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In the reign of Queen Victoria England had fifteen wars.

The enormous growth of the city of London is shown by the fact that its present population is given at 5,670,000, or considerably greater than that of Paris, Berlin, Vienna and Rome combined.

There are 536 authorized guides in the Alps. One hundred and ninety-four of them have taken a regular course of instruction in their profession and have received diplomas. Thirty-five of them are between sixty and seventy years of age and six are over seventy.

Equatorial Africa promises another treasure to civilization, announces the *New York Press*. It is a much scented plant, the branches of which carried about the person will frighten away mosquitoes. The smell of the plant is neither unpleasant nor unhealthy, but no mosquito will venture within its range.

To use the phonograph for recording the chatter of monkeys and to attempt from such a record to evolve the language of the simians is something which in the opinion of the *San Francisco Chronicle* out-Darwins Darwin. With such methods as these we ought to get hold of the missing link before the end of the century.

Why cannot, asks the *New Orleans Picayune*, some able designer get up a representation of the eagle that looks something like that glorious bird? The spread-wing idea is unnatural and absurd. It is only because of its antiquity that it is tolerated. An eagle that would spread its wings and legs in an attempt to symbolize peace and war deserves to be shot. A fine design of an American eagle at rest, perched on a crag or limb of a tree, would not be a bad one for our silver coins.

A man by the name of George Hulce, at New Haven, Conn., was named as an executor in a will. When the will was probated two witnesses, through an honest mistake, swore that he was dead, and the court had an order to that effect entered upon the records. A short time afterwards Hulce turned up all right, but he has been declared to be legally dead and is so in law until the record is changed. This cannot be done without reopening the case, which will cost some money. This, Hulce declares, he will not pay, and as no one else has any interest in the matter he will probably remain legally dead as long as he actually lives.

The depreciation of farming lands in England has gone so far, asserts the *Boston Cultivator*, that in many localities they are worth only half what they were twenty years ago. The low price of wheat, and competition with other countries in meat and other food products, is responsible for much of this decrease in price, though part of it is due to a succession of bad seasons. The United States now leads all competitors in wheat production. But it is certain that after a few more years American increase in population will take all the wheat we can grow. When that time comes, not only English but other wheat growers will share in the increased prosperity of farming that must everywhere prevail.

The census bulletin giving the population of Texas by minor civil divisions shows some wonderful percentages of increase of population, notes the *Louisville Courier-Journal*. The increase over 1880 in the whole State was 643,774, equal to 40.44 per cent., which is itself a healthy percentage, though quite insignificant compared to the growth in population of some of the counties. Only sixteen counties show decreases. Armstrong County shows an increase of 2945.16 per cent.; Childress, 4600; Collingsworth, 5880; Hardeman, 7708; Randall, 6133.33; and Floyd, 17,533.33 per cent. The effect of these magnificent percentages is somewhat impaired by giving the figures upon which they are based. Armstrong, for example, had only thirty-one population in 1880 and 944 in 1890—an immense relative but very moderate positive increase. Childress increased from twenty-five in 1880 to 1175 in 1890; Collingsworth from six to 357; Hardeman, from fifty to 3904; Randall, from three to 187, and Floyd, from three to 529. There are still counties in the State the population of which is put down at 3, 4, 7, 9, 14, 15, 16 respectively.

## A PARTING GUEST.

Dear world, how shall I say farewell to thee  
As from thy friendly house I go at last?  
Let me not like an unloved wanderer be  
From thy door cast.

No, I have been a little while thy guest;  
Still there are light and music, down thy halls  
The laughing recognition of a jest  
Rises and falls.

Thou hast with love and bread my wants supplied,  
And hurried on my hours in joyous flight;  
But longer with thee now I cannot bide—  
I come to say good-night;

But leave not other friends who need thee here—  
Give me thy hand and I am quickly gone;  
Thy lamps will light me with their genial cheer  
Until I meet the dawn.

—Meredith Nicholson, in the *Century*.

## A MIDNIGHT ASSIGNMENT.



HEN Sandy Graham, stone mason and ballie, kicked Fergus Cameron down the back stair of his home on the Lochee Road, of Dundee, and shied a bag of onions and a clothes line where his big foot could not reach, he was an unconscious factor in one of the prettiest romances that ever cast a fragrance over the life of a newspaper man.

This was the cause of all the trouble. Fergus Cameron was the ten-shilling-a-week clerk at the salt pans. One and one made two during the day, but one and one in the evening represented only one, for while the former might be bags of salt, or pounds, shillings or pence, the latter were the mutually sympathetic hearts of Fergus Cameron and Maud Graham, the pretty daughter of the Dundee ballie.

Now, the average Scotch ballie is a much bigger man, in his own estimation, than the President of our nation might allow his daughter to marry an ordinary book-keeper; but a President of the United States is no criterion in estimating a man chosen to fill the chair once graced by such illustrious characters as Donald MacTavish and Sandy Jamieson. Shades of Nebuchadnezzar! who so great as a Scotch ballie?

You may have heard of the Scotch ballie, but I knew one. It was long ago, but the awe-inspiring influence of a personal acquaintance with him has not yet departed. He was a newspaper man, so he said, claiming the title by virtue of part ownership with his wife and Kirsty Buckley, a crabbled old maid, in a newspaper and magazine depot. All in all, he was a great man in the town. Excommunication day always brought him to school, and on such an occasion he generally stood with the Latin book upside down.

"Excuse me, Ballie," our teacher would remark in his meekest way, "excuse me, you have the book upside down."

"Sir, don't you think a ballie can read Latin upside down?"

How we prayed that a kind Providence in much love and mercy might make of us ballies and newspaper men.

Do you wonder that Fergus Cameron was kicked downstairs, and that a bag of onions and a clothes-line hastened his departure, and that three weeks later he stood upon the deck of an Atlantic liner, gazing with tearful eye on the fast fading shore-line of the land of blue mist and purple heather? An American youth would have been happier under the circumstances, for he would have had Maud Graham with him; so little respect has an American youth for the exalted office of a Scotch ballie.

Cameron arrived in New York with a few dollars in his pocket and fewer friends by his side. He spent the first night in a cheap lodging-house on West street, and in the morning set out to find an old friend of his father. The prospects of employment at his own occupation were by no means bright, but an acquaintance on the part of the old man with the city editor of a morning paper opened for him the door of the newspaper kingdom. Into the humblest position went Fergus Cameron. Naturally bright, well educated, and with no end of capacity for work, he cheerfully and manfully faced his new duties with a calm determination to turn the battle of life into victory, and he a bigger man

than a Scotch ballie. His was the old, old story of success and failure, of failure and success, but his application to business and the excellence of his work carried him into the good graces of his superiors in office. The star that ruled his luckless lot might have fated him much that was disheartening, but its adverse influence did not extend to his business career.

A wild night in January, 1888. Snow had fallen all of two days and nights, and the States were beginning to feel the deadly effects of the great blizzard. Fergus Cameron was in the West, plowing his way toward a country village. A midnight assignment had fiddled out, his only horse had stumbled into a ditch and broken its leg, and his choice lay between death in the snow and a struggle toward the village. Every minute was like an eternity; he seemed to be dragging the world at his heels. Mind-weary and body-sore he fought the bitter, blinding blast until overtaken nature gave up the battle, and he sank in the snow.



FERGUS CAMERON SURPRISED.

Two weeks later Fergus Cameron awoke from the torpor of oblivion and saw the world of light again. From the large heating stove in his bed-room a cheerful fire shot shafts of light over the soft rugs on the floor. The surroundings were strange; what did it mean? He lay there looking drowsily about him, and slowly recalled the incidents of his terrible battle with the storm, wondering to whose hospitality he was indebted for his salvation. His dreaming was pleasantly disturbed by the entrance of a graceful female figure. Who was it? Cameron rubbed his eyes wondering if it was a new phase of his delirium. Another rub; another look; were his senses playing him false? By his bedside stood grace and goodness personified in his old sweetheart, Maud Graham.

They are married now, and all the trials of the past are forgotten in the sweet bliss of the present. Old Ballie Graham's views have broadened considerably since he failed in business and crossed the ocean, and no one is more willing to admit that his handsome son-in-law is a much more important person than a Scotch ballie who can read Latin upside down.—*The Journalist*.

## An Island of the Dead.

The captain of a coasting vessel that lately put into Guaymas, Mexico, tells a story of a strange discovery made by him when his vessel had been driven off her course some weeks ago. He sighted an island not down on any of the charts. He sent a boat ashore and the men returned and said that no one lived there, but there were many houses and evidences that at one time the island had been inhabited. The captain himself then went ashore and found that the island had undoubtedly been swept by a scourge of some kind, which had carried off every living being. There were numerous huts showing that at one time the place had been thickly inhabited, but not a living thing could be found. An investigation showed that the former residents had died in such numbers that they had not been buried, but the skeletons were lying around the island wherever the people had been when death had overtaken them. In one hut were the remains of seventeen people, while in many others skeletons were found in great numbers. They had been dead for such a time that the bones were beginning to decay. There was little to show what kind of people they were, but it is supposed that they belong to some of the numerous island tribes which were so abundant on this part of the coast fifty years ago.—*New Orleans Picayune*.

## A Contractor's Little Scheme.

A local contractor has a peculiar method of keeping tab on a gang of Italian laborers working under him. The men are known only by numbers, and to keep track of the doings of each individual is a matter of considerable difficulty. They are all apt to sneak off when the foreman's back is turned, and sit down for a rest. The unique plan of the contractor in question is devised to put an end to this lazy practice and the consequent loss of time. In the morning before the gang goes to work each man's number is printed in chalk on his trousers. When the men knock off work in the evening the chalk marks are inspected, and if any are found to be erased or blurred, the unfortunate Italian to whose trousers the blurred number appertains is docked a day's pay. The scheme works admirably, as the men prefer to forego the pleasure of a few minutes' rest rather than lose their pay.—*Philadelphia Record*.

## WISE WORDS.

It is sometimes hard to distinguish innocence from bluff.

Contentment is not knowing anyone who has anything better than you have.

Every man in trouble feels that his friends are not as indignant as they should be.

Nearly any man will spend \$100 worth of time to get thirty cents worth of revenge.

Men are like little boys; they all like to have a great big rag tied around a little sore.

The man who can win the reputation of being able to lick everybody saves himself lots of fights.

There is one thing you can always depend on a man doing, and that is the thing he wants to do.

Men and women are the only things ever created that the nearer you get to them the smaller they get.

There is one thing in which the poor man has the advantage of a rich man; he knows who are his friends.

When a girl who is engaged to be married tells of her engagement, it is a very good sign that she was never engaged before.

Every woman believes that if her husband could be married to some other woman for a week he would know how to appreciate her.

Marriage seems never so much a failure to a man as when something goes wrong at home that he can't possibly blame on his wife.

It makes no difference how worthless a man is; his mother thinks it no sacrifice to delude the best girl in the world into marrying him.

We heard two young men discussing boarding-houses. "At the place where I board," one of them said, "the home influence is better than the meat's."

Young people usually talk so much to each other when they are engaged that by the time they are married they have nothing left to say, and begin to invite others in.

## A New Story of General Grant.

I was told a good story about General Grant, the other day that I never saw in print, writes the Washington correspondent of the *Courier-Journal*. It will be recalled that early in the war the New York Fire Zouaves were a crack regiment, commanded by Colonel Ellsworth. Every man in the ranks had been a fireman, and it was confidently believed that Ellsworth's command was able to put down the war without assistance. The Colonel was a young man, handsome, gallant, burning with military ardor and thirsting for military fame. He was as much the idol of the North as Ashby was a few months later the idol of the South. The Fire Zouaves were the first troops to march into Alexandria, Va. Their Colonel was at their head, and after the town had surrendered Ellsworth saw a Confederate flag flying from a hotel.

Instead of ordering a squad to remove it he bolted into the house, ascended the stairway, went out on the roof and captured the flag; descending he was confronted by the landlord—one Jackson—who shot him dead. Jackson himself was then shot to death, and the affair created more sensation than considerable battles a few years later. After the war a daughter of Jackson secured an appointment in one of the departments here. She was a modest, diligent and capable young woman, and discharged her official duties acceptably. In the course of time a super-loyal gentleman was put in charge of the bureau in which she worked.

Nosing around, he soon discovered the antecedents of the young clerk and discharged her. She was friendless and penniless, and as a last resort went to the White House and called for General Grant. He received her, and she related her story to the silent man. Without saying a word he took a piece of paper and wrote: "The war against men is ended, and my Administration shall not begin one against women. Restore Miss Jackson to her former clerkship instantly." This was addressed to the loyal bureau official, and the young lady is yet in the public service. That was an exhibition of chivalry that Dariois or Francis I. might have envied.

## Twenty Dined Off One Potato.

George W. Scott has brought into the Telephone office a half-dozen of the largest sweet potatoes ever raised, perhaps, in the country. They are "new issues," and the six weighed fifty pounds. The largest one was given by the editor to a family in which there were eighteen members—the husband and wife and sixteen children—all of whom were great lovers of potatoes. Sunday they decided to have it for dinner.

It was fried—a part of it at least—and was amply enough for all the family, besides a married daughter and her husband who were spending the day there. The remainder of the mammoth potato was made up into potato pone and furnished dessert enough for the whole crowd and to spare.—*Tahlequah (Indian Territory) Telephone*.

"I've lost my situation," remarked a young man who had been working for a Fifth avenue firm. "Is that so?" "Yes, fired." "Why? I understood that you worked in a fire-proof building."—*Pittsburg Chronicle*.

## SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL.

Steam pipes are made of ramie fibre. Blotting paper is made of cotton rags boiled in soda.

Scientists say that a grasshopper has its ears on its forelegs.

A man breathes about eighteen pints of air in a minute, or upward of seven hogheads in a day.

A company has been formed in Chicago, Ill., to manufacture a metallic substitute for wooden railway ties.

According to a statistician of small things, the human heart in a lifetime of eighty years, beats 300,000,000 times.

The interesting fact has developed in the case of table glass that the much-admired iridescent film is slightly soluble in water.

An underground hydraulic power distribution plant is being talked of for Berlin, Germany. Such systems have already been successfully used in England.

A turquoise mine has been discovered near the town of Ibrahim-Olga about fifteen miles from Samarcand. This is said to be the third turquoise mine found in Central Asia.

The largest animal known to exist in the world at the present time is the roqual, which averages 100 feet in length; the smallest is the monal, which is only 1-12,000 of an inch in length.

There have been many collisions at sea which have seemed wholly unaccountable, and it may be suspected that they have proceeded from the not uncommon inability to distinguish between green and red lights at night.

It has recently been discovered that in a cubic centimeter of milk, two hours after removal from the cow, there are 9000 microbes, and in twenty-five hours these have increased to over 5,000,000. Their number is enormously increased by elevation of temperature. These microbes are harmless, and by many scientists are supposed to even aid digestion.

Field flasks of aluminum instead of the ordinary glass flasks are being introduced experimentally in the German army. They appear to be serviceable and strong, and should they fulfil their promise the whole army is to be supplied with them. In addition to their greater durability the metal flasks are much lighter than those of glass, their weights being respectively 450 and 500 grams.

Are light carbons frequently possess characteristics of the diamond, to which in composition they strongly approximate. The pieces of unburned carbons which are thrown away are very often found to contain very hard, sharp edges, which will cut glass, and the mischievous street Arabs have discovered this fact and use the pieces for defacing windows and doing other destructive work.

A comparatively new system of construction, the invention of Mr. Monier, is being applied to the building of houses, bridges, fortifications, reservoirs, sewers, etc. It consists of a network of iron rods covered with cement concrete, and the most remarkable feature in connection with it is the great strength of the constructed material, relatively to its weight. It is also claimed that the material is perfectly fire-proof and cheaper than any other at present employed and that space is considerably economized owing to the comparative thinness of material employed.

## A Fine Game Preserve.

The Rev. N. M. Jurney, of Leesville, N. C., has associated a number of gentlemen with him, and they have established in Cartaret County one of the finest game preserves in North Carolina. The gentlemen who own the preserve are only worth \$18,000,000 in the aggregate. They have purchased 8000 acres of land, and have posted it, to be used exclusively for their own hunting. This large tract of land is a vast forest, and it contains the finest fresh water pond in the State. This pond is three miles long, and from a hundred yards to a half mile in width, and abounds in fish. In the forest there is an abundance of deer, wild turkeys, wild ducks, wildcats, quail, squirrels, etc. Forty-five deer were killed on this tract alone last season. Mr. B. N. Duke, of Durham, N. C., is President of the company. The company is erecting a handsome lodge to cost \$3000, and will stock their preserve with game of all kinds. They will also sow grass, pens and grain for the benefit of deer, turkeys, quail, etc.—*New Orleans Times-Democrat*.

## Water Purified by Electricity.

The Webster method of purifying waste water by means of electricity has been tested by Dr. Fermi in the Hygienic Institute, at Munich, Germany. During the course of the experiments it was found that the water became purified in about fifteen minutes, the organic substances being reduced by about one-half, and the suspended substances being precipitated to the bottom. The smell of the water was perceptibly improved.

While the results of the tests show that electricity does not at the present time realize the ideal of water purification, it has two great advantages; first, that very little iron is precipitated and its removal is not so difficult as in the case of purification by chemical means, and, second, the dissolved organic substances, which are not precipitated by any of the known chemical methods hitherto employed, are at least partially removed by the electric current.—*Philadelphia Record*.

## MY MOTHER'S HAIR.

Such beautiful, beautiful hands!  
They're neither white nor small,  
And you, I know, would scarcely think  
That they were fair at all.  
I've looked on hands whose form and hue  
A sculptor's dream might be;  
Yet are those aged, wrinkled hands  
Most beautiful to me.

Such beautiful, beautiful hands!  
Though heart were weary and sad,  
These patient hands kept toiling on,  
That the children might be glad.  
The tears well forth, as, locking back  
To childhood's distant day,  
I think how these hands rested not  
While mine were at their play.

Such beautiful, beautiful hands!  
They are growing feeble now,  
For time and pain have left their work  
On hand and heart and brow.  
Alas! alas! how near the time  
Of pain and loss to me,  
When 'neath the daisies, out of sight,  
Those hands will folded be.

But, oh, beyond the shadow land,  
Where all is bright and fair,  
I know full well these dear old hands  
Will palms of victory bear.  
Where crystal streams through endless  
years  
Flow over golden sands,  
And where the old grow young again,  
I'll clasp my mother's hands.

## HUMOR OF THE DAY.

China has a revolution alle samee South American man.—*Boston Herald*.

A locomotive travels better and a man worse with a headlight.—*Columbus Post*.

The detective, like the duke, should be catchy in his makeup.—*Binghamton Republican*.

How could a critic ever become famous, if there were no minor poets to flay?—*Puck*.

The successful politician must be sharp enough to cut all the people who expect favors from him.—*Puck*.

"How did your friend become a Colonel?" She—"He married a Colonel's widow."—*Boston Beacon*.

Put a handle to a man's name, even if he is a crank. A crank without a handle is of little use.—*Boston Transcript*.

Corporal (at the inspection)—"That fellow looks as plump and fat as if all the cooks in the town had fallen in love with him."

It's the woman who has a brown plush sacque on who can quickest tell a sea-kink when she sees it on another woman. *Texas Siftings*.

The kangaroo is a funny animal. It has four legs in all, but two of its legs are longer than its fore legs put together. —*Elmhurst Gazette*.

Some papers make it the "grip," others the "grippe." Still a spell of it is bad enough no matter how taken.—*Philadelphia Times*.

A—"If I were a minister I should hate to dine at a banker's table." B—"Why?" A—"Think of three days of grace!"—*Yale Record*.

If college men would only tackle the world as they would their foot ball opponents, the rest of us would never get a goal.—*New York Herald*.

How goodlooking some of us would be could we only live up to the photograph which we regard as a perfect likeness!—*Boston Transcript*.

"Oh, mamma!" cried Willie, on seeing a zebra for the first time, "do come here and see this poor little convict pony." —*Harpers' Young People*.

Don't pen missives to your best girl on postal cards. She may have a suspicion that you do not care two cents for her.—*Union County Standard*.

Marriage seems never so much a failure to a man as when something goes wrong at home that he can't possibly blame on his wife.—*Atchison Globe*.

When Strephon, hearing in the dark a step, gave Bridget Daphne's kiss, He evidently missed his mark. By having failed to mark his Miss. —*Puck*.

A hermit and a tramp present about the same general appearance; the distinguishing feature is that one is a recluse, the other a wreck loose.—*Union County Standard*.

"My hair," mused Van Smythe, as he carefully consigned his two remaining wisps to their appointed places, "reminds me most painfully of a fool and his money."—*Life*.

There are lots of them in the world at the foot of the procession who believe they are at the head, though they admit that the procession is going the wrong way.—*Atchison Globe*.

"Did you ever notice how sometimes the earth seems to smile at the sun?" said the poetic young woman. "Oh, yes," he answered. "The sun's an old flame of hers, you know."

Saidso—"When Jobbets made his debut as a star the audience went wild; the encore was terrific." Herdso—"In which scene was it?" "The one in which he was beheaded."—*New York Herald*.

Tommy—"What is a 'running account'?" Pa says it's an account merchants have to keep of customers that are in the habit of running away from paying their bills." Uncle—"That's one definition of it." Tommy—"Is there another?" Uncle—"Yes. A running account is, in some instances, an account that gets tired out running after a while, and then it becomes a standing obligation."—*Boston Courier*.