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MERRY RAIN.

Sprinkle, sprinkle, comes the rain,
Tapping on the window-pane;
Trickling, coursing,
Crowding, forcing
Tiny rills
To the dripping window-sills.

Laughing rain-drops, light and swift,
Through the air they fall and sift;
Dancing, tripping,
Bounding, skipping
Thro' the street,
With their thousand merry feet.

Every blade of grass around
Is a ladder to the ground;
Clinging, striding,
Slipping, sliding,
On they come
With their busy zip and hum.

In the woods, by twig and spray,
To the roots they find their way;
Pushing, creeping,
Doubling, leaping,
Down they go
To the waiting life below.

Oh, the brisk and merry rain,
Bringing gladness in its train!
Falling, glancing,
Tinkling, dancing,
All around—
Listen to its cheery sound!

The Hour Before Dawn

The latest September days had come in all their perfection—days when the pure, cool air seemed like an elixir of life and youth—when there was the first suggestion of the exquisitely sad days of the dying summer time in the hazy, red gold atmosphere that hung silently over the hill-tops, and brooded like some palpable blessing over lowland and lawn.

Blanche Carroll sat on the low door-step of the farm-house, that had been her home that Summer, looking out through the twilight with wistful eyes that were blue as heaven's dome. Thinking—always thinking, it seemed to her, since those other days, not yet a year gone by, when, instead of being what she was now, Mrs. Pemberton's half assistant in the duties of the family—half sister, daughter, friend—whatever one chooses to call the intimate relation that existed between them—when, instead of this, she had been belle and heiress, whose sway was undisputed, whose reign had been as magnificently triumphant as its sudden ending had been pitifully sharp and bitter.

She had never, in all her eighteen years of gay, joyous life, known what it meant to have a wish ungratified—a want, however imaginary, unfulfilled.

There had never been any lack of ready money; there had been horses, and carriages, and servants at the girl's signal, and trips to the Continent whenever the fancy seized her.

Then had come the terrible financial earthquake, and a week after, Blanche Carrol had learned from the lips of her distracted father, that everything must go, even to her jewels and laces, and costly little elegancies, so that his name would not be dishonored for the first time in his life

A week after that day, which had seemed the most dreadful of all possible days, some one had come to her, and added the very blackness of darkness to her woe by telling her how Mr. Carroll was found dead in his office chair—apoplexy or paralysis—which was not yet decided. Blanche almost collapsed under the second blow. Never having remembered her mother, she had loved her father with double intensity. And when he was dead and buried, the world yawned before her, with no protecting arm between her and it—when there did not remain a hundred pounds in all the wide world she could call her own.

Poor Blanche!

And yet it was not the very worst. The worst of all was Elmer Westcourt's defection, with scores of those whom she had implicitly believed were best, truest, dearest—others whose defection hurt her for the time, but whom she learned she could readily exist without.

But Elmer Westcourt. He had been all that was most noble, most perfect, grandest in masculine human nature. To him she had looked with almost the reverence of a devotee to her patron saint.

His physical beauty had commanded her passionate admiration, his qualities of mind had called out all her keenest approbation, and his peculiarly masterful way had taught the girl for the first time in her life, how sweet it was to be governed.

There had never been an engagement between them, and yet Blanche had been so positively sure he loved her.

She had seen it in his eyes, time and again. She had more than once listened to sweet, suggestive words he had spoken, in his low, thrilling voice. She had, with good reason, built the most beautiful castles of their future together, and had been only waiting his pleasure to speak, when her trouble came to her.

And, with all other summer friends, he, too, had left her, without a word, without a sign, to think what she chose, to suffer or not, as the case might be. Then, in her distress, her sorely-wounded pride, her desolation of soul, Blanche had rushed away from London—away up among the cool, green hills of Cumberland, where she was not mistaken in supposing she had one friend left—Mrs. Pemberton, who, although personally a stranger to her, Blanche knew had been a dear, warm friend, in girlhood days of her dead mother.

And so it came to pass that Blanche Carroll made her home in the tenant farm-house, where, with light, womanly duties, and pleasant responsibilities, she was bravely striving to forget her bitter past, and the sound of Elmer Westcourt's voice, and the look in his eyes.

She was thinking of all this as she sat in the twilight, that cool, breezy September night, and into the beautiful blue eyes had come such a wistfulness and heartsick woe, that dear Mrs. Pemberton, looking up from her knitting, saw the misery.

"It will never, never do," she said, energetically—so much so that her kindly, emphatic tones, brought a sudden dash of color to Blanche's face. "It will never do—the way you allow yourself to brood on things that you can't help. I am really delighted to think John will be home so soon. He will take you in charge, and make you give up these useless memories, which only seem to make you miserable. Such a dear, blessed old boy as my John is, Blanche, and so handsome! Why, I confidently expect it will be a case of mutual affinity, you and he, unless he has lost his heart abroad; this year he has been to Germany."

A case of affinity for her! Blanche felt a thrill of sick pain Mrs. Pemberton never imaginad her words had caused, for, although she knew there was a love story entangled somehow with Blanche's old life, the girl had been proudly reticent of particulars, or Elmer Westcourt's name.

Mrs. Pemberton talked so much, so often of her darling "her blessed boy," her only son, John, who, to her, fulfilled every dream of manly excellence and perfection. And Blanche used to wonder often what the quiet home would be like when Mrs. Pemberton's son came into it. She used to wonder how it would be possible for her to endure the presence of anyone who would in any way remind her of man's perfidy and heartlessness.

But if their lives—her life—was to be invaded by a man. Well, after a time she grew to be ashamed of her morbid cowardice of feeling, and resolved, with a stern determination that was pitiful, that John Pemberton—and odd, strengthful name it was to her—should not interfere with the duties of the quiet life she had chosen, and which, although she was hardly conscious of it, was leaving its impression on her discipline and patience, and nobility on her nature.

Nevertheless, the pain—the very bitterness of woe—was not removed. Her father's death she could, in the ordinary healing course of nature, have got over. Loss of wealth, position, and summer friends, would, after a time, have been as a trifle to her.

But Elmer Westcourt's defection! So long as she lived, it would hurt her with that keen, sick pain, which some women do suffer—women with great purity and trust of nature, who can no more imagine deceit and cruelty in one they love than themselves are capable of it. Truly it was her darkest hour.

To her, Elmer Westcourt would always be the one who had power to touch her heart. To her he would always be the beloved, though not the lover—the one above all others, although unworthy, strangely paradoxical as it was.

So Blanche tried her best and bravest to enter into Mrs. Pemberton's spirit of welcome for her son. She beautified his room, that for more than a year had stood alone in its unoccupancy. She baked delicious cakes, and arranged toothsome bills of fare, and went through the whole house, leaving everywhere the impression of her artistic touch, that delighted Mrs. Pemberton so thoroughly.

"John will appreciate it so, bless his dear heart. Blanche, I never wanted anything in all my life as I want my boy. And do, Blanche, make him feel, so far as you are concerned, that you make him welcome, will you?"

Up in her room, hours after, Blanche remembered particularly what dear old Mrs. Pemberton had said about her contributing her share towards welcoming and pleasing the coming guest, and as she stood before the glass, brushing out the long, lustrous hair, that was full of gleams of sunshine, she thought how far past the time it was when she could be a pleasure or a pride to any one.

She thought how worn out she had grown to be, how aged and old-womanish her fierce, ceaseless fight with fate had left her, and she smiled wearily at the idea of her being even thought of when John Pemberton came.

I think Blanche really thought it was so—that she was worn and faded, when, instead of her old-time radiant, sparkling beauty, she saw a sweet, subdued, serious loveliness, which others recognized and admired, if she did not.

She had never, in all her flush of beauty, wealth and happiness, made a fairer picture than she looked that day, after she had dressed for Mrs. Pemberton's son's home coming.

She wore white, with delicate blue ribbons, and her lovely hair was piled high on her head in a golden confusion of flossy puffs, tenderly rings, and glossy braids.

It seemed strange to Blanche that she could not possibly take an interest in the coming of this gentleman—she who not so very long ago, had so thoroughly enjoyed a flirtation. She wondered why, in spite of herself, she was so listlessly indifferent, and honestly tried to catch the infection of Mrs. Pemberton's excitement of joy.

The old lady had put on her best dress—a rich, rustling silk—to do honor to her son's coming, and Blanche thought, as she went into her parlor, that she had never seen a sweeter tableau of placid, aged beauty, and happy old days, than Mrs. Pemberton offered, in her lace cap and gray puffs, and pale face lighted by such glad eyes.

"How your son ought to worship such a mother!" she said, with a warmly graceful little impulsiveness—a characteristic of other days, to which she seldom gave way now. "Mr. Pemberton surely does—"

Mrs. Pemberton jumped up from her chair at the sound of carriage wheels at the door.

"He has come! Oh, Blanche! But whatever possessed you to think his name was Pemberton? Why, John is my first husband's son!"

And Blanche slipped out of the back door as the gentleman came in the front one—went away upstairs again, leaving mother and son to the sweet sacredness of their glad meeting.

In all her life, Blanche had never felt so lonely as in that half hour she spent up stairs, knowing how entirely forgotten she was. She was not selfish, either, but it seemed as if all the trouble she had ever known came surging its waves of keen remembrance over her.

She realized as she had never done before how pitifully alone she was in the world, and then into the midst of the harrowing thoughts, the tears that had left her heart but had not yet reached her sweet, sad eyes, into the midst of the desolation of her young life, came Mrs. Pemberton's voice, quick, glad, exultant, as she called from the foot of the stairs:

"Blanche, Blanche, do come down! There's a mystery I can't quite understand. Come here!"

And Blanche, half smiling at the dear old lady's pardonable excitement, went quietly, promptly, to be presented to her son.

Mrs. Pemberton caught her by both hands, to drag her perforce to her parlor.

"It beats all I ever did hear of! I never was so—"

Just then a tall handsome gentleman came through the parlor door, with quick, eager steps, and Blanche looked and saw Elmer Westcourt.

"Blanche Carroll! My darling, whom I thought I had lost until a few minutes ago! Blanche, my love!"

And the girl stood looking at him, clutching Mrs. Pemberton's hand in a vice-like grip, that was chill as death, her face pale as her dress, her eyes full of mingled piteous bewilderment, and wondering doubt, and mute ecstacy.

"To think I never once thought of telling you that John's name was Westcourt! You see, I always call him John, although Elmer is prettier, and he has an equal right to it, it being his middle name. And to think—Well, I'm clean beat!"

And Mrs. Pemberton sank down in the hall chair, and wiped her eyes and her glasses, while Mr. Westcourt took Blanche in his arms and kissed her, and hastily explained what she did not fully understand till later—how he had written to her in the hour of his sudden, imperative departure abroad—how he had sent her letter after letter, and how he concluded she had done with him.

And they both knew then that Blanche's equally sudden removal from her old home, and her self-elected retirement to the country, had been sufficient reason why she never had received what would have changed all her life for her.

But the sunshine was come at last—the glad, bright sunshine, that was all the better for the dark weather that had so long hidden it. And Blanche's life blossomed out anew, under the radiant influences of love and hope.

The Russian Knout.

There is probably no more terrible instrument of punishment, or it may perhaps be more properly called torture, than the knout in the hands of a Russian executioner. To give the reader some idea of its form, the mode of administering it, and its horrible effects, we quote the following from a recently published work, entitled "The Knout and the Russians;" "Conceive a robust man, full of life and health. This man is condemned to receive fifty or a hundred blows of the knout. He is conducted, half naked, to the place chosen for this kind of execution. All that he has on is a pair of linen drawers round his extremities. His hands are bound together, with the palms laid flat against one another, and the cords breaking his wrists; but no one pays the slightest attention to that. He is laid flat upon his belly, on a frame inclined diagonally, and at the extremities of which are fixed iron rings; his hands are fastened to one end of the frame, and his feet to the other: he is then stretched in such a manner that he cannot make a single movement, just as an eel's skin is stretched in order to dry. This act of stretching the victim causes his bones to crack, and dislocates them—but what does that matter? At the distance of five-and-twenty paces stands another man: it is the public executioner. He is dressed in black velvet trowsers, tucked in his boots, and a colored shirt, buttoning at the side. His sleeves are rolled up, so that nothing may thwart or embarrass him in his movements. With both hands he grasps the instrument of punishment—a knout. This knout consists of a thong of thick leather, cut in a triangular form, from four to five yards long, and an inch wide, tapering off at one end, and broad at the other; the small end of which is fastened to a little wooden handle, about two feet long. The signal is given: no one ever takes the trouble to read the sentence. The executioner advances a few steps, with his body bent, holding the knout in both hands, while the long thong drags along the ground between his legs. On coming to about three or four paces from the prisoner, he raises, by a vigorous movement, the knout towards the top of his head, and then instantly draws it down with rapidity towards his knees. The thong flies and whistles through the air, and descending on the body of the victim, twine round it like a hoop of iron. In spite of his state of tension, the poor wretch bounds as if he were submitted to the powerful grasp of galvanism. The executioner retraces his steps, and repeats the same operation as many times as there are blows to be inflicted. Where the thong envelopes the body with its edges, the flesh and muscles are literally cut into stripes, as if with a razor: but when it falls flat, then the bones crack. The flesh, in that case, is not cut, but crushed and ground, and the blood spurts out in all directions. The sufferer becomes green and blue, like a body in a state of decomposition. He is removed to the hospital, where every care is taken of him, and he is afterward sent to Siberia, where he disappears forever in the bowels of the earth."

Bad Game of Freeze-Out.

No, John William is a changed man. He never will be real happy again. He was a light-hearted young man once, and he wore a good conscience and a collar as broad as a minstrel joke, and little tight boots, and his heart was just as full of affection and the image of a girl out on High street as it could hold. And twice a week, Tuesday and Friday nights, John William went up to High street just dressed to death and overflowing with tender things to say that he had thought up and composed and read during the day. And she—that High street girl—always met him at the hall door and led him into the parlor, and he was, oh just so happy he wanted somebody to kill him right away, for he felt too good and happy to live. Oh, he was a nice young man. Everybody loved him. Dressed in such exquisite taste, and such a flow of language. Could talk about any and everything under the sun; members of the Philo-Apollodorus Diadaction Society used to call him the Aventinoniens of America, he was so overflowing and lucid.

Well, one lovely evening he made his regular semi-weekly visit, went up rather early, and anticipated the best kind of a time, but was struck all of a heap when the servant answered the bell, and politely ushered him into the parlor. But he thought maybe the dearest girl in the world was just putting on a little style. But you can't imagine how dreadfully discouraged he felt when he went into the parlor and couldn't see the young lady anywhere, and nobody there at all but her mother. Now, John William's acquaintance with her mother was very slight. He had never met her at all in fact, and he had casually heard that she didn't like him pretty much, and that she had once remarked that she'd like to meet him once, that she'd take some of his impudence and nonsense out of him, that was all. Naturally, John William stood in great awe of her mother. Tall woman, with a broad, high forhead, wide mouth, with awful parentheses at the corners of it, thin lips and eyes that had a supernaturally glassy look even when they were smiling. Talked bass. And spoke very slowly. Not at all the kind of a woman to impress a strange young man very tenderly.

But John William isn't the kind of a man, isn't John William, not to take advantage of an opportunity when it presents itself, and he resolved, as soon as he took in the situation, to smite while the metal was in a condition of temperature indicating malleability. So he proceeded to strike. He sat down on the edge of the hardest chair he could find, and directly opposite the young lady's mother, and looked her directly in the face, while he began.

To begin with he didn't say anything. Couldn't exactly think of what he wanted, so he just looked at her and smiled pleasantly.

His overture was met by a stony glare that not only froze his smile, but congealed the very blood in his heart, and he had to grasp for a moment or two while it thawed out. Then he once more unto the breach, good friends.

"Pleasant, this evening."

"Very," came like a response from the gloomy tomb, and John William felt the cold chills crawl up and down his back.

"It has been a lovely afternoon," he went on.

"Beautiful," she said, hoarsely, and John William thought of stories he had read about dead people who were mesmerized and kept on talking for hours after they were dead.

"It was very warm during the middle of the day," John William said, going back for a subject, thinking he would light on something if he only pushed his researches far enough down the dim, shadowy aisles of the buried past.

"Ex-ceed-ing-ly," was the solemn response, and John William wanted to stand up and scream so bad that he thought he would go wild. But in the bright lexicon of youth there's no such word as never say die, Mr. Brown, and he made one more effort:

"It looked like rain once during the morning."

Ve-ry much in-deed," came in a sepulchral cadence. And John William held on to his chair with both hands to keep himself from jumping out of the window. But he persevered:

"We had a lovely sun-rise."

"Re-mark-a bly." And to save his never-dying soul, John William couldn't help making a gurgling groan and pounding on the floor with his heels.

"Sir-r-r!" the lady exclaimed in the distant thunder tones with which Janauschek used to say, "Mr. Tulkinghorn, open the door."

"Oh!" screamed John William, springing to his feet and tearing his straw hat (Milan braid, $3-50) into shreds. "Oh! he yelled, dancing up and down like a wild Indian, while his hair stood up like porks upon the quillful fretupine. "Oh!" it was doggoned, infernally hot till night, you can just bet your everlasting boots! Hot? oh-h! Ha ha ha hahaha-a a!" And he sailed out of the house and went clattering, down High street, a gibbering, howling, shrieking maniac.

O brethern, a girl doesn't know what fun she misses by not being a boy!

Flowers and Flower Girls.

She is a little brown, black-eyed, gypsy of a girl, and sits on the sidewalk in Fourteenth street New York, and sells her flowers every afternoon to ladies as they shop on that thronged pavement, or on their way from the matinees: or to gentlemen who walk home in the afternoon from their business houses.

"Where do you get all these pretty flowers?" I asked the little flower girl of Fourteenth street.

"From my father's garden over the river on Union Hill."

"So your father is a florist?"

"Yes, a small one. My mother and I help him in his garden, and we make bouquets all mornings; and after I have eaten my dinner I come over to the city and sell the bouquets. When there is not enough flowers in our garden I go to the larger florists' hothouses and they sell me flowers at low prices for my bouquets. I never come before 1 o'clock in the afternoon; it would be no use. The ladies who come out in the mornings haven't any time to buy bouquets, nor the gentlemen neither."

"Who do you sell the most of your flowers to?"

"To people!" opening her big black eyes bigger.

"No; I mean, do you sell more to ladies, than you do to gentlemen?"

"Oh, yes; ladies buy more than gentlemen. Men are almost always cross on their way up town. But one (and here she brightened into a smile) is always in a good humor, and he always buys. He takes my littlest bouquet, too, and pays me five times what it is worth."

"He must be very kind. Do you make much money?"

"Yes; the flowers help to support us a good deal."

"Do you——"

"Excuse me. Here comes my gentleman," and, turning from me, she lifted her tray of flowers to an elderly man, who took a small bouquet and dropped twenty-five cents in the child's hand and, with a smile, passed on.

I found that most of the little street venders of flowers were the children of German parents. The fathers, having small gardens and a hothouse or two perhaps, do most of the work after their working hours at some other trade are over. The mother does the lighter garden work, and the children sell the flowers in the streets. Pursued in this way, floriculture must be profitable. That it has been a very profitable business in the past to many, there can be no doubt in the mind of any one who visits Union Hill, North Bergen, Weehawken, and West Hoboken. I tramped all along those heights which lie between the Passionists' Monastery and North Bergen lately, and found between thirty and forty large and small floricultural establishments in my walk, and heard that there were about as many more. Astoria, too, furnishes further proof that the cultivation of flowers can be made as profitable as it is pleasant. The Astorians make up in the quality of the floral trade what they lack in quantity, as compared with the New Jersey florists. Boston also sends flowers to New York, and Newport sends a great many roses. It is a little remarkable that most of those engaged in the flower business are taciturn, reticent men. I mean all who handle the flowers, for among the 125 or 130 florists' stores in this city there are only a few whose proprietors own or ever enter a garden. A large quantity of the flowers used in New York are bought by agents or middlemen, such as are found in every business of any considerable magnitude, who buy the cut flowers from the gardeners in New Jersey, Astoria, and from nearly all the small towns around that city and Brooklyn, and sell the same to the florists who keep the stores. Most of these agents and flower store owners know nothing about the cultivation of flowers. Again, the florists who cultivate the flowers rarely know how to make bouquets, or if they know how, they do not make it even a part of their business. The florist who sells the flowers, purchases the same from the producer or an agent, who makes the bouqets. He makes all of those large flat basket and other fancy bouquets which adorn the tables of fashionable dinner parties, evening parties, balls and weddings and all funeral and church devotions.

The flower business has been dull this season. The weather has been too warm, so the men who handle them say, to have a good market. The supply is in excess of the demand. The festive season this year was dull for the florists, however gay it may have been for the ball goers and society people. The request that "no flowers" shall be sent to the house or church on funeral occasions, which was the result of too many being sent formerly, has greatly interfered with the profits of the flower producers and sellers for the last year. All who deal in flowers, except the small gardeners, whose children help by selling and whose families aid in the cultivation, complain that the flower business is not what it used to be. But as most of the producers are dealers in plants as well as flowers, and as both producers and city dealers get orders for plants from all parts of the United States, from Maine to California, they are not so much affected by the condition of the immediate market for bouquets and cut flowers as might be supposed. I judge more by inference, however, than by any direct information on the subject; for the cultivation and handling of flowers do not seem to make men, women, or children very communicative on the subject.

Wearing Garters.

Children should never wear garters, as the stockings can be kept up by the attachment or elastic straps to the waistband. If garters are worn, it is important to know how to apply them with the least risk of doing harm; at the bend of the knee the superficial veins of the leg unite, and go deeply into the underpart of the thigh between the hamstring tendons. Thus a ligature below the knee obstructs all the superficial veins, which return the blood from the legs; unfortunately, most people, in ignorance of the above facts, apply the garter below the knee. Elastic bands are the most injurious. They follow the movements of the muscle, and never relax their pressure upon the veins. Non-elastic bands during muscular exertion became considerably relaxed at intervals, and allow freer circulation of the blood.

—San Francisco is to be supplied with water from the Blue Lakes, distant nearly 125 miles. There are three of these lakes, the highest being nearly 9,000 feet above the sea. The contract price is about $16,000,000.

A Picturesque City.

The wanderer in Tunis will traverse narrow winding alleys with regular white buildings; through the old arabesqued Moorish arches are glimpses of cool, bright courts, with waving trees and trickling water. Suddenly he will emerge into the brilliant bazaars. Series of vaulted roofs are supported on light, graceful arches, all white, and springing from delicate, brightly colored pillars; the little shops are recessed on either side. The costumes of Tunisians, Moors, Tripolines, Djerbans, Algerians, Fezzians, Arabs from Djerid and the desert, blacks and infidels of all nations, are indescribably picturesque. The Tunisians' costumes are almost invariably in perfect taste. The silk *djubbas* were of deep red and apple green, or deep blue and golden, the vests and jackets pale rose colored, or of delicate blues, greens or yellows, in silk, cotton or wool.

It is a constant picture, always varying and always charming. Here is a regular Moor, with a cinnamon face, a snowy turban, a rosebud above his ear, a deep blue embroidered jacket, waistcoat and drawers, white stockings and yellow shoes. The next man to him is dressed in slaty blue and pink, the next a negro in a blue cloak lined with brown fur. Women pass in white, woollen haiks, holding out in front of their faces red, black and blue silk scarfs. Strolling from one bazaar to another, the traveler will be more pleased as he goes on, past beautiful angles of Moorish buildings, mosques, arches and colonades; past caravansaries, where vines or fig trees throw cool shadows on the camels feeding in the courts, while the dark-faced white-robed Bedouins lounge among them.

Thence perhaps to the silk bazaars, where lovely floss silk hangs in bunches, suggesting wonderful embroidery. Then to the merchants of carpets, shawls, and stuffs, and through zigzag streets beyond the bazaars, with the beautiful sky overhead, and where solitary palms stand up from courts and gardens. Lovely minarets abound, square, arabesqued and tiled, others thin and graceful, with delicate little galleries; domes covered with old green tiles, like dragon's scales; inviting cafes, with splendid studies of Arabs. The traveler will decorate his coat with sweet musk roses, his lips with the golden tinge of orange juice, and he will drink numerous cups of coffee as he squats on little square sugar-cane stools. The evening sky melts from turquoise into golden, and thence into the rosy color of a flamingo's breast. The abundance of flowers in the bazaars is charming. Small bouquets of rosebuds and orange blossoms, stuck on slips of wood, are in almost everybody's hand, and cost one caroub. There are four caroubs in one penny. A bouquet is very generally worn over the ear, just beneath the turban.

The Frost King.

But, though not so dangerous, the still days are the coldest in Manitoba. There are every winter a dozen or more days so magically still that all the usual sounds of nature seem to be suspended; when the ice cracks miles and miles away with a report like a canon; when the breaking of a twig reaches us like the falling of a tree; when one's own footsteps, clad in soft moccasins, come back like the crunching of an iron heel through gravel; when every artificial sound is exaggerated a hundred fold, and nature seems to start at every break in the intense silence. The atmosphere is as clear as crystal, and the range of vision seems to be unlimited. Seen from a window, from the cosy limits of an almost hermetically sealed room, the clear sunshine and crisp freshness of the day appear to invite one forth to enjoy its seeming mildness. But the native knows better than to venture out. A fifteen minutes' walk in that clear ether is a fifteen minutes' fight for existence. A sudden prick and your noze is frozen; next go both cheeks; one raises his hand to rub away the ghastly white spots, only to add his fingers to the list of icy members. Rub as you will, run hard, swing you arms, all to no purpose; the little white spots increase in size, until the whole face is covered with the waxen leprosy. The breath congeals almost upon leaving the mouth, and the icy vapor falls instead of rising. Spit, and instantly there is a lump of ice where the spittle fell. Ah, it is cold beyond belief! The spirit registers a temperature away down in the forties. I have seen a stalwart man, after two hours' exposure on such a day, walk into the room where every footfall clanked upon the floor like blocks of wood clapping together; his feet frozen solid as lumps of ice. I remember going sixty yards to shoot a rabbit and returning with fingers curled into a hook, and frozen fast to the trigger-guard. On such a day one may stand for hours in the snow with moccasined feet and leave no trace of moisture behind. The snow is granulated like sand; there is no adhesiveness in it. It is as difficult to draw a sledge through it as through a bed of sand. Slipperiness has gone out of it. A horse gives out in no time. And yet the aspect of all nature is calm, still, and equable as on a May day

One of the still nights on the prairie is unspeakably awful. The cold is measured by degrees as much below the freezing point as your ordinary summer temperature is above it. Scraping away the snow, the blankets and robes are spread down. Then you dress for bed. Your heaviest coat is donned, and the hood carefully pulled up over the heavy fur cap upon your head; the largest moccasins and thickest socks are drawn on (common leather boots would freeze one's feet in a twinkling); huge leather mittens, extending to the elbows, and trebly lined, come next; you lie down and draw all the available robes and blankets about you. Then begins the cold. The frost comes out of the clear, gray sky with still, silent rigor. The spirit in the thermometer placed by your head sinks down into the thirties and forties below zero. Just when the dawn begins to break in the east, it will not infrequently be at fifty. You are tired, perhaps, and sleep comes by the mere force of fatigue. But never from your waked mind goes the consciousness of cold. You lie with tightly-folded arms and up-gathered knees and shiver beneath all your coverings, until forced to rise and seek safety by the fire. If you are a novice and have no fire, then count your heads and say your prayers, for your sleep will be long.

This low temperature, however, is vastly preferable and more enjoyable than the shifting climate of the lake regions. One always knows just what to expect and prepares accordingly; the air is crisp and entirely free from moisture, and there is an utter absence of that penetrating, marrow-chilling quality which makes winter life further south a burden. No sudden changes to pile cold upon cold, and keep one's lungs in a continual congestion. The climate, while cold, is equable. From November till April, one knows he can go out without abundant wrappings. Just what constitutes an abundance varies considerably in amount. The native attires himself in a pair of corduroy trousers, retaining about as much heat as a pine board, a calico shirt, an unlined coat, very much open at the breast to show the figured shirt, a fur cap, moccasins, and a pair of duffle socks without legs. Thus apparelled he is ready to face all day the roughest weather of the winter. But then he is continually in motion, and possessed of an unimpaired circulation. The foreigner, not to go into the minutiæ of his wardrobe, simply puts on all the clothing he can conveniently walk in, then closely watches the end of his nose. As for the aboriginal occupants of the country, little Indians may be seen any day running about in the snow before the lodge doors, with the thermometer at thirty degrees below zero, clad only in their own tawny integuments.

The Vampire Bat.

South America also has its large bats, of one of which everybody has heard—the vampire. Much nonsense has been written about it, but there was some foundation for the stories of its sucking the blood of men and animals until it kills them. In the interior of South America nearly everybody sleeps in a hammock either out-of-doors or with the window open, and the weather is so warm that little covering is used. The vampire comes in on silent wings, and finding a toe exposed, gently pricks it with his sharp tooth, and draws the blood until he can swallow no more. The sleeper rarely is awakened, and does not know his loss until morning. He may then feel weak from the flow of blood, but I am not aware that a man was ever known to die from the cause. Horses are very greatly troubled by them also. Mr. Charles Watterton, an enthusiatic naturalist now dead, who spent several years in New Guiana, has told us much about this ugly bat, but could never induce one to taste of his toe, although he would have been very glad to be able to say that he had been operated upon. For eleven months he slept alone in the loft of a deserted wood-cutter's hut in the deep forest. There the vampire came and went as they wished He saw them come in the moonlight on stealthy wings, and prick the ripe bananas; lay in his hammock and watched them bring almost to his bedside the green wild fruit of the wild guava; floating down the river on other moonlight night was struck by the falling blossoms of the lawarri-nut tree which the vampire pulled from the branches to get at the tender seed-vessel or the insects that lurk in the deep corollo. He lay night after night with his bare foot exposed, but could not get them to lance it, although his friends and companions were all bled by this nocturnal surgeon; and except that he once caught one fastened to the shoulder of one of his animals, he came away no wiser than when he went of how the vampire does his horrid work. The vampires measure about twenty-six inches across the wings; frequent old houses and hollow trees, and repose in clusters, head downwards, from the branches of forest trees.

Amputating a Dead Man's Leg.

It was shortly after the battle of Antietam Surgeon Abraham Lyddon Cox took charge of a field hospital. Dr. Cox was an elderly and somewhat eccentric person, but he was an eminent surgeon, a profound scholar, a genial gentleman and a true patriot. At a later day, borne down with exposure and overwork, he died at Chattanooga, a martyr upon the altar of his country. One day in the performance of his mpurnful duties, Surgeon Cox essayed to amputate the mangled limb of a Connecticut soldier. He had become greatly absorbed in the delicate task, when the medical attendant remarked:

"Doctor, I think that you had better stop the operation, the man is sinking very rapidly."

"Well," replied the doctor, without looking up, "the work is nearly over, and I might as well finish it."

Scon afterward the attendant declared: "Doctor, the man is dying."

The doctor had then removed the limb, and was engaged in taking up the arteries, and he quietly remarked:

"It is due to my profession that this operation should be carefully completed," and he calmly went on.

He had begun sewing up the stump when the hosptial steward came along and said:

"Doctor, there's no use of going on: that man is dead."

Surgeon Cox made no reply until the last stitch had been taken. Then gently caressing the stump with one hand, he removed his spectacles with the other, and looking up, quietly said:

"I am sorry that the poor fellow is dead, but there is one consolation about the matter—he has gone to heaven with a "flap" that he may be proud of."

—During the first three months of the present year, the total immigration at New York was 8,879, against 7,250 arrivals for the corresponding period of 1877—an increase of 1,536.

The Vatican.

The word is often used, but there are many who do not understand its import. The term refers to a collection of buildings on one of the seven hills of Rome, which cover a space of 1,200 feet in length, and 1,000 feet in breadth. It is built on the spot occupied by the cruel Nero. It owes its origin to the Bishop of Rome, who in the early part of the sixth century, erected a humble residence on its site. About the year 1150, Pope Eugenius rebuilt it on a magnificent scale. Innocent II., a few years afterwards, gave it up as a lodging to Peter II., King of Arragon. In 1305, Clement V., at the instigation of the King of France, removed the Papal See from Rome to Avignon, when the Vatican remained in a condition of obscurity and neglect for more than seventy years. But soon after the return of the Pontificial court to Rome, an event which had been so earnestly prayed for by poor Petrarch, and which finally took place in 1376, the Vatican was put in a state of repair, again enlarged, and it was thenceforward considered as the regular palace and residence of the Popes, who, one after the other, added fresh buildings to it, and gradually enriched it with antiquities, statues, pictures, and books, until it became the richest depository in the world. The Library of the Vatican was commenced fourteen hundred years ago. It contains 40,000 manuscripts, among which are some by Pliny, St. Thomas, St. Charles Borrome, and many Hebrew, Syriac, Arabian, and Armenian Bibles. The whole of the immense buildings composing the Vatican are filled with statues, found beneath the ruins of ancient Rome; with paintings by the masters; and with curious medals and antiquities of almost every description. When it is known that there have been exhumed more than 70,000 statues from the ruined temples and palaces of Rome, the reader can form some idea of the riches of the Vatican. It will ever be held in veneration by the student, the artist, and the scholar. Raphael and Michael Angelo are enthroned there, and their throne will be as endurable as the love of beauty and genius in the hearts of their worshipppers.

The African Honey Bird.

The honey-bird is about as large as a gray mocking-bird, and is of a similar color. It endeavors to attract the attention of travelers, and to induce them to follow it. When it succeeds thus far, it almost invariably leads the person who follows to a nest of wild bees. While on the route, it keeps up an incessant twittering, as if to assure its follower of success, and often alights on the ground or a bush, and looks back to see if the person is still in pursuit. The native Africans, when conducted by the bird, frequently answer its twittering with a whistle as they proceed for the purpose of signifying to their conductor that they are still following it. When the bird arrives at the hollow tree, or other place where the honey is deposited, it hovers over the spot, points at the deposit with its bill, and perches on a neighboring bush or tree to await its share of the plunder. This is the usual termination of the adventure. But sometimes the honey-bird seems to be actuated by a love of mischief, and then instead of leading the traveler to a bee's nest, it conducts him to the lair of some wild beast, and then flies away with a twittering which sounds a good deal like laughter. Gordon Cumming, "the lion killer," once followed a honey-bird which conducted him to the retreat of a huge crocodile; and having introduced the traveler to his august presence, the little feathered joker took a hasty leave, evidently much delighed with the success of his trick.

A New Industry.

A new industry has sprung up in Carbon county, Pa. It is the manufacture of the oils of wintergreen, pennyroyal and sassafras. The first named is made most. The leaves are picked on the mountains from early Spring to the Fall of the year. This in itself is quite a profitable occupation for men, women and children. They are paid from seven and eight mills to a cent a pound for leaves, and it is not unfrequently that one person brings to the distillery 200 pounds a day. Mr. Kuehner has paid as high as $1,600 a year for leaves alone, and he has never been overstocked with them. The pickers make more at this business than they could make on the railroad or at almost any other employment. The work is light, and the mountains are covered with the herb. At the distillery the leaves are put in a large still, covered with water, and steamed. The oil soon begins to sink to the bottom, and after a due time is drawn off. For this there is a ready market in New York at $2 per pound. This is the lowest price at which it has ever been sold. Eighteen or twenty years ago it brought $16 per pound; from 1864 to 1868 it dropped to $7 and $8 per pound, and six years ago it came down to $4. The largest quantity made in one year was 625 pounds. It is put up in twenty-five pound cans, boxed and shipped. It is used largely in medicines, sarsaparilla, cream-beer, soaps, toilet-waters, vermifuge etc.

Words of Wisdom.

Despair has ruined some, but presumption multitudes.

Delays increase desires, and sometimes extinguish them.

Let them obey those who know how to rule.

The near miss of happiness is a great misery.

Haste trips up its own heels, fetters and stops itself.

Look well into thyself; there is a source which will always spring up if thou wilt search there.

The virtues of a man ought to be measured, not by his extraordinary exertions, but by his every day conduct.

Liberality, courtesy, benevolence, unselfishness, under all circumstances and towards all men—these qualities are to the world what the linchpin is to the rolling chariot.