

WOULD FATE BE KIND?

RONDEAU REDOUBLE

Would Fate be kind, and give our childhood back,
All the long years which we have left behind,
And bid us walk again the self-same track,
Which we have followed, ignorant and blind—

Should we be glad the same old path to find,
With every sorrow, every loss and lack,
And every burden for the heart and mind—
Would Fate be kind and give our childhood back!

Would Grief's wild storms, Disaster's Thunder-crack,
Be recompensed by all Life's joys combined?
Would we toil on beneath Care's heavy pack,
All the long years which we have left behind?

Fair fruits were bitter, underneath the rind;
In bluest skies the tempest gathered black;
Would we rejoice, should Fate her skein rewind,
And bid us walk again the self-same track?

Why change the dates in Time's grim almanac?
Safe with the past let them remain embroiled;
Nor crave the path in Life's cramped zodiac,
Which we have followed, ignorant and blind.

We should not be more happy or resigned,
Nor suffer less from scourge, and knout, and rack,
Briers and thorns with nettles intertwined,
If she should send us on the self-same track,
Would Fate be kind?

—Elizabeth Akers, in Putnam's.

HEMMED IN BY FIRE.

For five years I had been confined to my armchair by paralysis. Occasionally I would be carried down to an open carriage and taken for an hour or two through the city, or the neighboring country. My legs—well, there is no necessity to speak of them; one of my arms was still able to move, and, thanks to it, I could still eat alone. But my eyes were good and my hearing was acute.

One day, when the time was extremely dull, I fancied that I would regain complete calmness if I could hear an opera. My friends remonstrated, but I insisted. I cannot tell how happy I was—I was going to be filled with music, good music. By an unexpected chance they played "Le Prophete," one of the works that I had always preferred.

At last the hour came. My niece of sixteen was to accompany me. Two strong men carried me to my chair. Fortunately we did not live very far from the theatre.

My nephew had thoughtlessly secured seats in the first circle. No matter, my two bearers installed me there, me and my armchair. I was directly in the centre, just opposite the stage, and I saw admirably all the theatre, from the pit and the orchestra chairs to the boxes of the fourth circle, that legendary place where you are not incommoded by the chandelier—you see over it. I remained alone with my niece, who was as much enchanted as I was.

They played the first act. I do not remember ever to have enjoyed in my life happiness so complete, so heavenly. The second, third and fourth acts were rendered in a manner that I thought perfect.

During the intermission I noticed between two violoncellos an odd little creature, in whom I felt unaccountably interested. He was a poor, miserable fellow, shockingly deformed, but his features were quite regular. When he played all his body moved and appeared to wrap itself around the violoncello in a fantastic and loving manner; forming a singular contrast, his face assumed a serious and almost austere expression, and the light of enthusiasm illumined his eyes.

I mused in silence until the moment when Jean de Leyden thinks that he should reveal his accomplices that they must die with him. Then a white smoke rose on the scene through the cracks in the floor. It excited no attention, and was only thicker than the smoke usually employed, but suddenly there was an explosion and a flash that dimmed the lights in the auditorium; then all the dancers rushed toward the wings; the tenor lifted his white robe and literally took flight, and all the other singers and choristers disappeared one after another.

"What does this mean?" demanded some of the audience, already alarmed.

Here a young woman appeared on the stage, running. The most frightful terror was expressed in her face. The poor girl, distracted, sprang into the orchestra, screaming in a choking voice: "Fire!"

The audience started with one sound. Oh, I remember all as if I were still passing before my eyes. The musicians stopped suddenly, but not all together, for some random notes broke forth, here and there, on the air. Frantic with fear, they rushed toward the door of the orchestra, but quickly returned. The retreat was cut off. They must escape by the auditorium.

The auditorium! Ah, there everything was frightful, horrible, inconceivable! It was a battlefield. At first I did not appreciate the danger, and then I trembled and shook with an unnatural fear. Alone with Jeanne—alone with that child who could do nothing for me and who remained calm. I realized that I must remain where I was, without being able to stir, at the mercy of the fire, which would slowly advance to lick me, to burn me alive, to consume me. Nevertheless, I did not lose my presence of mind.

"Quick!" I said to little Jeanne, "fly, my child, and hasten to find some one who will take me away, if there is time."

A young man who had noticed my niece hurried toward her.

"Come, little one," said he to the child. Without ceremony he pulled her along by the hand.

"But my uncle, my uncle!" cried the girl.

"Oh, let him come," sharply answered two or three voices from the crowd who were crushing themselves without mercy at the narrow door. They left me there.

During this time the struggle was desperate in the orchestra chairs, stalls and pit. There were only four doors, each three feet wide, for this torrent that wanted to rush out in two seconds. The terrified people used all their efforts to reach these doors. Each wished to pass those who were in advance. They pushed, cried, shrieked and fought with fury.

Two strong men braced themselves back to back near an opening that they intended to pass before any one else, and during that time no one, neither they nor the others, could escape. Behind them were sobs and imprecations, and the crowd pushed with blind fury.

I saw some young men who had already felt the heat of the flames jump on the seats and then on the shoulders of those nearest the door. Thus they crawled along on their fellow sufferers.

Meanwhile the scenery was burning. The flames were rapidly approaching the auditorium. The heat had become more intense. I was perspiring freely, but it was more from fear than from heat. Already the spectacle was sublime—sublime and grand. In spite of the anguish which chilled my heart, I found something violently gay in those enormous tongues of fire, frisking before me and caressing the front of the stage.

At the doors the contest was becoming more violent, more compact, more frantic. Oh, woe to the weak! Woe to the kind! Woe to all those who had not yet consented to become ferocious beasts.

I saw a great demon, his eyes distended with fear, stretch out his hand. He seized by the shoulders a young woman in front of him, and dragged her backward, so as to gain her place, at least. The contracted fingers of that giant hand were driven into her flesh, and bruised and scratched it. But she resisted madly, fighting with all her strength and trying in her turn to plunge her nails into the face of the cruel man. That dastard I knew by sight. He was regarded in society as a polished gentleman.

Suddenly a fireman appeared. Why had he come? I called out. He looked at me, seeming to ask what I was doing there, and disappeared. I supposed he was coming to my rescue. Not at all.

Little by little, however, the theatre emptied. Some who had waited until the last still had the courage to draw into the corridor the vanquished on whom the crowd had trampled. Among them many women were mortally wounded.

The fire had reached the orchestra. The stands were overturned; violins, hautboys, flutes, clarinets lay on the floor. Scarcely any one had the presence of mind to take away his instrument. On some of the stands, still erect, there were scores and sheets of music already scorched. The smoke, quite thick from the first, was drawn toward the roof by some phenomenon of ventilation.

The sheets of music curled slowly; the heat was becoming intolerable, and a violin string broke from the heat of the fire. That sound of the dying instrument was heartrending in its sadness. Soon all the harp strings snapped, one after another. This admirable, exquisite instrument seemed to sing its death song in that agony. A melody flew away into the flame with its soul. After the harp, the strings of the bass-viol broke, with a sharp sound, like the reports of a revolver.

At this moment a head rose in the door of the parquet to the left. It seemed to be a child's head. Soon the body entered. Suddenly it took two steps forward, and I screamed. It was not a child. It was the little, deformed musician. Deliberately he walked toward the orchestra. A volume of fire stopped him. He recoiled but appeared not to renounce some mad project. Seizing a favorable moment, he darted forward. His arms covering his face to protect it, he approached his place among the musicians. He had returned to seek his friend, his companion—his violoncello. I saw him take the instrument in both hands and try to lift

it over the railing which separates the orchestra from the parquet. What folly! I trembled violently with anxiety. Involuntarily, and in a terrible voice, I roared: "Go away! Go away!"

Then, all at once, he seemed to succeed. The violoncello, finally extricated from the chairs which encumbered it, moved toward him, when, nearly at the same instant, all the violins and violoncellos, the light wood of which had become overheated, burst into a blaze simultaneously.

The little fellow relaxed his grasp, tottered and fell forward headlong into the orchestra, and upon his burning instrument. For some seconds I gasped and stretched out my arm—my one arm—to the place where I had seen that strange and sombre figure rise. I saw him, still moving in the midst of the flames, extend his blackened arms, and then sink into the glowing coals.

Probably he did not hear me. The fire spread all around him. He stood on a chair, and then placing one foot on the separating railing, he dragged his violoncello.

I almost forgot my own situation in the excitement. Poor little creature, so brave, and who must have been good and intelligent, and to whom I had never spoken! I see him still there, before my eyes, standing on that chair, and making those great efforts.

The flames became more violent. It was like a furnace. The cornices and other projecting parts of the front of the stage kindled rapidly now. I could scarcely distinguish anything more. The smoke blinded and choked me. My time had come. I was going to die.

The enemy advanced slowly and steadily. Had I lost all hope of being saved? No, I must admit I had not. Yes, I hoped still. My hopes were carefully built on the death of the poor 'cellist. Since he had been able to return for his instrument, others would be able to enter in search of me and carry me out.

Then, like an immense wave, another volume of smoke enveloped and stifled me. Although the fire had not yet reached the woodwork of my box, the heat was so violent that I began to feel my blood boiling. The sensation of burning became terribly appreciable. I knew I would not be able to retain consciousness much more than two minutes longer. The sweat ran from my forehead and temples down my cheeks and beard.

A brand detached from I don't know where described a curve through the auditorium and fell into the box next me. My resignation could not withstand that. Decidedly I did not want to die. Save me! Save me! I had no other wish, no other desire!

But my fury, my heartrending cries, my frantic gestures, were all in vain. No one came. My beard was scorching and commencing to burn. I felt an itching sensation in my face, on my neck and at the roots of my hair. Now I made a great effort and moved in my chair.

"There is still time," thought I. I determined to rise and walk. It was only for a moment. After inclining my body forward, I made a sudden movement. My eyes flashed. I believed I was going to walk. It was only for a moment. No, no; my legs were not willing. They remained reluctantly paralyzed. My excitement again became violent. I tried once more. No, no, no. Now I felt only that I was dying. It was no longer possible to endure one degree of heat more. Before my eyes a blinding light; around me, everywhere, above me, below me, the fire. I remained passive; perhaps I fell. I knew nothing more. I was abandoned.

Eight hours afterwards I found myself in bed again. My little niece in running for help had fallen and was severely wounded in the head. She had been carried away fainting, and it was only after recovering her senses that she was able to speak. Two men were dispatched to my rescue, and drew me from the furnace just as I became unconscious.—Translated from the Argonaut, from the French of Camille Debans.

RICHES IN CORNSTALKS.

Enough Power Now Wasted to Run All the Nation's Machinery.

Prof. Wiley, of the Department of Agriculture says that inasmuch as every 100 pounds of cornstalks will yield six and a half pounds of absolute alcohol it is obvious that the ignorant agriculturist has been allowing an enormous amount of wealth to go to waste.

Say that one acre will yield from ten to twelve tons of grain stalks, or about 20,000 pounds, and you have a quantity of raw material which will produce 1300 pounds of absolute alcohol, or 216 gallons. Alcohol at the present time is worth forty cents a gallon.

Ground in a wet condition and dried, cornstalks may be kept indefinitely, and are ready at any time for conversion into alcohol. Prof. Wiley says that the alcohol derivable from the cornstalks that now go to waste in this country would not only drive all the machinery of our factories, but would furnish the requisite power for all our railroads and steamboats, run all of our automobiles, heat and illuminate all of our houses and light the streets of every city in the Union.—From Leslie's Weekly.

Dodging the Spotlight.

Courtesy is becoming so rare that the man who gives up his seat in a street car feels as if he were playing to the grand stand.—Cleveland Leader.

WOMEN WHAT ARE WEARING

New York City.—The Eton jacket that is made with the sleeves cut in one with it is one of the latest developments of the Mandarin idea. This

Walking Suits.

For walking suits nothing is so good as a dark blue serge with kilted skirt and slightly fitted cutaway jacket.

Velvet Throat Band.

A little ornament is becoming quite universal among exclusive dressers, either with high or low neck, and with or without other necklaces or sautoirs. It is a half-inch band of black velvet-ribbon clasped tightly with jewels about the throat, and studded with many little jeweled slides.

Nine Gored Skirt.

The skirt that is made with a pleat at each gore is a well deserved favorite; it is very generally becoming and is simple withal. Just now it is being very much worn, both for walking and for round length, and as it can be trimmed in various ways is an exceedingly satisfactory model. This one is made of a pretty novelty material trimmed with plain colored braid that is cut to form pointed ends and held by buttons, but bandings of every possible sort are in vogue, and there are innumerable ones that might be utilized for this design. The same fabric and one fabric on another are much used and can be made to produce exceedingly novel effects. Applied bands simulating tucks are very fashionable, bandings put in some geometrical form are well liked, straight rows are in every way correct, or the skirt can be finished with



one is distinctly novel, the sleeves being finished at the elbows with roll-over cuffs while it still preserves the long unbroken shoulder line. In the



Illustration it is made of chiffon Panama cloth with the collar of velvet and trimming of soutache braid, large, handsome buttons finishing the front edges. It is, however, adapted to every seasonable suiting, and can be relied upon not for the present only, but also for the coming season. The use of soutache applied in this way is both attractive and smart, and there are also soutache bandings that can be purchased by the yard, which give something of the same effect with considerably lessened labor. The roll-over collar, in Tuxedo style, is always pretty and becoming, and the jacket can be closed or worn open as the occasion requires. Again, the collar could be of the same material braided or of silk in place of the velvet. If a lighter effect is needed.

The jacket is made with fronts, side-fronts, backs, side-backs and sleeves. The fronts and backs are finished and lapped over onto the side-fronts and stitched to position, and the sleeve edges are also finished and arranged over the side-fronts and side-backs and are stitched into place. The sleeves, however, are gathered at their lower edges and finished with bands to which the roll-over cuffs are attached. The collar is joined to the neck and front edges.

The quantity of material required for the medium size is three yards twenty-seven, one and seven-eighth yards forty-four or one and one-half yards fifty-two inches wide, with one-quarter yard of velvet for the collar, soutache according to design used.

Dresses Are "Loud."

It seems impossible to be loud at the rate in which checks and plaids are daily increasing in this quality. Things that seemed impossible a year ago are counted as the extreme of quiet dressing.

Transparent Materials.

Some of the prettiest frocks of transparent materials are worn over foundations of changeable silks.

a stitched hem only and be perfectly in style.

The skirt is made in seven gores and is so shaped as to flare abundantly at the lower portion. If walking length is desired it can be cut off on indicated lines. There is a pleat at each seam which effectually conceals the joinings and the fulness at the back is laid in inverted pleats.

The quantity of material required for the medium size is eleven yards twenty-seven, six and three-quarter yards forty-four or fifty-two inches wide if material has figure or nap; seven yards twenty-seven, five and three-quarter yards forty-four or



four and one-half yards fifty-two inches wide if it has not, with six yards of braid.

Severe Mannish Suits.

Probably there is no more fascinating finishing touch for one of the severe, mannish suits than a jaunty sailor hat, tilted over waved hair, from whose bandeau springs a bunch of slender feathers.

Tailored Shirt Waists.

There are attractive tailored shirt waists that are worn with a white tailored skirt.

POPULAR SCIENCE

The Black Sea contains less animal life than any other body of water. The lower depths are saturated with a poisonous gas which kills the fish.

Dr. Bernard Hollander, of London, has caused a sensation, says a special dispatch, by the announcement of his theory that insanity may be cured by the surgeon's knife.

The saltiness of the sea is caused by the washings out of the land surface of the globe, chiefly by the disintegration and always disintegrating salts of the rocks of the land.

Electricity is enjoying a wonderful growth in Spain. Few localities exist where the electric light is not used, and everywhere industrials are adopting the motor drive system. The construction of electrical apparatus in the Empire has not kept pace with the demand, and dynamos and motors are imported from America, Germany and Switzerland.

In Leipsig, Germany, four of the big fire fighting engines are driven by electricity. The engine, ladder trucks and tenders are supplied with electricity from storage batteries. Each machine is equipped with two motors of from seven to fourteen horsepower. The machines can cover a distance of twenty-four miles without recharging.

A new method of cutting steel is said to have been patented by a Belgian engineer. The process consists in first heating the metal by means of an oxy-hydrogen flame and then cutting it by a small stream of oxygen gas, which unites with the steel and forms a fusible oxide, which flows freely from the cut. It is said that the cut is fully as smooth as that made by the saw, and is only 1-100 inch wide.

The cause of terrestrial magnetism is not yet satisfactorily explained. It is certain that the earth cannot be considered as a regularly magnetized body, but rather as made up of an indefinite number of small magnets, the general result of their action being directed north and south. The needle, it must be remembered, does not "constantly" point due north, but has its "variations," with which all navigators are familiar, magnetism being subject to wave-like movements, some of them taking hundreds of years to complete, and others only a few hours.

The density of the earth and planets is determined in various ways—by the "torsion balance," an apparatus devised by one John Mitchell in the latter part of the eighteenth century; by the "chemical balance," by the vibration of the pendulum and by the deviation of the plumb line. In these various experiments the mathematics are used which, for lack of space, cannot be explained here. It must suffice to say that, given the dimensions of the earth, and the exact weight of a cubic mile of water (both of which are readily attained), it is easy, by the aforesaid methods, to get at the earth's weight or density, the result being that the earth is five and one-half times heavier than a globe of water of the same size. In other words, the earth weighs five thousand eight hundred and forty-two trillions of tons.

THE BLIND.

How They Learn to Play Music by Note.

A branch of knowledge which one would say it would be almost impossible to teach a blind person is music. It is easy to understand that a blind man might learn to play almost any instrument by ear, but the students are not taught to do this. They learn by note, and many of them become expert musicians. The method of teaching music employed by the New York Institution was originated by Miss H. A. Babcock, the chief instructor in music, and through her help the method has been adopted in the majority of the large educational institutions throughout the country. To explain to beginners everything that is on the staff and the methods of its use, a cushion about the size of an ordinary sofa-pillow, filled with sawdust, and firm, is used. Upon this, by means of cord and bonnet wire, which has been twisted into the shape of notes, the bars are made and the notes are arranged and rearranged at will, as they are held in place on the cushion only by tiny hairpins. By this ingenious method the student masters the principles of staff notation and gains a clear idea of what a bar of music looks like to seeing persons. The rests are made of leather, the sharps of brass, soldered. A blind graduate in music from this college, F. Henry Techudi, became an Associate and later a Fellow of the College of American Musicians. Still later he was elected Fellow of the American Guild of Organists, and at the present time he occupies a position as organist in Decatur, Ala. The students are all fond of singing, and the choir of the institution is unusually good, both as to voice and method of using it. Music is written in point system for the use of the blind.—Leslie's Weekly.

New York City has the reputation of carrying more bedbugs in its public conveyances than any other city in the world.