

Why Not Be Happy, Today?
I have questioned my hopes of the future,
I have doubted my dreams of the past;
I have roamed through the realms of ambition,
With visions too lovely to last;
I have longed for youth's fondest ideals,
But those phantoms are now far away,
And at last fair Philosophy whispers:
"Oh, why not be happy, today."

Though storm clouds may darken life's valley,
And each heart have some shadows of care,
The bright sun will soon gild the heavens
And thy troubles will melt into air.
So what is the use of weeping?
No! the world does not care for your whimpering.
So why not be happy, today?

Ah, the old world at heart is too solemn,
And life is at best full of trials;
But try to be cheerful, 'twill help you
If you brighten all pathways with smiles.
Then life will be well worth the living—
Let kindness illuminate its way,
And with hope's gilded banners before us
Let's strive to be happy, today.
—Larry Chittenden, in Form.

THE PHANTOM VOICE.

Sitting on the veranda of his summer residence by an inland lake in Michigan, surrounded by his family and guests, the venerable Judge Wattle told the strangest story of his professional career.

"Immediately following my admission to the bar," he said, "I was made prosecuting attorney, accepting the honor as a deserved tribute to my superior abilities. But you must bear in mind that this was a good many years ago in a little valley town in Pennsylvania, where we were hemmed in by the mountains and had few with whom to compare in the matter of intelligence or attainments.

"In the criminal annals of the county there were the evidences of a well-disposed community and it came as a startling sensation when Farmer Jenkins, driving home late one night, was beaten to insensibility and robbed of a large sum of money. Here was work for me and I went at it with the zeal of an ambitious beginner. Jenkins insisted that he would be able to identify his assailant, seen in the dim moonlight that sifted through the trees, describing him as a tall, well-dressed young man with a dark mustache and an angry red scar across his left cheek.

"Why, I see that air critter," declared Constable Joe Huskey, "I know him sudden like yesterday when I was fishin' at Pankey Holler creek. Th' feller war in swimmin' an' tole me he war just outen the city fur a leetle recreation. I'd know him 'mongst a thousand."

"By employing competent assistance from Philadelphia, we ran down our man, Jenkins and Huskey both recognizing him at sight. A few days after the arrest and while I was working on the case, a handsome, matronly appearing woman walked into the office, introducing herself as the mother of the prisoner, who had given the name of Harry Winter. She bore the unmistakable marks of refinement, and in a brief statement, punctuated by convulsing sobs, assured me that a terrible mistake had been made. Harry was her son, her only support, and she a widow. He was the soul of honor and had never given her an hour's anxiety. He was with her the night of the assault and robbery. They had walked for an hour in the evening, after which he read to her, going to his room at 11. It was a physical as well as a moral impossibility for him to have done the great wrong laid at his door. Her story greatly impressed me, but there was the positive identification by Jenkins and the constable.

"Less than a week later I had another caller; a well-dressed man who walked with a limp and who said he had been subpoenaed by the defense to show Winter's good reputation. But nothing could have surprised him more, for he knew the accused to have a damning record. He declared that he had a full confession of that very crime from the prisoner who had relied upon the cripple as a loyal friend simply because they had met occasionally at the mother's house. This swept away the doubts that she had created, convincing me that her clinging love had overcome her regard for the truth. I gained a promise from the cripple that he would say nothing till called to the stand by the other side.

"When the prosecution had made its case at the trial I was entirely satisfied. Just after Jenkins and Huskey had sworn point blank, as I knew they would, word reached me that there was a private detective in the court room who wanted Winter for a crime committed in New York. This was help from an unexpected source, and I soon had it before the jury that the ugly scar on Winter's cheek was made by a man defending his home against burglars. There was not a weak link in the chain of evidence that had been coiled about him.

"On his behalf the testimony of the weeping mother made a deep impression, but I was confident that the spell she had put upon the twelve men sitting in judgment would yield to the cool deliberations of the jury room. After several unknown witnesses had given testimony tending to show that Winter had led a reputable life, the man who had called upon me limped to the stand, and I must confess that I rejoiced at the anticipated confusion of the defense.

"But there was a most unaccountable intervention. No sooner was the oath administered to the witness than a voice from overhead solemnly warned him to remember that he had made sacred promise before his Maker to tell nothing but the truth. The prisoner dropped heavily into his chair, the jurymen went white as ghosts and the judge cast a troubled look about the ceiling as if to detect the bold offender. 'Order in the court' was gruffly demanded and the case proceeded. The first material question asked was as to the character of the prisoner, and that same phantom voice, this time from the rear of the judge, called the collapsed witness by name and said in measured tones: 'Remember that the pains and penalties of perjury are not inflicted in this world alone, but are imposed through all eternity.'

"The court whirled and gasped with a terror that his pride sought vainly to conceal. An unknown dread was upon me and jurymen were stricken with fright. Hard-headed and practical old farmers as they were, the superstition that had lain dormant and dying through generations was quickened into life. But it was the witness who cringed and stared as though in the presence of death. He admitted a bitter enmity toward the prisoner whose liberty he had meant to swear away, though called in his behalf, and wound up by not only swearing that Winter was a model young man, but that he was seen walking with his mother by the witness on the night in question.

"I felt the ground slipping from under me, but the dramatic climax was yet to come. From an open door into one of the small adjacent rooms hurried an excited man with striking features and blazing eyes. He rushed to the prisoner, embracing him as a father might have done, and then demanded, rather than requested, that his evidence might be taken. It was to the effect that he had been a captain in the Mexican war, that Winter, then a mere boy, was a drummer whom the captain loved as a father; that when he was shot from his horse in a charge, the boy gallantly fought back the murderous Mexicans till stronger assistance could come, and that there he had received the wound which left such a ghastly scar. The impetuous witness even got in a statement that there must be some vile conspiracy against Winter and wanted to confront the private detective. But he had disappeared. The jury acquitted without retiring, and I thought their verdict a righteous one.

"One evening some years later, when South on business, I found time heavy on my hands and dropped into a place of amusement. I was indifferently interested until that voice of the court room, which still haunted my memory, came from an upper corner of the hall. I felt like running, but, turning to the stage, I saw my hero of the Mexican war. He tipped me a recognition and later went with me to the hotel. There, under pledge of secrecy, he gave me the inside facts of that mysterious trial.

"The alleged mother, the alleged detective, the alleged captain, the cripple and Winter were all members of a shrewd gang of crooks operating in the East. Winter had committed the robbery and his pals had put up an elaborate scheme which saved him. They enjoyed many a laugh over the manner in which they had 'done' the 'Rubes' up in my country. Winter was then doing a life sentence. The 'mother' was dead, the 'detective' fled the country and the cripple went with him. The 'captain' was one of the best ventriloquists of the day, and had become a 'professor' who made an honest living. It was his voice, thrown at will, that left us simple folks thinking that we had encountered the supernatural."—Detroit Free Press.

Feats of Memory.
A case of an unusual memory which is attracting much attention is the recent achievement of Secretary Carlisle in Chicago. Mr. Carlisle's speech on the finances, which would fill eight or ten columns of the Democrat and Chronicle, was delivered without manuscript, and the speaker referred to his notes only two or three times during the whole of his address. As he gave many figures and statistics referring to this and other countries, the performance must be set down as a noteworthy one. It has, however, been equalled or surpassed by other men prominent in our public life. Edward Everett, Charles Sumner, Roscoe Conkling and James G. Blaine were famous for oratorical efforts which had all the force and attractiveness of extempore deliveries, but which had been carefully prepared and memorized. Mr. Conkling had special gifts in this direction. It was often difficult for his hearers to persuade themselves that his flights of eloquence, flashes of wit, volleys of invective and appropriate gestures were not inspirations of the moment, when, in fact, they were the finished product of laborious preparation, and, in some cases, of private rehearsal. His great speech in New York in the Garfield campaign was a wonderful achievement of memory and in oratorical art that conceals art.

Mr. Blaine also knew pretty generally well what he was going to say, and just how he was going to say it, before delivering an important speech. It long ago ceased to be a secret that on the occasion of his last appearance in Rochester he secured the attendance of an expert shorthand reporter in his private room. The reporter seated himself at a table, with paper and pencils, and Mr. Blaine, slowly pacing the room, deliberately thought out a dictated speech. A typewritten copy of the reporter's notes was immediately taken to the newspaper office, and a few hours later Mr. Blaine delivered the speech, word for word, to a large assemblage of people. Between the dictation and the delivery Mr. Blaine had many callers, and his thoughts were diverted in other ways by the events of the day, but his memory did not fail him. Although this was by no means one of the most important mental efforts of his life, it was a peculiar and impressive one.—Rochester (N. Y.) Democrat and Chronicle.

A Sarcastic Sign.
Floods in lowland countries have their humorous side as well as their tragic ones. A gentleman recently returned from the West relates a little experience he had with a swollen river in Missouri. The country had been a veritable swamp for some days, and after traveling through it on horseback for a week doing business here and there, he says he arrived at the bank of the river. There was no way to cross it except by swimming, so, dismounting, he tied his clothes to the horse, and drove him into the river, swimming after him. Reaching the other side, he dressed and continued on his way. Before going twenty feet, however, he came to the forks of the road, and not knowing the correct direction he wanted to go, he looked around for a sign. There was none, but just across the river, near the spot he had entered to swim across, he saw a board nailed on a tree. Well, there was nothing to do but to get in and swim across again, as undoubtedly that was the sign containing the directions. He swam across, and after climbing up the bank he read the following notice:

"Five dollars fine for crossing this bridge faster than a walk."

He says that under the circumstances the sarcasm of that sign put him in bad humor for the rest of the day.—Harper's Round Table.

Obtrusive Solicitors of Alms.
London streets were rendered well nigh impassable the other day by the droves of girls and women soliciting alms for the hospitals, says a London correspondent. Even the suburbs and the suburban railway stations were invaded. One is prepared to endure a good deal of annoyance where the hospitals are concerned, but I question whether they reap much advantage from this collection. Street solicitation has become unbearable in the metropolis. You are badgered from morning till night, all days in the week, for charities which you never heard of, and which probably never existed. The consequence is that the legitimate charities suffer considerable monetary damage. It is high time parliament stepped in to define what charities shall be allowed to make street collections, and to fix stated days in the year for such collections to be made.—New Orleans Picayune.

Children's Column

NORTH AND SOUTH.
The little boys in Labrador
Would stare if they could see
A crop of yellow oranges
Growing on a tree.

The little boys in Florida
Declare they'd like to know
How tails are made
And walls are made
Of watery stuff like snow.

ON CAT DAY.
It is a habit of the house, whenever there has been a wash day among the cats, to give them a party in the evening; they have bows on their necks, and are all brought to the drawing room, where their balls are thrown to them, and as they are always in a state of hilarious excitement when the first sleepiness of the bath goes off, a general frolic follows.

Some of them do not like the bow at first and try to twitch it off, but soon come to take pride in it, like the bell-weather.

Carina, a true Parisian in that respect, had love of adornment and showed excessive complacency in her neck ribbon, but at her kittens' first party, when they ran to meet her, after kissing them in turn she saw that each had a bow and boxed their ears all around.

She had a little brass and velvet collar with a bell which she was allowed to wear for the rest of the day after a washing. When the bell was jingled she would run and hold her neck to have the collar fastened, and then trot about to be seen and heard. She had a great deal of the love and admiration which I have observed in cats.—New York Mercury.

WHERE DID POTATOES COME FROM?
Nobody knows precisely where the potato came from originally. It has been found, apparently indigenous, in many parts of the world. Mr. Darwin, for instance, found it wild in the Chonos Archipelago. Sir W. J. Hooker says that it is common at Valparaiso, where it grows abundantly on the sandy hills near the sea. In Peru and other parts of South America it appears to be at home; and it is a noteworthy fact that Mr. Darwin should have noted it both in the humid forests of the Chonos Archipelago and among the Chilean mountains where sometimes rain does not fall for six months at a stretch. It was to the colonists who Sir Walter Raleigh sent out in Elizabeth's reign that we are indebted for our potatoes.

Herriot, who went out with these colonists, and who wrote an account of his travels, makes what may, perhaps, be regarded as the earliest mention of this vegetable. Under the heading of "Roots," he mentions what he calls the "openawk." "These roots," he says, "are round, some large as a walnut, others much larger. They grow on damp soils, many hanging together as if fixed on ropes. They are good food, either boiled or roasted."

At the beginning of the seventeenth century this root was planted as a curious exotic, in the gardens of the nobility, but it was long ere it came into general use. Many held them to be poisonous, and it would seem not altogether unreasonably so either. The potato is closely related to the deadly-nightshade and the mandrake, and from its stems and leaves may be extracted a very powerful narcotic. In England prejudice against it was for a long time very strong, especially among the poor.—Detroit Free Press.

CITY CHILDREN'S ENJOYMENT.
Perhaps the children who have plenty of sunshine, fresh air, mountain streams and large lawns to enjoy will appreciate them more if they read the following touching incident, written by Grace Duffie Boylan for the Chicago Journal:

They came from the noisome alleys and squalid tenements along a mile of misery edging South Clark street, and when they had been gathered under the early morning sky, and marshalled in ragged, straggling files up to the Polk street railway station and into the long line of cars waiting to take them out for a holiday in the country, they numbered almost a thousand.

BABES FOR BAIT.
How Ceylon Hunters Lure Hungry Crocodiles to Their Death.
Exposing Fat Infants Temptingly On River Banks.

Crocodiles like to eat babies—not their own awkward offspring, but human darlings, fat and dimpled. This liking of the saurian for babies is used by hunters in Ceylon to lure the reptiles to their death. A nice, fat baby is tied by the leg to a stake near some pond or lagoon where crocodiles abound. Soon the child begins crying and the sound attracts the crocodiles within hearing distance. They start out immediately for the wailing infant.

The hunter in the meantime conceals himself in the bushes or swamp grass near the baby, with a rifle in his hand projecting out and almost over the child. He remains perfectly quiet and the reptile, intent on its prey, notices nothing but the screaming and kicking child. As the monster approaches to within a few feet of the bait the hunter sends a bullet directly into the alligator's eye, causing instant death.

A miss would mean death for the baby, but the hunters are expert shots and at the short distance at which they fire a miss is next to impossible. As a rule the sound of the firearm scares the baby worse than the presence of the crocodile's jaws and the rows of sharp and glistening teeth, but after being shot over a few times the child takes the shooting as a matter of course and pays little attention to it.

So expert are many of the hunters that they do not shoot the alligator until it has approached to within a few feet of the baby. Then, with but a few inches of space between the muzzle of the rifle and the eye of the alligator, the shot is fired that ends the existence of the reptile and saves the child.

A recent issue of a Ceylon newspaper contained the following advertisement:

WANTED—Some very fat children as bait for crocodile hunting; we guarantee to return them safe and sound to the homes of the parents. Apply to So and So.

This advertisement, which is inserted in all seriousness, makes its appearance regularly in the Ceylon papers and is said to be productive of good results. But these Ceylonese mothers must be different from most mothers, or else they have a high opinion of the ability and skill of the men who hunt crocodiles with human bait.

Ceylon has many curious customs and curious people. It is best known now as a country from which tea is exported. During recent years the tea planters there have become more numerous, and various brands of Ceylon teas are now widely advertised in Europe and America. The country formerly raised more coffee than tea.

Many of the tribes that inhabit the interior of Ceylon are but partially civilized. The oldest of the aborigines are the Veddas. Their language has less than 100 words and they live a pastoral life, bows and arrows being their weapons. They have a primitive form of government, the oldest man in a settlement having a little authority by virtue of his age. They are truthful, however, and honest.

There are not now more than 200 or 300 unmixed Veddas in the island, which has a total population of about 2,000,000. Some of the tribes are highly civilized. The caste system prevails there as it does in many Eastern countries. The richest man in Ceylon is a butcher, and because of his caste, which is regulated by his occupation, is not allowed to associate with many families whose possessions could be hauled in a hand cart.

The Bicycle on the Farm.
Here's an up-to-date incident for you. In a certain sequestered rural neighborhood a small urchin drives the cows to and from pasture every morning and evening, just as has been the habit of such urchins in such neighborhoods since time immemorial. But unlike the urchins of times immemorial, and contrary to all precedent and established convention regarding the matter, this youth does so—upon a bicycle. He is dirty and tanned, is this youngster, not to speak of being barefooted and out-at-knees, yet he skims along the country lanes upon an 1896 high grade \$100 wheel. This is what might be termed calling the cows home with all the modern improvements. Who says that there is anything left for the bicycle to revolutionize?—New York Sun.

The Salvation Army officers were in command; but their ten regiments made up as strange an army as has ever been seen since the piper of Hamelin marched before his host. For they were little white-faced and destitute children, who have never seen a river running clear as crystal or shining pebbles or the sky bending like a dome of sapphire, over their heads and down to touch the green and level land. The good women planned the trip to Momence a month ago, and not an invitation was declined.

Not one, did I say? There was just one. Little Giuletta Condi had beaten on the doors of the barracks at sunrise that very morning; and when they were opened had rushed sobbing to the pretty young captain to tell her that she could not go. The woman nurse with the striped dress and the cool hands had been all night sitting in the hot and poisonous air by Giuletta's mother's bed, she explained; and she had told her to hurry back, for if the priest did not get there in time it would be something for the poor mother to die holding fast to her little hand. All this between short, sharp sobs that shook the frail shoulders and filled the soft black eyes with bitter tears.

The little captain comforted her as well as she could, and with the power born of long experience in just such sorrows. But Giuletta was the only one absent when the time for starting came. How they swarmed out of the yellow coaches and went over to possess the land that borders the Kankakee! The land, indeed! They had not been there five minutes before they were dabbling their bare feet in the water; and in an hour there wasn't a wild flower ungathered or allowed to blush unseen for two miles around. For the first time in their starved and wretched lives they knew what it was to be "knee-deep in June." Deeper, even, for the pink clover and tall grasses grew high, almost to the tops of some of their heads. That's what made the trouble. For a sniff of the air and a touch of cool blossoms made little Paul Strauss an apostle of freedom. He called his brother Johnnie and told him of his great scheme. They wouldn't go back to the city; they'd just stay right there all summer.

"Eat," responded Paul, "what we eat in dat town? Nothin'! Look at dem cows; ain't dere no fish."

Paul waved his hand oratorically toward the pasture and then toward the river.

Ten minutes before train time the officers in charge of the excursionists called the roll, and found two hundred missing. Searching parties were unable to find them. Sharp whistles from the waiting engine brought no answer from the usually noisy throats. Finally a deserter ran crying into the excited camp:

"Dey're out dere, under de bridge," he yelled. "Dey's goin' to stay and be farmers!"

And, sure enough, behind the low abutments, and under the shadow of the bridge were 100 children, while deep in the field of clover another 100 children lay hidden.

They wept and struggled desperately at being taken out, and pleaded with their captors to leave them where they were.

"I don't want to go back," cried a tall girl of ten or thereabouts, pitifully. "I can be good here. Oh, I can be good here. Let me stay."

"What can you do, child; where would you stay?" asked the captain, kindly, and the girl went reluctantly toward the train.

Another, with an old face, pinched and eerie looking, under her tangle of hair, said sententiously:

"Ye'd better let her stayed! She'd jes' starve here, an' in town she'll hev to get so many wolloppins first."

The tall girl heard her and turned around.

"Yes," she said, as if the argument was unanswerable. "An' I'd like to die when I feel so—so sort o' clean."

God pity her, and pity us all!—Pacific Ensign.

Odd Way to Learn News.
The late Lord Lilford, in his recently published work on the birds of Northamptonshire, England, tells this story of a singular incident which occurred in one of his frequent visits to Spain: "I first learned," he says, "the news of President Abraham Lincoln's murder from a scrap of a Spanish newspaper found in a nest of the kite by my climber, Agapo, near Aranjuez."

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