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BY HAWLEY & CRUSER.

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AN AUTUMN IDYL.

As through the forest, disarrayed
By chill November, late I strayed,
A lonely minstrel of the wood
Was singing to the solitude;
I love thy music, thus I said,
When o'er thy perch the leaves were spread;
Sweet was thy song, but sweeter now
Thy carol on the leafless bough.
Sing, little bird! thy note shall cheer
The sadness of the dying year.

When violets pranked the turf with blue
And morning filled their cups with dew,
Thy slender voice with rippling trill
The budding April bowers would fill,
Nor passed its joyous tones away
When April rounded into May;
Thy lie shall half no second dawn—
Sing, little bird! the spring is gone.

But now the summer's chant is done
And mute the choral antiphon;
The birds have left the shivering pines
To fit among the trellised vines,
Or fan the air with scented plumes,
Amid the love sick orange blooms,
And thou art here alone—alone—
Sing, little bird! the rest have flown.

The snow has capped yon distant hill,
At morn the running brook was still,
From driven herds the clouds that rise,
Are like the smoke of sacrifice,
Ere long the frozen sod shall mock
The plowshare, changed to stubborn rock,
The brawling streams shall soon be dumb—
Sing, little bird! the frosts have come.

Fast, fast the lengthening shadows creep,
The songless fowls are half asleep,
The air grows chill, the setting sun
May leave thee ere thy song is done,
The pulse that warms thy breast grows cold,
The secret die with thee, untold;
The lingering sunset still is bright—
Sing, little bird! 'twill soon be night.

STRANGELY BETROTHED.

"GOING OUT, Ellen, are you?" said my father, as he tightened the reign of his sturdy hill-pony. "Well, well, my dear, I have to face the heat, too, and shall envy you the shade of your favorite trees, beside the big tank. That Mala bar headman I spoke of, who has just brought over a gang of fresh coolies from the mainland, has promised to meet me in front of the joss-house in the Nal Tantee village, to see if we can come to terms. I shall be back before tiffin time I hope."

And with a kindly nod and smile, he rode off at a brisk trot; his house-keeper a bare-footed Cingalese lad, easily keeping pace with the pony, and running swift and silent, like a brown shadow, beside his master's stirrup. Times had changed, and for the worse, since Mr. Travers had been reckoned among the most thriving coffee planters in Ceylon. Our once famous plantation, called Travers after the family that had possessed it two generations, was now not the source of profit that in my grandfather's time, it had been. The rich soil, worn out by over-cropping and neglect, no longer yielded its heavy harvest of red-brown berries; while to reclaim fresh land from the jungle was both toilsome and costly. The estate gave us the means of main tenance, and little more.

I was an only child, and my father was a widower, so that our actual necessities, in that cheap and frugal country, were easily provided for; nor should I have had a care in the world, save for the old, old story of love, the course of which hard circumstances would not suffer to run smooth. Our nearest neighbor—and Christian neighbors, with white faces and English-speaking tongues, were scarce in northern Ceylon—was Mr. Forster, a planter by far wealthier than we were. Now Oswald and I were plighted lovers, but the very idea of an engagement between his only son and the daughter of his embarrassed neighbor was gall and wormwood to Oswald's father, a proud, strong-willed man, who managed his thriving property, so as to extract from every beegah of arable land its utmost yield in silver rupees.

Desirous to escape from Oswald's mind the idea of marrying poor little Ellen Travers, Mr. Forster, with his wife's concurrence, proposed to send his son to Europe, confident that foreign travel and change of scene would soon obliterate from his memory the image of the lonely little girl beside the great Tank of Minary. And now a word concerning the tank itself, the name of which I fear conveys to European readers but a very inadequate conception of the stupendous reality. The tank of Minary, justly reckoned among the marvels which the Island of Ceylon has still to show, is perhaps the largest of the artificial lakes ever planned by moral engineer. More than two thousand years have passed since, before the Christian era, a Buddhist king bade his subjects toil to erect the massive walls of heavy stone and rough chunnam, that environ that vast sheet of water, twenty-five miles in circumference.

With the Minary Lake, or Tank, which

and its slender tongue protruded from lay close to my own home, I had been from childhood familiar, and I dearly loved the mirror-like expanse of its clam waters, studded with floating islands, of the crimson-blossomed lotus of India, the red flowers and green leaves of which covered many thousand acres of the surface. Strange fish, of brilliant colors, glided in glittering shoals through the deep, clear water, rarely disturbed by prow or paddle; bright birds of every size, from the scarlet flamingo to the tiny tortoise on the towering adjacent, haunted it; and all around grew in dense profusion the mighty trees and flowering creepers of the virgin forest, whence came at times the mountain cat, the belling of the deer, the panther's snarl, or the crashing of the gane and sapling, as a wild elephant forced their way through the trackless recesses of the jungle.

I am bound to admit that there were other tenants of lake and forest less attractive than the bright-plumaged birds and the pretty little lizards basking in the pathless of yellow sunshine. Alligators were very common, snakes plentiful, and the scorpion, the centipede and the tree-leech were often to be met with in the more swampy and tangled tracks of the woodland. But we, who were colonial born, learn a disregard of the creeping things that surround us which astonishes a new arrival from Europe, and I had never in my life known what it was to feel real fear of beast or reptile.

I watched my father's retiring figure until it disappeared amid the feathery bamboos that lined the path, and then, turning my back on the white house with its green verandahs, walked on, under the shadow of the great forest trees, till I reached the embankment of the Minary Tank. Half-an-hour's walking brought me within sight of a ruined summer-house, built on the edge of the lake by some former Dutch proprietor, and yet surmounted by a large ball of gilded pith, perched on a pole. Near the summer-house it was my custom to meet Oswald. And it would be but very seldom that we were to meet, henceforth, since, poor fellow, he was to sail by the *Lord Dalhousie*, expected at Point de Galle on the 31st of the month.

On my way I paused now and then, familiar as was the prospect, to gaze upon the wide expanse of the lake, the silvery waters which rolled away so gradually that it was hard to conceive that what seemed almost entitled to take rank as an inland sea could be actually the work of human hands. Flocks of wildfowl, with white wings and shrill scream, hovered above the swarms of gorgeously tinted fish that swarm around the huge weed-bushes, while here and there among the red lotus blossoms appeared what might have been easily mistaken for a floating log, but which I knew to be an alligator, drowsily basking in the glad sunshine.

The heavy heat seemed to render exertion, even for the natives, difficult, for I saw no fisher, as usual, paddling his light canoe or preparing his tough nets of cocconut fibre; and the very Cingalese woodcutters had deserted their work, leaving behind them a great heap of sawn timber, in front of which, imbedded in the spongy wood of a cypress tree, four or five short bright axes remained sticking. Some few paces from his heap was the ruin summer-house, and beyond it there towered aloft the giant talipot trees, with its vast serrated leaves, that serve the Cingalese for sail and thatch and screen beneath which Oswald and I were accustomed to meet.

To my surprise, and perhaps chagrin, I did not at first see him for whom I looked, and began to fear that he had forgotten to keep his wonted tryst; but on drawing nearer, I beheld a sight that for the moment froze my very veins with horror, and caused the cry of anguish that rose to my lips, to die away. Oswald, lying on the turf among the roots of the gigantic palm tree, seemed to be asleep, overcome, probably by the unusual heat, while around him was loosely coiled something that resembled a stout rope, curiously streaked with black, and orange, and white—something that caused the withered leaves and crisped grass to rustle as it stirred, writhing.

I had never seen a living tic palunga, but I knew at the first glance that the snake before my eyes was no other than a large species of that dreaded reptile, which in Ceylon takes the position that in Continental India belongs to the cobra for the bits of which there is no known remedy. Twice within the last three years, laborers on my father's plantation had been brought in dying, from the venom of the tic palunga, but in each instance the skill of the native snake-charmers had led to the capture of the reptile, and it was not believed that any of this species, rare as well as dangerous, been left alive in our immediate neighborhood. This, however, was unquestionably a tic palunga, many feet long, and it had wrapped its coils as though in hideous sport, around Oswald's limbs as he lay there unconscious.

The great head of the enormous

snake rested on the ground, among the flowers and ferns. I could see its eyes, bright as jewels, fixed upon me. It showed for the moment, however, no particular sign of anger or distrust, but contented itself with quietly contemplating the intruder upon its haunts. As I stood gazing on my sleeping lover and the monstrous creature that lay, wakeful but quiescent, so near to him, all the stories of snakes that I had ever heard or read came crowding in upon my quickened memory. I knew that the tic palunga, in common with the most of the venomous varieties of its race, seldom employed its poison-fangs unless when attacked or annoyed; but I also knew that the hardest elephant hunter of the forest, would sooner confront the charge of a herd of incensed tuckers than face the lance-like dart and rancorous bite of this dread denizen of the jungle.

The tic palunga, unlike the bos and the python, rarely, if ever, preys upon the animals, such as deer or cattle, confining its diet, for the most part, to birds, frogs and lizards. Some caprices, most likely, had caused it to twine a part of its supple convulsions around Oswald as he lay, and so long as he remained asleep and motionless there was little probability that the serpent would harm him. My great fear was lest he should awake, and in awaking, by some hasty movement, arouse the ire of the restless foe. Oswald was brave and strong, but it was mockery to speak of strength or courage when so terrible an antagonist was in question.

Suddenly, as if it had been a whisper from Heaven, there came into my mind a thought that promised hope, even in that dire extremity of need. I had often seen harmless snakes kept tame in colonial households, and was aware of their habits, and of their love for certain kinds of food, and above all for milk. Could I but bring to that spot a supply of milk, and place it, before Oswald should awake temptingly near to the tic palunga, all might yet be well. And yet to desert him—poor fellow—in such terrible company, seemed cruel; yet it was for his sake, and I felt that I must go. Very slowly, then, lest my footsteps should disturb the sleeper or irritate the huge reptile that kept watch beside him, I stole away, and when at a safe distance, flew rather than ran, along the forest path.

The nearest European dwelling was Oswald's own home. There were Chinese huts nearby, no doubt, where dwelt some of Mr. Forster's hired men, but I should not be able to procure what I sought save from the planter's house. At another time I should not have willingly trespassed on the domains of Oswald's father; but this was no occasion for scruple or punctilio. Life and death, as I knew depended on my speed.

There, at length, rose up before me, the milk-thorn-hedge, the impenetrable thorns of which are useful in keeping out leopard and jackal, which surrounded the planter's homestead; and passing through an open gate, I entered the compound. The first servant that I met, and who lifted his hand to his snow-white turban with a polite "Salaam," and a smile that showed the white teeth between his bearded lips, was a man whom I knew, a Marhatta groom who had formerly been in my father's service, and whose child I had nursed through an attack of Ceylon fever.

"Lall Singh!" I gasped out, panting for breath, "do me a kindness for the sake of old bread and salt. Get me some fresh milk quickly, for the love of God, but ask no questions—thai!"

Something in my tone impressed the Marhatta, for without a word he hurried off and soon returned, bearing a jar of milk and drinking vessel, or *lota*, which would contain something less than a pint, and which at a sign from me, he filled with milk. This very act, slight as it may seem, was no small compliment for it was, doubtless, his own drinking that Lall Singh was giving me, and should any lip not belong to one of pure Hindu descent touch its burnished rim, it would hereafter be unfit for use. However, I scarcely waited to utter a word of thanks, but snatched up the brass *lota* and darted out.

It may be thought that I had not given the alarm to the household at Mr. Forster's plantation; but I had resolved that I would not, if I could do my errand unquestioned, create a turmoil which might bring about the very evil against which I was striving. Oswald's mother and sisters loved him, but their nerves were not of the strongest, and their outcries, had they heard the news, would have had the effect of envenoming a score of servants and coolies, and to seal Oswald's fate by sending a posse of volunteers to the place where he lay at the snake's mercy.

As if on winged feet, carrying the precious draught of milk with jealous care, I hurried back to the spot where, at the foot of the huge talipot tree lay Oswald, yet asleep. The snake, however, as though uneasy, was beginning to stir. Its monstrous head, wagged slowly from side to side among the white wild flowers

between its grim jaws. But I was in time, and as I poured the milk, or rather a portion of it, on the ground, so that a long trail should lead to the spot where I set down the brass drinking-cup, with what of its contents remained, I was careful to avoid, by any abrupt gestures, incensing the tic palunga.

Then came a minute or two of agonized expectancy, and then, to my great joy, I saw the reptile slowly uncoil himself, evidently making for the milk. First one wreath and then another of the snake's body was untwined; and the great serpent, brushing through the forest grass and flowerets, stooped its broad head to drink. As I saw Oswald thus freed, and the unsuspected foe drawn farther and farther away from the place where he reposed, I felt the strength which had hitherto supported me become weakness. My nerves being no longer braced by the sense of Oswald's mortal peril, the instinctive terror and disgust which I had from childhood felt for the serpent tribe overpowered me, and I grew giddy and weak, and could scarcely see.

What was this before my dim eyes? The well-known porch of the Dutch colonial's summer-house, overgrown by trailing creepers, and all but choked by tall weeds. Mechanically I entered, and sinking down on a mouldering wooden seat, once decked with silken cushions and gold leaf I gradually regained the physical strength which had deserted me, and with it the capacity for thought. It is curious how in such cases of extreme exhaustion, the benumbed mind slowly resumes some train of abandoned thought, and thus it was with me. By degrees I remembered Oswald's danger, and my own efforts to save him, and—

What was that rustling among the stems, and leaves and buds of the luxurious plants that festooned the shattered windows of the summer-house, in all the rank profusion of their tropical growth? Surely—surely not the rippling, undulating motion with which a huge snake drags himself through the brakes and jungle grass! Yes; my fears were but too true, for there in the open window space—the broken trellis work of which had been replaced by wild vines and dangling orchids—appeared, at a height of six or seven feet above the ground, the hideous head of the serpent that had lately menaced Oswald, and now confronted me.

And then it flashed upon me that the deserted kiosk was probably the reptile's actual home, and that, as though in the very irony of terror, I had ventured to intrude into the lair of the terrible creature, from the sight of which I had—once that Oswald's safety seemed assured—reeled dizzily away. I had often heard of the strange taste which snakes evince for an abandoned human dwelling, and how frequently they haunt the out-buildings of Europeans' abodes and the huts of the natives; and yet here had I rashly strayed into the lurking place of the deadliest guardian of the Ceylon jungle.

That the snake was perturbed there could be no doubt. It curved its graceful neck like that of a swan, and hissed slightly while its broad jaws were partly opened. I fancied that I could see the curved poison fangs, more to be dreaded than ever was Malay creese or Moorish dagger—while the jewel bright eyes glistened ominously. One wild, piercing shriek I could not repress; and then the futility of resistance, or of flight forced itself upon me, and I stood, motionless as a marble statue of embodied fear, gazing at the emerald eye fixed so pitiless a stare on mine. The subtle suffocating odor which large serpents exhale when angry, reached me; but already I gave myself up for lost, and waited passive till the tic palunga should make his fatal dart.

The sibilant noise from the snake's half shut jaws had grown louder, and the bright baleful eyes more menacing; while the grim head towered high aloft, ready to strike—when, suddenly, something bright flashed through the flowering vines of the creeping plant, and the snake's hideous head and lithe body disappeared, as if by magic. Then followed the sounds of a fierce struggle, repeated blows, trampling feet, and snapping boughs, and accents of human voices; and then Oswald came leaping through the doorway, clasped me in his arms, and bore me out into the broad light of day, where lay—writhing yet—the carcass of the dead snake, hewn through by the sharp-cutting axe which Oswald still grasped in his right hand.

"Shabach!" exclaimed Lall Singh, whose swarthy face gleamed with delight, as he spurned the body of the vanquished reptile. "It was well that the first blow went home, or it would have fared but badly with the young sahib when this accursed slayer of men turned on him. Wahi! I'd sooner have faced a tiger."

To Lall Singh I was indeed in no slight degree indebted for my safety. Convinced, from the agitation of my manner, that something was wrong, he had followed me, and was in the act of

of arousing Oswald from his slumber, when the piercing shriek which fear had wrung from me re-echoed through the woods and calling attention to the imminence of the peril. Then Oswald had snatched up one of the keen, short axes which the native woodcutters had left sticking in a tree-trunk, and had been fortunate enough to disable the snake at the first blow.

My story is now told, and I have only to add that I was overwhelmed with praises and caresses by the Forster family—hitherto so cold—and that on the following day, Mr. Forster himself rode over to my father's house, to entreat Mr. Travers, from whom he had of late been estranged, to accept his renewed friendship and to ask for my hand on behalf of his son. Oswald lost his passage on board the homeward-bound steamer that was to touch at Point de Galle; and when he did visit Europe he took Ellen Travers as his wife.

We have long been happily settled far from tropic jungles and their dangerous inhabitants—but never have either my husband or myself forgotten those few instants of bitter anguish and alarm beside the Tank of Minary.—*Agosy.*

All Sorts.

The best luminary for an impetuous individual is a rush light.

Civility is dear to everybody, and yet it costs nobody anything.

Why is a drawn tooth like things forgotten? Because it's out of the head.

Where are happiness and contentment always to be found? In the dictionary.

"We prey for meat," as the foxes remarked when they jumped into the poultry yard.

One cannot speak in a balloon without having high words, and yet it is death to fall out.

Cologne, where the celebrated water of this name is made, is called the sentimental city.

The swan finds the water instinctively; but the man is born in ignorance of his element.

Would it be fair to style a merchant a lucky dog who has half a dozen barks upon the sea?

Young man your bride must be won before marriage, but you must both be one afterwards.

The affection of parents is best shown to their children by teaching them what is good and true.

As you stand by your young bride when you are married, so stand by her afterwards.

New York is a learned city. She has a pauper who can solicit alms in ten different languages.

Always be as witty as you can with your parting bow—your last speech is the one remembered.

Superficial knowledge is like oil upon water—it shines deceitfully, but is easily skimmed off.

Abstinence is to love what fasting is to the body; a little stimulates it, but a long abstinence is fatal.

If you would pass for more than your value, say little. It is easier to look wise than to talk wise.

The love shown to us when we are ill makes us realize the fact that sickness often terminates in heaven.

"How sweet, but how bad for one so young!" was what a romantic maiden said beside an infant's cradle.

Fear sometimes adds wings to the heels, and sometimes nails them to the ground and fetters them from moving.

The firmest friendship has been formed in mutual adversity, as iron is most strongly united by the fiercest flame.

If you would be known and not know, vegetate in a village; if you would know and not be known, live in a city.

It is a remarkable peculiarity with debts that their expanding power continues to increase as you contract them.

Ambition often puts men to doing the meanest offices, as climbing is performed in the same posture as creeping.

It is beautiful on a lovely day, to see the soft, sweet clouds rove like lambs through the blue pastures of the heavens.

A Milwaukee girl, in order to keep her lover up to his promise, always introduces him as "my intended husband."

A shilling, idly spent by a fool, may be picked up by a wise man, who knows better what to do with it; so it is not lost.

Beltigon comes from women more than from men—from mothers most of all, who carry the key of our souls in their bosoms.

An hour's industry will do more to produce cheerfulness, suppress evil humor, and retrieve your affairs than a month's moaning.

"I hate to hear people talking behind one's back," as the robber said when the constable was chasing him, and crying "Stop thief!"