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TWENTY YEARS AGO.

Twenty years ago, sweet wife, Thine eyes were bright and gray, New grief had dimmed their lustre, And stole their light away.

But I can gaze into their depths, And still they softly shone; I fondly pray their loving looks Reflect the love of mine.

Twenty years ago, dear wife, Thy hair was bright as gold; But now its silver threads streaks Tell we are getting old.

I pass my hand across thy curls With blessing in my touch; For though harsh Time has stole my joy, Thy love has left me such.

Twenty years ago, loved wife, Thy hand was round and fair, And showed with grace the golden ring My love had placed on there; But time and toil have left their mark; Yet through those signs men see, The hand I hold within my own Is dear as life to me!

—Jennie Stovin, in N. Y. Weekly.

TWO BAD MEN AND A FIDDLE.

An Averted Shooting in a Colorado Mining Camp.

THE accidentally averted tragedies are not often chronicled, but I've seen a few of that kind that are worth telling about," said a Colorado mining man to a Capitol committee room group the other afternoon, says a Washington correspondent of the N. Y. Sun.

"One night, when Cripple Creek was new and raw, Biff Randall and Alec Grubb, who were partners in a claim that was panning out big, drifted into Sank Murphy's canvas honkatank and blew the house. Biff and Alec had been off the reservation for four days. Both were pretty bad men.

"Well, on this night Biff and Alec, being tired and precarious-like on their pins, and neither of 'em having had any sleep for four days and nights, were peevish with each other, and the boys noticed that they were pretty snappy in the way they talked to each other. Consequently the boys kept a sort o' focus on the entrances to the tent, so's to be able to execute proper getaways at the needful moment, in case there was anything doing between Alec and Biff.

"After they'd both wetted down all hands three or four times Biff and Alec were naturally quite some more to the bad than before they'd come in, and they continued to have fancy little cracks at each other for some reason or other. Finally Biff caught sight of a dusty old violin box resting on a shelf behind the bar. The fiddle and case had been left with Sank Murphy by a rover who wanted the price of a hide back to Denver.

"Sank," said Biff to Murphy, who was taking the watch himself behind the bar, "lemme have a peep at that music box. Maybe I'll play you a chune. I used to be a heap on the fiddle when I was young and purty."

"Well, I never knowed that," put in Alec, kind o' leering and ugly. "I knowed that you was a whole lot strong on elbow work, but not with the bow. If I can't play a faster chune on that thing than you can I'll hand you over my half of our hole in the ground."

"Biff, in the act of taking the fiddle out of the box, looked up at Alec from under his shaggy eyebrows.

"You're on, you juniper," he said, pretty quiet like, considering Alec's sneering way. "You're on fr keeps, and you got to stay with that crack or git what's comin' to a welcher."

"Alec grinned sardonically and confidently, and Biff began to tune up the violin. We thought he'd only been four-flushing when he'd said that he could play some on the thing, but we saw by the way he tuned it up that he knew something about it.

"He put some rosin on the bow, sat down so's to be more steady, stuck the fiddle under his chin and began to saw 'The Irish Washerman.' It didn't sound so bad at that.

"Meantime we kept the off eye on Alec. We figured that Alec was out on a limb. Now, considering the merit of Biff's performance, we were plenty surprised to note that Alec didn't appear to be even a little bit worried about that def he'd pushed over.

"We couldn't see that it looked reasonable to suppose that Alec could hand up a faster tune than Biff had executed, and that's why we were astonished to observe that there was no sign whatever of caving on Alec's part.

"Now, you catfish," said Biff to Alec, handing over the fiddle and the bow, "you make good that chaw o' yours about fast chunes. I'll leave it to the bunch. If you've got me copped, the whole claim's yours. If you hain't got the goods, I'm going to mark a dead line jest 1,000 yards from that hole in the foothill and you're goin' to stay outside of it."

"Alec took the violin and bow with his confident grin still on his face. He laid the instrument and bow down long enough to cut himself off a large chew from a plug. After carefully stowing the chew in the left-hand corner of his countenance, he picked up the fiddle and bow again, tried the strings like a man who knew just where he stood, and then began on 'The Devil's Dream.'

"Well, it didn't take any of us half a minute to see that Alec had the merchandise and that he had Biff bent. Alec was right there with 'The Devil's Dream,' and there are not many faster fiddle tunes than that.

"Alec rocked around in his seat quite a lot while he played, but he didn't make any breaks in his fingering or bowing, and he tore off that tune like a runaway steam train going

down a mountain side. Well, when we saw the way the situation stood, we began to sort o' edge sidewise toward the tent flap.

"We hadn't been asked to be made mpres and none of us felt exactly like pushing to the front and handing down any decision as to the respective virtuoso abilities of Biff and Alec. We saw that Biff's eyes were blazing and that his nigh hand was sort o' twiddling nervously in the direction of his gun. And so our tide just naturally set toward the tent flap.

"Alec set the fiddle and bow down after he'd got through and grinned quizzically and powerful irritatingly at Biff. Biff had a shagreened, evil look on his map that ought to've caused Alec to be careful, but Alec was flushed with triumph and his four days' souze, and he kept right on grinning in Biff's teeth.

"Ombrey," said Biff, straightening himself up and glaring hard at his partner, "lemme tell you somethin'. You're a ringer. You're a —"

"Now, it was at this very instant, when the hands of both men were traveling toward their guns, that I noticed a squat, heavy-set man, clad in dark clothes, and with a flat-topped derby pushed back from a very bald head, standing in the entrance of the tent. I knew him right away—had seen him in Denver the week before.

"We of the bunch were just about to execute our timely hike when Biff and Alec were on the point of making their gun play, when the little man, who appeared to be quite aware of what was in progress, walked jerkily up to where they stood confronting each other, and almost on the pinpoint of plugging each other, and he said, addressing them both, and looking smilingly from one to the other:

"I heard some blaying—nod? yes?"

"Biff and Alec both turned and gazed with open mouths at the queer-looking little man with the bald head. Neither of them said a word, but they just stared at him.

"Oh, here is ze veoolen," said the squat man, picking up the instrument from the bar and scrutinizing it. Then he peyed up the bow. Biff and Alec continued to stare at him.

"Vell, I blay for you," said the little man, and he snuggled the violin up under his chin like as if it was a pet kitten, and he gave a flourish with the bow, and then he brought it down for a crashing chord on all four strings at once—and then Biff's and Alec's guns went back into their belts and they forgot about everything else except the sounds that were coming out of that catgut and, knowing that the making of war medicine was over for the time being, we all gathered around the squat man.

"Did any of you ever hear Edouard Remenyi, the Hungarian violinist, play? Because that's who the squat man was—Remenyi. He had run down from Denver to Cripple Creek to see what a new American mining camp was like, and prowling around, and hearing Alec's scraping of 'The Devil's Dream,' he had just dropped into the honkatank on an impulse, without any idea of what was going on.

"Well, Remenyi 'blayed' all right. He just nursed that old thing under his fat neck like a boy cuddles a guinea pig with a broken leg, and he hadn't been playing more than two minutes before every man in the gang looked as if he had a sneaking sort of feeling that he hadn't done right with his life.

"Biff and Alec sidled over to the bar and leaned their backs against it, side by side, and every time that Hungarian squat man pulled out a tremolo that was particularly meaty and reproachful and full o' meaning, they'd exchange kind o' entranced smiles with each other and shake their heads sadly at each other.

"I don't know what it was that squat foreign man played. I never will know. But I know that what he played made me feel like I'd been neglecting the folks back home, and when I reached my shack I sat down and wrote 'em letters until daylight.

"When after ten minutes of straight playing, he wound up with a lot of low things 'way down on the G string that sounded like a brook gurgling to itself in the night, and when he'd took the violin from under his chin with a sort of dreamy smile on his pudgy face, there was an amount of coughing from those fellows standing around such as I never heard outside of a hotel for 'lungers.' And none of the bunch seemed to want to look at each other except, Biff and Alec.

"They looked at each other silently and sheepishly for about two minutes after Remenyi put down the violin and mopped his forehead with a big white silk handkerchief. Then Biff walked up to the stocky virtuoso, cleared his throat, and said in a tone that was pretty hoarse:

"Podner, I don't know who you all are, nor where you stamperes from, nor anything about you 'cepting what I just heard. But I know who I am and what I've got. All I got's half a hole in the rock, with some pay dirt in sight, and that's yourn. And, next to that hole in the ground, I got a shack filled up with the riff-raff belongin's that I've been gittin' together fr years. Well, that shack's yourn, too, and here's the key to the padlock. Take it. Touch a match to the whole stout and burn it down if you want to—but it's yourn. That's all."

"The amazed Remenyi stood gazing at Biff with his little beady brown eyes twinkling wonderingly, but before he had time to say anything in reply, Alec stepped forward, fronting him, cleared his throat as Biff had done, and said:

"Which it affords me pleasure to come to the front and make good fr what my podner, Biff, just got

through tellin' you all. You win out the claim and everythin' on it. Me and Biff don't feel like we got no right to stay in no camp where there's a ombrey that can do things on a fiddle like you can do, and so, such bein' the case, me and Biff, we just cashes in, and glad to do it, and vamoose, that's all."

"They meant absolutely every word of it, too. But Remenyi took sudden alarm over the peculiar actions and words of the two rough-looking men. He didn't understand the language very well, and he didn't know what they were trying to force on him, out of enthusiasm and booserino ecstasy, a claim that has since panned out big, as a tribute to his genius.

"With a murmured word or two he took to his short legs and scampered out of the tent, while Biff and Alec gazed after him disappointedly. Still under the daze of that great music they both speechlessly beckoned all hands to the front, blew the outfit twice around, and then, linking arms, they hiked to their shack, scabbered up and went to work.

"They'd both have been dead men if Remenyi, of Hungaria, hadn't popped into that canvas honkatank at the moment he did."

A Pretty Royal Custom.

A pretty custom dating from the wedding of the late Queen Victoria has ever since pertained to the royal family. A sprig of myrtle which formed a part of the bride's wreath was carefully cultured, and in due time planted out. When the princess royal was married sprigs were cut for her bridal wreath from this myrtle tree. The princess, following her mother's example, had one of the sprigs cared for till it became a full-sized tree, which served for her daughter-in-law's wreath at the wedding of the present emperor of Germany. The custom was observed in the marriage of the Prince of Wales and all other of Queen Victoria's children and grandchildren. There is already, as the result of this charming custom, the making of a grove of myrtle trees. Other royal customs attached to the marriage of the royal family relate to the bouquet and the wedding cake. Ever since the marriage of Queen Victoria a firm of Windsor florists have had the honor of presenting the one, a Chester confectioner finding the other, neither accepting payment.—From the Scotsman.

The Princess and the Telephone.

Telephones can be very treacherous instruments at times. One evening the prince of Wales, the king, was at a public dinner at which he was to speak. During the meal he told an equery to send for a book, to which he wished to refer for a fact, from Marlborough house. The equery gave the necessary instructions, and the hotel manager rang the royal residence up on the telephone. After he had made himself understood there was a pause of many minutes. He rang again, then again, until at last losing all patience he literally shouted: "Are you there? What the do you mean by keeping his royal highness waiting? Can you find the book or not?" To his angry expostulations came the quiet answer: "We are very sorry to keep you waiting; we are doing our best to find the book, which shall be sent on at once. Please tell my father this because he is so particular." It was the first, and doubtless he hopes it will be the last time, that the manager had ever rated a princess through the telephone.—Mainly About People, London.

Military Orthography.

A British soldier, who is at this moment serving in South Africa, recently sent a letter to the war office containing a word that baffled the imagination of every clerk and official to whom the puzzle was submitted. The mysterious word was spelled "yfe." It was repeated several times, and seemed, indeed, to be the main subject of his communication. At length it occurred to one of the clerks to consult the hall porter, a grizzled veteran quite unhampered by board school accomplishments.

"Can you tell us the meaning of this word, Simpson?" asked the brilliant clerk.

"I should think I could," replied the veteran, with mild contempt. "Y-fe spells wife, of course. What else could it spell, sir?"—London King.

Always a Wedding.

"Do you love me for myself alone?" asks a woman.

"Yes," says the man.

She believes him, and marries him.

"Do you love me for myself alone?" a woman asks.

"No, for your money," say the man, not by word of mouth, but by his actions, which speak even louder than words.

She does not believe him, and marries him.—N. Y. Sun.

Rather Indefinite.

Hewitt—Lend me fifty, will you?
Jewett—I will when I get back from New York.

"When are you going to New York?"

"Just before I lend you that fifty."
—Judge.

Good for Burns.

Tourist (after his first drink of Bloody Gulch whisky)—Thunder and lightning! Gimme a chaser, quick!
Bartender (disdainfully)—Wot d'yer want—water?

"No;—linseed oil!"—Puck.

Another View of It.

Biggs—It's hard to be poor.
Diggs—Not necessarily. A great many people find it easy enough.—Chicago Daily News.

Isn't it Worth 25c. To Be Cured of Constipation

People who suffer from habitual constipation with all its attendant ill's, clogged stomach and bowels, sluggish liver, heartburn, indigestion, and than and impure blood, are too apt to believe that the only remedy is violent purgatives. The contrary is the case. Such cathartics, even if they do move the bowels, are irritating and griping, leave the stomach inflamed and enfeebled and the constipated condition recurs with greater difficulty of cure and the sufferer constantly growing worse. There is a laxative that moves the bowels without pain or griping, cleanses the stomach, sharpens the appetite, stimulates the liver, strengthens the nerves, and purifies the blood, while its marvellous tonic properties tone up the entire system and keep it healthy.

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