than the results of observation, for Homer could not find anybody who had explored it.

Ghosts ought really to be forgiven a good many faults, because they are in general so unselfish about selecting homes nobody else wants.

That evening, as Ashton connected the reports of the place itself with stories of sights and sounds around it, he found himself yielding so much to the influence of gossip that he determined to shake off the weakness and to try what stuff he was made of. He would stand in those haunted halls and summon the ghosts and see what would happen. He knew well enough that it would be nothing.

But he did not tell his plan to the others; he said merely that he was going for a walk to blow away this ghostly atmosphere by a little fresh air. Nobody volunteered to accompany him. night had never seemed more distasteful to them all. They only looked at each other significantly as he left them, and said:

"Another Americanism."

There is an unreasoning element in human nature which assumes every individuality of a foreigner to be a national characteristic. Dr. Ashton, whom the son of the house had become acquainted with in London and brought home with him for a visit, was to his entertainers an epitome of America, and it must be confessed that at the end of a week they had come to have a good opinion of that country.

As Homer walked on rapidly he saw an occasional star in the sky, but it seemed as if he never could get out of the shadow of the trees, there were so many of them.

He soon came to the ruin, a mile away, opened the heavy gate and began to descend the long flight of steps leading into the corridors and rooms underground. What could the old place have been used for? Did monks come here for prayers and penances, or were these dungeons where captives taken in the petty warfare of those times felt the personal vengeance of their captors? He thought of the one described in "Ivanhoe," into which Isaac the Jew was thrown, damp, dark, hung with chains and shackles, and where in the ring of one set of fetters were two moldering human bones. It was no wonder ghosts were said to haunt a place like that.

In the midst of these thoughts the gate he had left open swung to with a clang, shutting out earthly things behind him. Step by step he went down the stone stairs into blackness to which the night outside was twilight. Sometimes he seemed to hear a sound, but when he stopped to listen it was the beating of his dull heart. When he reached the foot of the stairs he still went on; every now and then his outstretched hands struck against a wall or pillar, for he was passing through an arched hall that ended in a narrow passage. He next entered what he thought must be a large room, for the air had an indefinable difference and the blackness seemed that of space instead of substance. As he stood there uncertain which way to move and the very echo of his footsteps ceased, the horror of darkness and silence which had been growing upon him reached its height. He tried to utter his challenge, but his dry lips would give forth no sound, an abyss of night seemed to swallow him up.

Suddenly he fancied he heard a movement, he thought that something like palpable blackness flitted about him. He turned to fly and took a few hurried steps in the direction of the entrance. Then he stopped. It was no ghostly presence that arrested him, but the iron hand of his resolution; he had come here to do a certain thing and was not to be cowed by a feeling which he would be ashamed to own to himself in the daylight. He faced about and went forward quickly a few steps.

"If there is any ghost let him now appear," he called loudly.

The dreary walls answered his cry with a dull reverberation.

With arms folded he stood a moment—the hardest thing of all to do—awaiting results. If there had not been a roar in his ears, if the beating of his heart had not made even his vision unsteady, he would have said that he heard subdued laughter, or moaning, it was impossible to tell which as the sound rolled toward him from the hollow sides, and that he saw something like a whiteness in the distance, while a sense of presence made him cold with horror.

He had done all he had resolved to do and was free now to get out of this dreadful place. He hurried toward the entrance, urged on by the unreasoning sense of pursuit that comes over one when he turns his back upon danger. At all once he lost his footing and lay at full length on the slippery floor; the shock, however, only jarred and bewildered him. As he put out his hands to rise he touched something from which he drew back instantly with a stifled exclamation; he thought it must be one of the reptiles likely to be crawling in this den. But he recollected that it was small and hard, perhaps it was a curious stone which would prove his night's excursion if the strangers he was with should be tempted to doubt it. After a little groping he found it again; it felt like a stone covered with slimy moisture, and putting it into his pocket he made his way out of the ruins as best he could.

When he returned to the house his friend was alone waiting for him, and sleepy, as Homer could see, consequently a trifle annoyed at being kept up so late. The guest said nothing that night of where he had been.

In his room he took out the stone. It was not a pebble or a piece of the pavement, as he had supposed, but an oval of grayish lava that had once been a brooch or part of a bracelet. As he cleaned it with his penknife and pocket-handkerchief he saw that the work upon it was beautiful; it was a figure of Minerva, the very folds in her tunic carefully cut, and, as he saw by his magnifying-glass, with a light tracery of carving on her hemlet and shield. On the opposite side, just under the shield, was the word "Violet."

It was evidently the owner's name, but who was she? Where did she live, and when? The pin, if it were a pin, had not lain in its last hiding-place long, he thought, it was not enough stained by the dampness, yet he was uncertain about that. "Violet" might belong to a former generation or might have been sleeping the sleep of the just for a century. But suppose not, suppose she were a young lady beautiful as her name, wealthy and high-born? Well, what then?

Homer put out his light and went to bed, but not immediately to sleep. The affair seemed to promise an adventure; as such it would have been interesting to any young person. But Ashton, in addition to being barely twenty-five, had been obliged to make his way for the last ten years; for though he was of good family, Dame Fortune had started him in life with no more than one of her pennies, which, however, every time a man turns it, as in the legend, leaves a gold-piece in his hand.

The next morning but one a tall young man with dark hair and eyes and an expression amused, yet resolute, handed in his card at Grantham hall and asked to see its owner, Sir Gresham Laud.

"Dr. Homer Ashton," cried Sir Gresham, looking up from his letters displeased at the interruption. "Who's he? I don't know any such person. Beryl," to the servant, "what does he look like?"

"As well, Sir Gresham, only spryer."

"Oh, 'spryer,' is he? In his head or his heels, I wonder? Well, I suppose I must see what the fellow wants; one of those genteel sponges come to suck up as many pounds as I'll give to their deuced charities," he muttered. By which speech it is fair to conclude that Sir Gresham had been sponged in this way more than once.

But when Homer, who was admiring the view from the drawing-room window, turned and bowed as the baronet approached, Sir Gresham perceived nothing of the suppliant about him and began to doubt whether this elegant stranger did mean to make him a few pounds the poorer by his visit. He came forward and requested his visitor to be seated. Ashton spoke of the beauty of the country and Sir Gresham answered him, but at the moment curiosity was evidently his ruling passion.

"You are wondering why I came," said Homer. "Certainly it was not to tell you, what everybody knows, that this is the finest situation about here. But I have in my possession part of an ornament which, I believe, belongs to Miss Laud."

"You! What is it?"

Ashton bowed and smiled also, as he handed the other his discovery of the night but one before. "Does it belong to your daughter?" he said.

But Sir Gresham was too bewildered to answer him.

"That?" he cried. "Good heavens! that? Where did you find it? It's a clew."

"A clew to what?" cried Homer, eagerly. He felt on the brink of discovering how a lady's ornament could come in so strange a place.

But Sir Gresham was too excited by some suggestion awakened by the sight of the stone to have an idea of trying to satisfy any curiosity but his own.

"Where did you find it?" he repeated.

"Is it your daughter's?" returned Homer.

"Yes, it must be hers," and remembering at last to thank the young man for returning it, he stood with the stone in his hand waiting impatiently for a full account of its recovery.

"Does Sir Gresham Laud suppose that I came here for the purpose of telling a midnight adventure to him?" thought Homer, as a look of amusement flitted across his face. "If you will be so kind," he answered, suavely, "as to ask Miss Laud if she will do me the favor to identify her ornament, I shall be most happy to tell you, and her if she cares to know, how I came by it."

Sir Gresham hesitated only an instant. "Assuredly," he said, and sent for his daughter.

The young man's heart beat faster at the sound of light steps behind him. Suppose Violet were plain and heavy-looking, yet suppose—he turned hastily, but not too soon for the beautiful face that was coming toward him. "She was named for her eyes," thought Homer; and there was something else he thought, too, that could no more than this be spoken at the moment. She greeted him with a simplicity that charmed him; but when she saw the medallion in her father's hand she cried:

"Oh, papa, my bracelet-clasp; where did you get it? Have they found out the robbers?"

Homer's eyes opened wide at her words.

"Robbers?" he repeated. "That's it, then? Perhaps I really did hear and see something after all." And after a moment in which three people stood facing each other with looks of inquiry he began an account of his expedition to the ruin. He was truthful in every detail, yet the story sounded remarkably well as he told it, watching Violet's face and seeing [illegible] and grow pale in imagining the blackness of the old cellars. If she would but "love him for the dangers he had passed;" he knew nothing of wars to be sure, except of personal struggles with misfortune, out of place to be told here, yet having left their mark upon him in a consciousness of power to dare and conquer adverse circumstances.

"I've no doubt they carried their booty there," exclaimed Sir Gresham, his thoughts still in the ruins an infinite distance behind the young man's winged fancy and supplementing the narrative which Ashton had just finished. While Violet was listening to her father's account of a daring burglary committed the winter before while the family were in the house, Ashton had an opportunity to study her face more critically, or, rather, more admiringly. It was possible he did not drop all the admiration out of his expression as from time to time she turned to him to explain more fully something that her father was saying.

"I've no doubt the villains bring their booty miles to hide it in the ruin," said Sir Gresham. "This medallion was the clasp of a heavy gold bracelet. It was given to my daughter by a friend and she is much obliged to you, I am sure, for finding it."

"Indeed I am," said Violet, coloring a little as she spoke.

"It is I who am under obligation to fate," answered Homer; "I have found something that Miss Laud values."

"The rest of the bracelet has been melted down long ago," pursued Sir Gresham. "That place ought to be searched."

"Yes," said Homer; "when will you do it?"

The baronet looked somewhat taken aback at this energetic suggestion.

"No doubt," he answered, "and perhaps, Dr. Ashton, you would like to be one of the party if I go with some of my neighbors? I suppose it ought to be done as soon as possible—within a day or two," he went on, as the other assented, "lest they should take alarm at your intrusion upon them. When should you advise going?"

"This moment," cried Homer. "It's a wonder that we Americans have any grass in our country," he added, smiling, "we are so averse to letting it grow under our feet."

He met Violet's eyes as he finished, and read in them an admiration and interest. In another moment she had turned away on some trifling pretext, but, undoubtedly, she was blushing. How was Homer to know that she had once declared she would marry the man who brought her back her bracelet clasp? That, however, was when she was quite sure it would never be found.

"Not until after luncheon, papa, will you?" she said. "You'd better not take Dr. Ashton until after that."

Several years later, when the medallion had led to more than the finding of stores of plunder in the old ruins which a gang of thieves had taken care to make appear haunted, Homer Ashton, a physician of high standing, was living in a large American city. A schoolmate whom he had not met for years said to him one day at dinner as they were talking of marriages and deaths among their comrades:

"By the way, Ashton, you never told me where you first met your wife. I only know that it was in England."

Homer laughed.

"I first met her," he said, "behind Minerva's shield. Did I not, Violet?"

—*Our Continent.*

A Bear Festival.

On arriving at the scene of the ceremony the visitor found about thirty persons, chiefly residents of the place assembled and dressed in their gala costumes, which consisted chiefly of old Japanese brocaded garments. From the commencement to the end sake played almost as prominent a part as the bear himself. The guests sat around the fireplace in the center of the host's hut, and an offering was first made to the god of fire. This was done in this wise: The Ainos, who were all seated, raised their left hands, holding a drinking vessel to their foreheads, while the palm of the right was also elevated slightly. A small stick lying across the cup was then dipped in the sake and the contents sprinkled on the floor to the fire god, the stick being then waved three or four times over the cup. A formula was uttered by each person present and the sake drank in long draughts, the stick being meanwhile employed in holding up the mustache. A similar ceremony then took place in front of the bear's cage. This was followed by a dance around the cage by the women and girls. Offerings of drink were then made as before to other gods, and finally the bear was taken out of his cage by three young men specially selected for the purpose. The animal was killed by pressing the throat firmly against a large block of wood. The body was then cleaned and placed neatly on a mat, food and drink being laid before it, and ornaments of various kinds being placed on its ears, mouth, etc. Mats were spread around the bears, the guests took their seats on them, and the drinking commenced. This continued for some time, until the Ainos sank in a state of helpless intoxication on their mats. The women in another part of the village mean time amused themselves with various dances, which Dr. Scheube describes at length. The following day, as a rule, the debauch is continued. The body of the bear is then cut up in such a manner that the hide remains attached to the head. The blood was collected in vessels and drank by the men. The liver was cut out and eaten raw. The rest of the flesh was distributed among the partakers of the feast. The writer states that, although hardened in a certain sense to the sight of blood, he could not look without horror on the sight of the drunken crowd, with their faces and bodies smeared with blood. The skull of the bear, stuffed with charms, is placed in a sacred place on the east side of the house, and the mouth is filled with bamboo leaves. It is then always preserved and venerated as a sacred object.—*Nature.*

Origin of "Excelsior."

One of the best known of all of Longfellow's shorter poems is "Excelsior." That one word happened to catch his eye one autumn eve in 1841 on a torn piece of newspaper, and straightway his imagination took fire at it. Taking up a piece of paper, which happened to be the back of a letter received that day from Charles Sumner, he crowded it with verses. As first written down, "Excelsior" differs from the perfected and published version, but it shows a rush and glow worthy of its author. The story of "Evangeline" was first suggested to Hawthorne by a friend who wished him to found a romance on it. Hawthorne did not quite coincide with the idea and he handed it over to Longfellow, who saw in it all the elements of a deep and tender idyl.—*James T. Fields.*

There is a new process of raising fish where the eggs are placed in large glass jars which are constantly fed with streams of fresh water conveyed through rubber tubes. By this method it is estimated that ninety-five per cent. of the eggs can be hatched. In two hatcheries at Toledo and Sandusky, Ohio, 50,000,000 white fish fry have been raised this season.

FOR THE LADIES.

A Bashful Young Man's Speech.

A young lady who graduated from a high school last July is teaching school in New Hampshire. A bashful young gentleman visited the school the other day and was asked by the teacher to say a few words to the pupils. This was his speech: "Scholars, I hope you will always love your school and your teacher as much as I do." Tableau—giggling boys and girls and a blushing schoolma'am.

Kate Field on Dress.

Kate Field has written and continues to write some curious things. Among the latest effusions of that gifted lady is the following in *Our Continent:*

There certainly are no women in the world who think so much about dress or devote so much time to it as Americans. The result, however, is hardly commensurate with the expenditure of time and money. To think about dress does not necessarily involve what is seriously called thought. When monkeys act like men we do not accuse them of thought. We attribute to them a wonderful power of imitation. In dress we are nothing but monkeys. We have not yet acquired sufficient taste or knowledge to make our own fashions, so we wait for the modistes of Paris to tell us what they please and then adopt their ideas regardless of consequences. France is the most artistic nation in Europe, but we should take our France with discretion. What is suitable for one is not necessarily suitable for all, and it is well known that costumes prepared for the American market are "louder" in style than those intended for home customers. American patrons are sought because they are willing to pay extravagant prices, but their judgment, as a rule, does not command respect.

Fashion Notes.

Grenadine lace is new.

Bullet buttons prevail.

Guipure lace is revived.

Puffed flounces are stylish.

Polonaises are draped to form paniers.

Hooks and eyes fasten many dresses.

Dull jet is not confined to mourning.

Puffed plastrons extend to the waist line.

Small bugles make up new jet trimmings.

Colored satin ribbon bows are worn at the throat.

Gloves with closed wrists continue fashionable.

Sashes are so wide and long that no other drapery is needed.

Panier effects are taking a prominent place among the present styles.

The newest dresses have numerous bows of ribbon or velvet on them.

The Langtry belted waist is used for white muslin, lawn and print dresses.

Handsome parasols have frills of lace, and others a bunch of flowers on the top.

Wide collars of lace or embroidery with cuffs to match, are worn with dark dresses.

Fichu capes, made of open-worked embroidered black surah, complete new black suits.

The stylish blue shades are electric, porcelain, soldier and sapphire blue. Peacock blue is discarded.

After Four Years.

The Philadelphia *Press* tells of the affecting way in which Mrs. Melville, wife of Engineer Melville, of the lost Jeannette, received the first letter from her husband after a silence of four years. Says the *Press:* Mrs. Melville, the wife of Lieutenant G. W. Melville, who went out as chief engineer of the Jeannette exploring party, yesterday at her home at Sharon Hill, near Philadelphia, received a letter from her husband. For four years the anxious mother and three little girls have been awaiting a letter from him. Yesterday morning Maud, who is about fifteen years of age, went, as she has thousands of times in over three years, to the postoffice to see if there was a letter. Mrs. Melville was seated at home sewing, and the other two girls were playing with their dolls. Suddenly one of the little ones said: "Why, mamma, something's the matter with Maud. I actually believe there's a letter from papa." Maud's feet did not appear to touch the ground. She broke through the gate like one pursued by some terrible phantom. With tears of joy streaming down her face and choking with sobs she threw herself at her mother's feet, dropping the letter and crying out: "Oh, mamma, at last! at last! it is from papa! Oh, it is from papa!" The mother tore it open and read it at a glance, and then reread it several times over. All the afternoon and up to going to bed last night the children were doing nothing else but reading over papa's letter. With the intelligence that it contained of the fate of others and the knowledge that just now he himself with the search party is facing similar dangers, there was nothing in the letter to give hope of the return of the husband and father. Written on a single sheet of tough, heavy note paper, the letter read as follows:

IRKOUTSK, Russian Siberia, January 1, 1882.—DEAR HETTIE—After many trials and many tribulations I arrived here yesterday. We can muster but thirteen people, all told, out of our original thirty-three persons. I am pretty well and will be at home this summer or next winter, according as I may be instructed by the navy department. I have telegraphed asking to remain and search for De Long and others who perished at the mouth of the Lena river. Love to children. Yours faithfully,

GEORGE W. MELVILLE.

"I Have Sinned and I Have Suffered."

The first line in the following is the refrain of an unwritten poem recited to a friend by John Howard Payne, author of "Home, Sweet Home," just before his death in Algiers:

I have sinned and I have suffered,
Yet the world will never know
How I tried to do my duty
In the long, the long ag[illegible]

I have sinned and I have suffered—
Human nature is so weak—
Yet my tongue cannot be tempted
To disclose, betray or speak.

I have sinned and I have suffered,
Who has not, through blood and bone?
If there be a mortal living
Let him bravely cast the stone.

I have sinned and I have suffered
Just the same as other men,
But my heart cannot be conquered,
Nor the soul that burns within.

I have sinned and I have suffered,
Mournful memories come to me,
Yet beyond the clouds of sorrow
Rifts of sunshine I can see.

I have sinned and I have suffered,
He can sink and he can save
All the human hearts that wander
To the cold and silent grave.

—*Washington Republican.*

HUMOR OF THE DAY.

Wooden shoes, especially those made of oak, are said to produce acorn.

Bimmelbammelbummal is one of the convenient words sometimes worked into verse by German rhymers.

Inquirer: "What is the most scarce American coin?" Don't know, sir, dollars are quite scarce enough.—*Boston Post.*

"Why does a donkey eat thistles?" asked a teacher of one of the largest boys in the class. "Because he is a donkey, I reckon," was the prompt reply.

Oscar Wilde does not admire the American onion. It so closely resembles a bulb of his dear lily that it brings tears to his eyes.—*New Haven Register.*

In youth my maiden aim
Was to change my maiden name,
And so I made an aim
At him, and won my game,
And changed and made a name.
—*The Judge.*

Glass balls and clay counterfeits have been successfully substituted for live pigeons at shooting matches. Now why cannot somebody bring forward equally merciful and efficacious proxies for the pugilists and basball players? We congratulate the pigeons, but why should not this immunity be extended also to men?—*Boston Transcript.*

WISE WORDS.

The height of meanness is to exult in its success.

One vice worn out makes us wiser than fifty tutors.

Neither worth nor wisdom comes without an effort.

Grief has been compared to a hydra; for every one that dies two are born.

The scientific study of man is the most difficult of all branches of knowledge.

Conceit is to nature what paint is to beauty; it is not only needless, but impairs what it would improve.

There is pleasure in contemplating good; but the greatest pleasure of all is doing good, which comprehends the rest.

Poverty is the only burden which grows heavier in proportion to the number of dear ones who have to help to bear it.

Sanctified thoughts, made conscious of, and called in, and kept in awe, and given fuel that burns not, are a water for Satan's coal.

Duty is the voice of God, and a man is neither worthy of a good home here or in heaven that is not willing to be in peril for a good cause.

Advertising in Paris.

Paris at present is certainly not a whit behind London and New York in the way of public advertising. Gigantic posters sprawl in the most prominent spots; hideous red carts covered with the name of some retail establishment, a score of times repeated, prowl about the streets; villainous daubs offend the eye on scaffoldings; banners bearing the "strange device," "Peerless Hair-wash," or some such other wretched nostrum, stretch across the broadest streets; even the pavements are decorated with the inlaid names of firms and patent medicines. Lately the police interfered to prohibit the promenading through the streets of advertising camels. As to the voiture-announces, that variegated vehicle will soon be quite left behind by a new electric-lighted advertising cabinet. The camels, however, are about the best thing in advertising thus far brought out. If the animal kingdom is to be pressed into the service of the vile race of "puffers," whom some jaundiced haters of the present state of society would wish to annihilate with one breath, we shall at least be able to see a greater fitness of things than has hitherto applied in the noble advertising art; polar bears will shuffle about with a specimen of winter furs upon their own backs; elephants would display the finest specimens of ivory and rattlesnakes would be the best vehicle for attracting attention to a new system of alarm bells.—*American Register.*