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"Well," drawled Somers, holding his work at arm's length, and then setting it down for a fresh wash to dry, "Of all the strange true stories that I ever heard, the strangest was told me by my friend Norton, three years ago in London. We were looking at a collection of pictures put up for sale, when, as we paused before a large one, marked in the catalogue as "Beheading of John Baptist," an old Spanish picture, artist unknown, Norton suddenly seized my arm and seemed about to faint.

"'Don't be frightened, old fellow,' he gasped at length, 'it will soon pass, would you mind going home with me?' He leaned heavily on my arm as we went down into the street, where I called a cab and we were soon at his studio. After he had taken a little wine and was somewhat recovered, he said: 'I must tell you the story of that painting, Somers, the story of my life. To begin with, Norton is not my real name, [and he told me the name of one of the proudest families in England, which I promised never to reveal]. 'I was the youngest son of a large family,' he added, 'and my father never seemed to care particularly for me, while my mother was my dearest companion. She died when I was fifteen, and all the brightness of my life went with her. I was passionately fond of pictures, and she had praised and taken pleasure in the drawings I was constantly making, and taught me how to appreciate the best works of art.'"

"'After my mother's death, I was left to spend my days as I chose in the old country seat where I was born and where my mother died. Sometimes I think I should have been deranged had it not been for my drawing. Though there was now no one to praise or care what I did; the only pleasure I had was in working from nature either out of doors or in, and try to make studies which I thought my mother would have liked. Once when my father was down from London, and had seemed kinder than usual, or rather less indifferent than usual, I ventured to ask him if I could not take painting lessons, as I had when my mother was alive. He seemed greatly annoyed and said that it was time I was sent to school and made a man off and that in any case no son of his should ever disgrace him by turning painter. According I was sent to a large private school for two or three years, spending my vacations at home where the love of the pencil proved too strong for my sense of filial duty, and I worked and sketched all summer, except during the rare occasions when my father or older brothers came down for a few weeks sojourn.'"

"'One day, when I was nineteen, I came in from a long walk, to find my father standing in the middle of the little den I had chosen myself in the tower, surrounded with, it seemed, to me, everything, that I had ever drawn or painted. We had quite a scene, and the end of it was that I was ordered to 'clear out of the house, and never to darken the doors again.' In a storm of indignation and grief, I packed up a few things, and taking what little money I had, started for Dover, thinking that I would go to France, to the little town where I had once accompanied my mother, when she was ordered a change of climate. I had a little money which had come to me from my grandmother, and upon this I managed to live for some years, and pursue my art studies both in Paris and at Rome. I took the name of Norton, from seeing it on some American baggage, the night that I crossed the channel.'

'At length I began to long for a sight of my old home, and determined to go to London. I had had no communication with my family, though I had kept the run of them somewhat through the English papers, and knew that two of my brothers were married. I came to England and spent nearly a week in the neighborhood of my old home without being recognized by any of its inmates, except an old hound, who used to be my companion. The family were in London, and some of the servants were new, so, in company with Leo, I revisited many of the scenes of my lonely boyhood; and one morning when there was a wedding at the village church, I slipped in and managed to reach the tower, where I waited until every one was gone, and then went down into the crypt where my mother had been buried, and as there was no evening service, spent the night lying on the cushions in our old pew, with my head upon the one on which she used to kneel. It was a moonlight night and the church seemed very quiet and holy, and I felt more at home than I had for years. Toward morning I let myself out at the tower door, and took an early train for London without bidding even old Leo good-by. I would have taken him along, poor fellow, had it been possible.'"

"'I hired some unpretentious rooms in town, and was quite successful in selling my pictures. Then came a dull season, when for a long period I was unable to obtain a commission, until, at length, my funds were exhausted. One night, just at dark, when I had spent the day in hard work, I came home somewhat, and had come home discouraged, a carriage stopped beneath my window, and soon I heard footsteps coming up the long flight of stairs, and then a knock at my door. I opened it to see a tall man in dark livery who bowed gravely and asked whether I were Mr. Norton. On my answering in the affirmative, he handed me a note written in a bold masculine hand upon heavy paper scented with some strange foreign perfume. It read.

If you are the Mr. Norton who painted a little picture called 'Judith and Holofernes' which was sold at the gallery in March, and care for a good commission, will you accompany the bearer of this note?

No signature was appended.

"'Who is the writer of this?' I asked.

The footman bowed as he replied, "'That my lady did not wish me to say, sir.'"

"'That is very strange,' I answered. I suppose to-morrow will be time enough for my answer?'"

"'She bade me bring you this evening, if possible, sir; the carriage is at the door, and you can take any luggage you wish.'"

After a little hesitation, I decided to pack a few traps and my colors, and at least call upon my would-be patron, and learn a little more of her project. As I turned to accompany him the footman said respectfully:

"'Beg pardon, sir, but my orders were to bring you blindfolded,' at the same time drawing a silken scarf from his pocket.

"'I set down my valise and exclaimed, 'who and what is your mistress, and what can she suppose I am made of, to impose such conditions upon me?'"

"'As you please, sir; but my lady is anxious to have the painting done, and will pay a great price for it, if you please her, and she will not have you come in any other way.'"

"Indignant, I walked to the window and looking out into the fast darkening street, quickly reviewed my present condition. No one cared, I thought, whether I lived or died, my affairs were in bad shape, and my curiosity was greatly aroused at this peculiar offer. Surely, if I did not like the looks of things upon my arrival I could refuse to execute the painting, and return home next day, none the worse for having humored "my lady." Turning back I picked up my valise and signified my willingness to accompany the footman. After locking my door, I submitted to be blind-folded, and the footman taking my traps in one hand, offered me his other arm and aided me to the carriage. We rode, I know not how far or how long; all I am sure of was that it was 8 o'clock when we left my rooms. At length the coach stopped and I was helped to alight and guided up a long flight of marble or stone steps, through a hall and up a slippery wooden staircase, through a softly carpeted passage, up some winding stairs into a room, when the footman respectfully removed the scarf, and hoped I was none the worse for my journey and that I would find everything comfortable now I had arrived. Then he left me, locking the door upon the outside.'"

"'The suite of rooms in which I found myself were most luxuriously furnished, with rich, foreign furniture, a delicate lunch stood on a side table covered with a fine linen cloth, while beyond opened an elegantly appointed bed chamber. I felt as if I were in the midst of a scene from "Morris's Earthly Paradise." There were no windows in either apartment, but great skylights, with moveable screens, as in a studio, while on an easel in the corner stood a huge white canvas, and nearby a table covered with paints, brushes and many kinds of oils and varnish. When I looked at my watch it was long after midnight. I took a glass of wine and threw myself on a lounge and tried to sleep, in spite of troubled dreams and visions.'"

"'About 9 in the morning the taciturn footman appeared and silently cleared away the untasted lunch, replacing it with a dainty breakfast. As he turned to go he said, 'should you wish for anything, sir, there is the bell. My lady will come to you at 10.' Promptly at that hour the door opened and I rose with some awe and much curiosity to greet a tall, large woman, with white waving hair and piercing gray eyes, who carried in one hand my little picture of "Judith and Holofernes." She greeted me coldly and said, 'I took quite a fancy to this little thing, Mr. Norton, and wish you to paint a similar subject upon this canvas,' indicating the one on the easel. 'I prefer Salome with the head of John Baptist, and have posed the model and made all the accessories myself. Some of the details of the head in your little picture are not quite correct, as you will shortly observe. I hope you will find colors and materials provided, and that you are ready to do a little work this morning.'"

"'Upon my assuring her that I had paints with me, and that I was ready to do something at once, she went to the end of the great room, drew aside a large portiere, and, I suppose, touched a secret spring, for a panel slid back revealing an alcove where stood the most beautiful young girl I had ever seen, dressed in Eastern costume. She was deadly pale, her lips were slightly parted as she gazed with a look of fascinated horror at a huge silver salver, on the table before her, on which lay the head or the footman who had brought me to the place. Apparently the head had just been dissevered.'"

"'The ghastly experience of Bellini had become mine. I fainted. When I came to myself there was a soft rustle and tread as of some one leaving the room, and a strong, pungent, but refreshing odor. The panel was closed and the terrible old woman stood over me.'"

"'Have you recovered?' she asked, 'I am sorry you are so weak. I supposed you had painted from cadavers enough at the schools not to mind a simple head. It is not always a young artist has such an offer as I am about to make you. Listen; I will pay you two thousand pounds if you will paint this picture to please me. See if you cannot bear the sight now like a man!' and again she touched the spring, and again the fearful tableau was presented. As I lifted my shuddering gaze upon it the young girl raised her lips and gave me one beseeching, imploring look, which steadied me, with a sudden rush of sympathy for one who must be suffering even more than I.'"

"'Turning to the great canvas, I began with trembling hand to sketch the picture before me. Soon I was forgot in my horror of the thing as my love of art gained the ascendency, and I strove with all my powers to portray the beautiful face and figure of that girl. Every now and then the old lady rose and closed the panel, I suppose in order to give the model a rest, but as soon as it was opened there stood the living picture just as before. The pose and accessories were perfect, except that the model's face showed an innocence and sweetness which the daughter of herodius could never have possessed. After two hours the old lady announced that Salome would pose no more that day, but that I might work meanwhile upon the head, and finish that as soon as possible. Once more raising her eyes to mine, the young girl, at a sign from her elder, turned and disappeared behind the drapery which formed the background. The old lady left the room after bidding me ring if I wished for anything, and saying that Salome would pose again at ten next morning.'"

"'I was left alone with that head, but I drew the portiere, to conceal it. Lunch was brought by a gray old woman who said nothing as she placed it upon the table, and all afternoon I worked upon the head, spending the evening over a quiet pipe and some rare and interesting books, which I found in the chamber. Four days passed much in the same way, when the old lady declared the head to be finished quite to her liking, and on the fifth morning Salome posed beside the empty salver.'"

"She breathed more freely and so did I, but her face was still pale, and I doubt if it ever lost that look of terror. How beautiful she was! How I labored to portray her rare loveliness! The old lady was extremely critical, but not so critical as I; for my whole soul went out toward the mysterious girl. I painted as I never painted before. I lingered lovingly over every detail, and, greatly as I longed for a breath of fresh air and the touch of the glad sun, I almost dreaded to finish the picture. I would not, if I could, have signed my name to the canvas, but wishing I place some infallible mark of recognition upon it, into the embroidered border of Salome's scarf, where it would escape any ordinary gaze, I wrought the crest of my mother's family. At length the old lady announced that in her opinion the picture was finished, and that there would be no more sittings. Salome gave no sign of hearing the remark, but I stooped to pick up a brush before I answered that I still felt the need of some further work upon it, and that it would require retouching and glazing here and there.'"

"'There will be no more sittings,' said my patron, curtly, 'but you may remain as long as it seems necessary for your retouching.'"

"Several intolerably dull days followed, during which I did what was necessary to the picture, and saw no one beside the old servant, who served my meals, and cared for my rooms, and who seldom spoke. The long confinement and nervous tension was telling upon me, and I determined to go away on Friday, feeling that I could do no more to my picture, but I longed to see Salome. Friday morning saw me with my valise packed, and I bade the servant tell her mistress that my work was done and I should like to leave during the day. She bowed silently and withdrew, while I paced up and down the long room, wondring how I could send some word of farewell to the girl who had so taken possession of me. Just then with a slight sound the panel opened and there stood the object of my thoughts, no longer clad in Eastern dress, but in some white woolen robe, her hair hanging over her shoulders and her eyes full of tears, appealing to me as if seeking deliverance from some strange spell.'"

"'I sprang toward her, and instinctively she stretched out her beautiful arms and threw them about my neck.'"

"'My darling! My darling!' I whispered; "come with me; show me how we can leave this dreadful place.'"

"She shook her head sadly, and pointed to her lips and ears. Then I knew she was deaf and dumb.'"

"'I kissed her lovely forehead once, and taking her in my arms determined to find some way to escape, but just then she fell back a dead weight upon my shoulder, and I turned to face the malignant sneer and angry eyes of the old lady, and just behind her stood the same footman who had brought me to the house, and whose head I had painted as that of John the Baptist. I fainted again, and knew no more until I found myself on my own bed at home, with the footman bending over me.'"

"'Are you better, sir?' he asked, and then in answer to my start of recognition, added, sadly: 'It was not I, but my twin brother, whom you painted, sir. Good day, sir; you will soon be all right now," and I found myself alone, with a strange lethargic sensation upon me, as of some opiate, while on my pillow lay an envelope containing a check for two thousand pounds, the sole witness of my strange experience. Even when I cashed the check I could find no clue to the person who paid it, nor to this day have I ever been able to learn anything of the old lady, the house where I spent that memorable time, nor of my beautiful Salome. I do not even know what was her real name, to me she will always be Salome. I have been through nearly all the principal streets of London and visited its many suburbs in vain, as I have never seen any house in one of them which seemed like the one I seek. I inquired at the gallery as to who purchased the Judith, but my only answer was that a liveried servant came and paid for it and carried the picture away.'"

"'Next morning," continued Somers, "we went again to the gallery, and there sure enough on the border of Salome's scarf was the tiny crest. The picture had been badly smoked as though exposed to some great fire, and looked much older on that account. We could learn nothing about it except that it came in a roll with several other paintings (many of which were nearly ruined from mildew) from an old church in Madrid. Norton was too agitated and excited to do anything, so, at his request, I bought the picture and had it removed to his rooms. He seemed overjoyed to possess it, and spent much time in cleansing and restoring, poor girl,' he would say, as he worked almost reverently upon her face and drapery, 'I hope you are dead, for I shall never find you in this world, and I know your life was terrible with that woman, I shall meet you somewhere.' Norton himself was drowned about a year after,"

"Strangest thing," added Somers after the long silence which followed his story, "that picture was totally unlike anything he ever did before or afterward, quite in the best Spanish style. He was a fine painter, too, but his talent was at its best, as he said, in that picture."

Superstitions About Wood Demons.

From the Tyrol, from Switzerland, from Germany or from Brittany, come well ascertained accounts of the popular belief in certain wild spirits of the wood, who are painted in all the most frightful shapes the imagination can suggest, and are characterized by their delight in every possible form of malevolence. They kidnap and devour children, bewitch the cattle, and lead men to lose their way in the forest. They can assume any size, from the most diminutive to the most gigantic; no trace of fire or heat on least an impossible impersonation of them. The Skongman, the forest spirit of Sweden, is like a man, but tall as the highest tree; he decoys men into the wood, and, when they have hopelessly lost their way, and begin to weep for fear, leaves them with mocking laughter.

The conception is well nigh identical with that found among the natives of the forests of Brazil, showing with what uniformity similar conditions produce similar effects on the human mind. But the Russian spirits Ljeschi (from a Polish word for wood) are not even more significant; for not only are the usual diabolical attributes assigned to them, such as the leading of men astray or the sending to them of sickness, but also the conventional diabolical features. Their bodies are after the human pattern, but they have the ears and horns of goats, their feet are cloven, and their fingers end in claws. The Russian wood spirit is, in fact, the devil of mediæval imagination and nothing else.

A Potato Peeler in Persia.

"One of the most comical things I've ever heard was told in the Caucasus," said Dudley Winston, the young man who accompanied his father on the mission to Persia. "It was in Tiflos, the capital of Georgia. You know there's an American store there—a big place of business where all sorts of 'Yankee notions' are dealt out at enormous profits to the natives. I dropped in there. One of the objects of interest to which the Russian salesman directed my special attention was a patent potato peeler.

"'Dees instrument,' he said, 'ess medi by ze famous 'ouse of Pat Aug.

I was astonished.

"What house did you say?"

"'Ze faymoos 'ouse of Pat. Aug.'

"Never heard of it,' I said; 'I guess you are mistaken.'

"Meestecken? No, sure. I have often heard of ze 'ouse, and I have often seen ze name of ze 'ouse. I will show him to you now. Oh, it is a firm which enjoys great fame here.'

"And with that he looks for a specimen potato peeler and brings one out.

"'Zere, sare,' he says, 'ees ze name engraved in ze metal. See!'

"I burst out laughing until my sides ached. There was the legend: "Pat. Aug. 17, 1873.' And the 'Pat. Aug.' part of it he had taken to be the firm's name. I found that this potato peeler was famous under the name of 'Pat. Aug.' all over the Caucasus."

Victor Hugo's Artistic Ability.

It is said that if Victor Hugo had devoted himself to pictorial art he would perhaps have eclipsed every one past and present who made black and white a specialty. He was never at a loss for material—a soft quill pen, with sometimes a hard one to finish up, and ordinary writing inks washed in with the feathery end of the pen, with any paper that he found at hand, were often what he worked with.

—George III died as he had lived—a madman. Throughout life he was at least a consistent monarch.

AZTEC MUMMIES.

Bodies Found in a Cave of the Sierra Madre Mountains.

There was brought to this city a collection of mummies which constitute one of the most remarkable discoveries made on the American continent. These mummies differ from those discovered in Egypt in a remarkable degree, being entirely nude, without wrappings, and apparently not having been subjected to any embalming process. Exposure to the air had no effect upon them, the flesh having been dried in a hermetically sealed cavern until it is like parchment, and the weight of the bodies is merely nominal.

Mr. Docking, in whose possession these specimens are at the present time, tells a romantic story regarding their discovery. In one of the spurs of the Sierra Madre mountains, not far from the banks of the Gila river and almost on the boundary line between Arizona and New Mexico, a party of American miners was searching for treasure which tradition says is buried in these hills. A cavern was one day discovered, hermetically sealed with a cement which defied the picks of the party, and only by clipping it off flake by flake was entrance gained to the cave. Lighted only by the flame of a blazing pine branch they traversed a passage about thirty feet in length, which ended in a room cut in the solid rock. Here, instead of untold gold and other treasure of Aztecs, they were startled to find a number of human bodies, looking more ghastly than usual in the flickering light of the torches. After recovering from their surprise, preparations were made to remove the remains, but the superstitious natives of the vicinity, believing that the bodies were those of their gods, objected to the proceedings, and it was only with much diplomacy and occasional skirmishes that they were finally conveyed to a flag station on the Southern Pacific road and transported to this city, where they were placed in charge of Mr. Docking, who will keep them in his residence, where they have been viewed by a large number of scientists and physicians, as well as by the various consuls of foreign powers in this city.

The most remarkable of the number are those of a mother and child, which when found were enveloped in one shroud, portions of which are still to be seen covering the lower limbs of the woman.

Still another mummy is that of a woman, her long hair being in a state of perfect preservation. The feet are small and highly arched, while the fingers are long and tapering. Remnants of her shroud still remaining is of a dark-blue color, differing both in this respect and in texture from the material of which the other shrouds were composed.

Another remarkable specimen, however, is that of a man in a sitting posture, the body being considerable larger than any of the others. During life his girth of chest must have been much above the average, the whole of the upper portion of the body having seemingly been molded in gigantic proportions. The cartilages of the ears and nose are still plainly to be seen, while the head is covered with a dense growth of black hair. The eye brows are well defined, while between the glistening teeth protrudes the tongue, now dried to an almost cork-like consistency.

The remaining mummy is that of a man, said by scientists to have been comparatively young at the time of his death. Many speculations have been made by those who have seen the collection as to his relation to the female bodies reclining on either side of him. And the different theories of brother and husband have many advocates.

That the remains are those of the ancient Aztecs, members of that civilization which was destroyed in Mexico by the soldiers of Cortez, there can be no doubt. The woman and the smaller man present all the peculiar physical conditions attributed to the once numerous people. The high cheek bones and slanting eyes are there, the thick skin and black hair are plainly visible to the eye, and the height of the bodies, although they were found more or less doubled upon themselves, is estimated at about 5 feet 3 inches. When this is taken into consideration, with the fact that the Aztec spread southward from about the 30th parallel until they inhabited the high plateaus of Mexico and Central America, there can be little doubt as to the race of which these mummies were once living members.

The specimens will be shipped east in a few days, and, in all probability, will find a resting place in one of the principal museums of Europe. Although Mr. Docking has kindly shown them to all scientists and historians who have called upon him, they will not be placed upon public exhibition in this city.

The Foolish Friends.

In the depths of the forest there lived two foxes who had never had a cross word with each other. One of them said one day, in the politest fox language:

'Let's quarrel."

"Very well" said the other; "as you please, dear friend. But how shall we set about it?"

"Oh, it can not be difficult," said fox number one; "two-legged people fall out, why not we?"

So they tried all sorts of ways; but it could not be done, because each one would give way. At last number one fetched two stones.

"There," said he, "you say they're yours, and I'll say they're mine, and we will quarrel, and fight, and scratch. Now, I'll begin. Those stones are mine!"

"Very well," answered the other, "you are welcome to them."

"But we shall never have a quarrel at this rate!" cried the other, jumping up and licking his face.

"You old simpleton, don't you know that it takes two to make a quarrel any day?"

So they gave it up as a bad job, and never tried to play that silly game again.

In 1776 Sarah Goddard printed a newspaper at Newport.

One of the most profitable ways of applying ashes is sowing them broadcast over newly seeded ground.

If any plants that have been set out in the border are to be repotted, do it early. It may be necessary to cut back both top and roots.

Carefully "hand-pick" the garden seeds you saved last season, saving only the perfect ones.

A Rough Diamond; or, Tried and True.

Patty McEwen was from Kent and had come down to visit the Seftons at their bleak little home off the coast. She had not been there more than a week before her cousin, Jim Sefton, found himself desperately in love with her. Poor Jim! with his broad Northern dialect, his thick shoes and loutish airs, why should he have aspired for the love of such a dainty little woman as Patty. He knew his own shortcomings and what a poor lover he was to be sure, and rued the day that he ever laid eyes on her.

Coming home from a concert in the village one night Jim found himself alone with Patty for a few minutes, as the others had strolled on ahead.

The wind had risen again and came sweeping like a giant over the fields of young crops as if it would tear every green blade out of the earth.

"It'll be a rough night—that will it," said Jim.

"Will be?" accented Patty. "'Is,' I should say."

"This is naught?"

"Naught is a very rough customer, then."

"Have you changed your mind, Jim, and are you coming?" Patty had to shout her question, the wind was so loud and gave such puffs and snorts. "You're bound to come one day."

"Eh! I'll be coming one daay." Jim fell into broad Lancashire, being taken aback by her graciousness.

"To-morrow?"

"No." He jerked his head. "No, not just that Kent will see me when—when"—

"When?" called Patty from the front.

"Can't say," he answered doubtingly.

"When?" And the girl, her love of teasing him excited by his manner, turned and faced him. Her hands were in the side-pockets of her ulster; her close cloth cap that matched it was well down on her small head, but the wind tossed her hair about. Loose brown locks flew around brow, and cheek, and mouth; still, her trim, alert, mischievous young self stood firm, and her merry eyes dashed raillery at the unfortunate Jim.

"When?" she repeated.

"Eh, lass!" he sighed, dropping helplessly into the broadest provincialism, "that I'll come—I'll be incorrectly himself," be able to answer ye! There! the likes o' me'll not be of your sort. No; I'm best out of Kent."

"Oh, very well!" flung she, and ran on.

No such storm as that which raged over the Lancashire coast that night had been known in the memory of man. The destruction was measureless. Lives were lost, trees uprooted, roofs flung bodily to a distance, sheaves and ricks had the thatch torn off them, gardens were swept bare.

Farm hands were up all night. At the Haigh Farm, Sefton's place, old Sefton and his sons worked like slaves to save things. No such mighty stacks of hay were in all the country round as theirs.

They saved all.

But the price!

Ah! Jim Sefton was reaching up from the topmost rung of a ladder bracing the end of the stack, when a sweep of wind bore down upon him. There was no time for any one to call to him, no time for thought; he was flung like a wisp of straw to the ground.

They took him up groaning.

No legs were broken, no arms were broken, but he moaned in anguish and lay like a log

Another Spring came.

For nearly a year had Jim Sefton lain on his back in the old farm-house. Death was not coming to him, but a life that to his vigorous spirit was a living death seemed to be his portion for the term of his natural existence.

Then some one said: "Go to London."

Well, the London surgeons cured him; and, then, being so far South, why should he not go on into Kent?

Jim had never lost his glorified dreams of his wild cousin.

But Patty, though he did not know it, was scarcely by that time to be called the "wild young cousin." Jim's accident had struck a terror into her heart. Things had been so arranged that her going home was not delayed by that terrible event; she was not wanted to nurse, and her father would have her home. So it was that she only once saw Jim, and that was when she went into his room to say, "Good-by" to him. He did not know her and her aunt hurried her off. The good aunt was the soul of kindness, but she was in dire grief and she was of the stern North.

Patty went sobbing.

And Patty had never forgotten.

How should she meet Jim?

He was in the house. She heard his voice, and all at once this foolish thought struck her—how should she meet him?

Common sense said: "Meet him naturally—he will expect nothing new from you."

She dallied about her room, then she ran into the garden for a rose; from there she saw the litting of the hillocky common, gold with its masses of gorse.

From a goose-bush in the old-fashioned garden she hastily pulled a bit of the yellow bloom, pricking her fingers, but—remembering.

Would Jim remember too?

She did not see Jim until her mother called to her to come to tea, and during that meal she astonished them all by being the Patty she had been a year ago. She laughed, and she teased, and she talked nonsense. Was that the girl who during the past year had grown quiet and staid? Aye—the very same.

Presently they were in the garden.

"Eh, and that's your Kentish gorse!" exclaimed Jim Sefton. Mouths of lying on his back with nothing to do but read, had changed Jim a good deal; for one thing his shyness had gone and had carried off much of his provincialism.

"Eh, that is it?" Patty mischievously copied the north-country lilt.

"It is what I have come specially to see," said Jim, quietly. "Will you put on your hat and walk out with me—to show it me?"

"To-night?" doubted the girl. Her wildness fled suddenly. She looked toward the others; they were all sauntering about the garden in the sweet May evening. "You will not be tired?"

"Tired? No, lass, no! I'm right again now. As tough as ever. And I'd like to get a walk with ye. You're willing?"

"All right." Patty ran in for a hat.

After that night Jim Sefton used to say there was no such grand sight as a Kentish common when the gorse is well out. When he came in he had a bit stuck in his button-hole, and Patty's spray had gone.

Patty was rosy, and her clear brown eyes shone with tears as she sat down to supper. She had such joy in her glad young heart as she had never deemed possible.

That year's gorse had Patty's story glorifying it for ever, and yet in the years to come she, very likely, would see little of the grand old common where she had taken Jim Sefton.

Her tears were not for that—they were tears of joy. What else but joy could she feel when she knew she was going back one day with Jim. Dear! would she not keep him well indoors on windy nights?

At which piece of promised tyranny big Jim laughed.

A Fighting Parson.

Self-defence is sometimes as necessary for a preacher as for any other man. In the life of the Rev. Sherlock Bristol, a preacher and miner in the West, is narrated the following stirring incident:

Mr. Bristol had just arrived at some mines near the Juba river, and was talking with a friend, Dr. Welber, when another miner came to make his acquaintance. Dr. Welber mentioned that the minister had preached some good sermons on board ship. The miner grinned.

"A minister!" he cried; "a minister!"

"You let him alone," said Welber. "He's a friend of mine."

"Not much," cried the other, "will we let him alone!"

He was a man who despised ministers and church members, and had organized a club, one of whose resolutions was that any clergyman who should chance to come upon their bar, should be treated to a dose of mud. He mounted a pile of boulders, and, swinging his hat, cried loudly,

"Hear ye! hear ye! Oh, yes! oh, yes! Every miner quit his work. Hurry here. There's fun ahead. Come one, come all."

Instantly work ceased and in a few seconds twenty or thirty miners were on the spot. The preacher shall tell the rest of the story:

The captain of the gang seized my collar, and said, "Dry up, parson! I'll show you how we do it."

So saying, he gave me a violent jerk, which brought my right hand against his neck—my left hand was resting on a windlass post—and, very naturally, I grasped a handful of his shirt collar and vest.

There came over me a strange spasm of impulsive energy, giving me about thrice my ordinary strength, and, without taking my hand off the windlass, his feet left the ground and he landed on his back in a puddle of water.

What a shout went up from every miner's mouth—save one! His hold was not broken and he sprang up, let go of the post, took hold with both hands, in wrestler's style, and laid him on his back again. Jerking him up again, I threw him from me against a pile of rocks ten feet distant. I intended that this should end it, but his wicked spirit was not conquered. Springing upon him like a cat I gave him such a shaking as made him limp as a rag.

"Will you behave?" I asked energetically. Hearing no answer I started with him for the river, eight rods distant, repeating my query and the distance at every rod. The crowd followed, laughing and shouting. Within a rod of the river he cried: "Enough, parson!" and I threw him down.

Wishing to finish a dirty job as soon as possible I now turned to the largest man among them, but he gracefully bowed, stepped back and said: "No, I thank you. You will pass!"

Southern Hotels in War Times.

While in Vicksburg after the siege I was afforded a fair trial of southern hotels as they existed in war times, and must confess that my experience in this connection was far from being a pleasant one. The floors and thatches of the hotels were generally unswept and unwashed, while, doubtless owing to the presence of our army, the servants suddenly became wholly unmanageable and consequently were few in number. As a rule the rooms were occupied by soldiers, some being sick, others with neglected wounds and quite a number who were shamming sickness. As a result, and in the absence of any sanitary rules, the rooms were in a sad plight as to cleanliness, while a disgusting odor pervaded the entire building.

It was wholly useless to seek for a separate apartment, and after registering one was assigned to a portion of a room and the whole or a part of a bed by paying $10. A single night's lodging cost $5, which entitled one to a lodging ticket and meal ticket. Arriving at your room, the servant, bowing obsequiously, usually apologized for the lack of everything needed for comfort by saying:

"Best in de house, sah, 'clar it am; solyahs done stole ebbery debblish ting 'bout de place; 'deed dey did, sah."

No towel, no soap, no bowl, no pitcher, no means of illumination, a bed of corn husks with a single sheet and a light coverlet, and from the beds having been occupied by soldiers, it excited no surprise to find vermin in abundance. If one could sleep under such circumstances he must needs be copper bound.

Rudeness of English Students.

The conduct of undergraduates at Oxford was so rude at the recent commemoration that it was criticised even by the English, who are used to such jocularities. The vice chancellor, who opened the convocation in Latin, was told "to speak up" and to construe his oration. Some one shouted that he could not hear a word, and the speaker was told that "that was quite enough, sir." The senior proctor was asked to oblige with a song, and altogether the proceedings were said to be noticeably "deficient in humor."

—For earliest wear English straws and coarse fancy braids—will prevail; later fine plain and fancy felt will be in favor. No material has yet been found to entirely supercede velvet as a hat covering, and for the coming season velvet hats promise to rival those of felt even for ordinary uses. The larger shapes will be covered plainly, and nodding ostrich tips and even long plumes promise to be a favorite trimming, while the "made" feathers, birds and wings will be reserved for felt hats and turbans and small bonnets.

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B. F. SCHWEIER, THE CONSTITUTION—THE UNION—AND THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAWS. Editor and Proprietor.

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NEWS IN BRIEF.

—The modern dyer controls about 15,000 shades of color.

—Mrs. Celeste H. H. Winslow began to write stories and poems when nine years of age.

—Of the 200 gold-beaters in New York not one is a woman, while of the 900 gold-cutters not one is a man.

—A log of solid redwood was struck 140 feet below gravel in sinking an artesian well at Watsonville, Nevada.

—Sicily's sulphur is estimated at about 30,000,000,000 tons, from which the world draws 400,000 tons yearly.

—Watermelons weighing from fifty to eighty pounds are often sold in the San Francisco markets, and one exhibited last fall weighing 115 pounds.

—The German government has paid 300,000 marks to an Austrian engineer named Mannlicher for a patent cylinder stopper for quick loading rifles.

—One hundred and six million feet of lumber, valued at $1,890,000, have been shipped from Fernandina, Florida, in the current year. Over 14,000 cars were required for the transport of it.

—The Holmden farm, near Pithole, Pa., for which, in the days of the oil craze, the Garden City Petroleum company, of Chicago, paid $1,500,000, was sold a few days ago for taxes amounting to less than $100.

—Vienna bread has made many fortunes, and one of $8,000,000 came to Count Zang, who died recently in Vienna. In 1842 he established the first shop for Vienna bread in Paris, and from that gained his wealth.

—The old cabin once occupied by John W. Mackay of bonanza fame when he mined in Allegheny City from 1856 to 1859, is to be exhibited at the Mechanics' Fair in San Francisco. The picks, shovel and rocker used by Mackay will also be exhibited.

—President Carnot of France has been placed in a curious dilemma. He was taught the handicraft of a carpenter in his youth, and the striking carpenters of Paris have written to him complaining that he has not attended their meetings nor subscribed to their fund.

—Probably the lady who purchases ribbon for trimmings is not aware that she is contributing to an enormous industry, but such is the case. The demand for this fashionable article is now so great that one State alone—New Jersey—turns out 36,675,000 yards a year. This is 110,025,000 feet, or not quite 22,731 miles.

—Russia imports annually 360,000,000 pounds of cotton, chiefly from America and Egypt, but it is believed that recent acquisitions of the Czar in Central Asia are excellently adapted for cotton raising. Some has already been grown in Khiva and Bokhara, and an extensive system of irrigation is being created to develop other land for this crop.

—The Mikado of Japan has almost finished his new palace, which has taken six years for its completion. There are 400 rooms in the building, and the dining hall will seat 127 guests. The furniture of the State Department came from Germany. Not the least interesting object in the palace is an American piano.

—"Only fifty years ago," says Sir Spencer Wells, "the average duration of human life in Great Britain was thirty years; to-day, according to statistics, it is forty-nine years. In fifty years the population has increased by eight millions. At least two millions of this increase may be put down as the fruit of improved sanitary and moral work, and of victory over preventable sickness.

—John Guy Vassar, founder of the Vassar Brothers' hospital, who has been seriously ill for months, and whose obituary was printed in several newspapers, is now well enough to drive in his carriage. It is said of him that recently, while confined to his bed, he made $150,000 in stocks.

—A suit at law at Moscow, and various investigations, disclose that tea is being shamelessly adulterated. Of forty-four samples which were officially analyzed four consisted of a mixture of tea and a certain kind of grass, four of the grass alone, and five of tea which had already once been used. In Moscow the police have found a number of barrels of sweepings intended for admixture with tea.

—The annual consumption of feathers in this country for bedding purposes is said to amount to 3,000,000 pounds, or 375 carloads. To furnish this 3,000,000 healthy geese must give up their feathers in a year. The geese furnishing these are to be found mainly in Southern Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky. The climate is cold enough to cause the feathers to be fine and soft, and not too cold to make their care a matter of unprofitable labor to the farmers.

—West Virginia thus far hasn't made much noise in the world